

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS FOR CHURCHES

[NOTE: The Session should review this Model Manual, making any desired choices or changes, before adopting it and recommending it to the Congregation for adoption by a two-thirds vote of the active members, present and voting.]

I. PURPOSE

The _____ Presbyterian Church is a member church in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It has been called by God and organized by the Presbytery to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in worship and service to the needy, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. GOVERNANCE

This church's Congregation and Session shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), both its *Book of Confessions* and its *Book of Order*. Subordinate to that Constitution, these bylaws and then the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall provide specific guidance.

MEETINGS

The Session shall hold stated meetings _____ [*“monthly” is recommended*]. Special meetings may be called in accord with BO: G-3.0203.

The Congregation shall hold its annual meeting in the church building on the _____ Sunday in _____ [*“January” or “September” is recommended*]. The business at that meeting (in accord with BO: G-1.0503) should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Financial report for the preceding year
- Budget for the current year adopted by the Session (for information only)
- Any proposed changes in the terms of call for the pastor (s) in accord with BO: G-2.0804
- Nominating committee report for church officers and their election
- Election of members to serve on the current year's nominating committee
- Review of reports from the pastor (s), the Session, and all church organizations (for information only)

Special meetings of the Congregation may be called in accord with BO: G-1.05, which may cover any of the above business items not covered at the annual meeting.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Reasonable notice, as determined by the Session [a minimum of 24 hours is recommended], shall be given of all special Session meetings.

Notice of Congregational meetings shall be given at regular services of worship on _____ [*“two” is recommended*] successive Sunday(s) prior to each meeting, in accord with BO:G-1.0502. The meeting may be convened following the notice given on the second Sunday.

QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

The quorum for Session meetings shall be the moderator and _____ [*“a majority” is recommended*] of elders in active service on the Session.

The quorum for Congregational meetings shall be the moderator and at least _____ [*“ten” is recommended*] percent of its active members.

Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted in any meetings.

INCORPORATION

In accord with the laws of the State of North Carolina, the Congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed (BO: G-4.0101), if such has not already been done. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the Congregation.

MEMBERSHIP

In accord with BO: G-1.03, the Session shall receive and nurture members of the church. The Session shall create and annually review rolls for all baptized members, active members, and affiliate members in accord with BO: G-1.04 & G-3.0204, also maintaining the required registers.

All members shall carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other (BO: G-1.0101).

WORSHIP

The Session shall ensure that services of worship of God are regularly and reverently held in accord with BO: Directory for Worship and G-3.0201.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated _____ [*“monthly” is recommended*] as well as at other appropriate times, as the Session may decide.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in accord with the principles of BO: Directory for Worship.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accord with BO: G-2.0401, the Congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

- There shall be _____ [*“five,” “seven,” or “nine” are recommended, depending on the size of the Congregation*] members
- _____ [*“one,” “two,” or “three” are recommended, to match the above choices*] of the members shall be elders designated by the Session, at least one of whom shall be currently serving on the Session, and who shall serve as chair of the committee.
- _____ [*“one” or “two” are recommended if “five” or “seven” were initially chosen; “three” are recommended if “nine” was initially chosen*] of the members shall be designated by the deacons, if any.

- _____ [*This number must always be the majority of the committee, depending on the number of elders and deacons (if any) chosen*] of the members, who are not elders currently on the Session or deacons currently in service, shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected at the annual meeting of the Congregation.
- Members of the committee shall be elected annually, and no one shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- The pastor (or moderator of the Session) shall be a member ex-officio, but without vote.
- The committee shall bring to the annual meeting of the Congregation nominations only for the number of positions to be filled [*Note: If more nominations than positions to filled are desired, or if there are additional nominations from the floor, election should be by secret ballot.*]
- The floor shall be open for additional nominations at the annual meeting.
- Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just and inclusive in accord with BO: F-1.0403, and G-3.0103, .0104 & 2.0401.

SESSION

The Congregation shall elect _____ [*No specific number is recommended, except that it works best if that number is divisible by three*] elders distributed into three equal classes (as near as may be), one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. [*Note: Alternatively for smaller congregations, elders can be elected for two-year terms, forming two equal classes (as near as may be).*]

If necessary, the nominating committee shall nominate a successor for a vacancy, to be elected by the Congregation for the unexpired portion of the vacated position's term.

No elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years.*

An elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session for a period of at least one year.*

[**Note: These term restrictions may be waived by the Presbytery for specific situations (BO: G-2.0404).*]

Those elected as elder shall be prepared and examined by the Session in accord with BO: G-2.0402.

DEACONS

If, in accord with BO:G-2.02, the Congregation determines to have deacons, either individually commissioned or organized as a board, it shall also determine how they are elected, their terms of service, and other matters, analogous to provisions for elders (as near as may be).

RECORDS

The Session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accord with BO: G-3.0107 & 3.0204, and shall submit any requested records to Presbytery in accord with BO: G-3.0108.

COMMITTEES

The Session, in accord with BO: G-3.0201, shall establish, discharge, and review the actions of any desired committees and other organizations within the Congregation.

AMENDMENTS

Subject to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), any Articles of Incorporation, and state laws, these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the active members of the Congregation, present and voting, provided that the proposed changes have been published at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.

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