

**STANDING RULES
OF THE
PRESBYTERY OF
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA**



**Revised by Presbytery of WNC
April 2015**

STANDING RULES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

I. PRESBYTERY

- A. Name. The Presbytery shall be known as the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.
- B. Constitution. The Presbytery shall always operate in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution (*Book of Confessions* and *Book of Order*) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It shall have the right to adopt Standing Rules (as a manual of administrative operations/ bylaws) that are in harmony with that Constitution.
- C. Relationship to Higher Governing Bodies. The Presbytery is subject to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), as provided in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- D. Geographical Area. The geographical jurisdiction of the Presbytery includes the 23 counties of: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey. The Presbytery may be divided into clusters, which may serve as units for pastoral care, training, worship, and other useful purposes.
- E. Incorporation. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation according to the laws of the State of North Carolina. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina Corporation shall meet at the same time and place, and in the announcement of the meeting, "Presbytery of Western North Carolina" shall designate both its functions.
- F. Members. All enrolled teaching elders (also known as Ministers of Word and Sacrament), as certified by the Stated Clerk, shall be members of the Presbytery.

II. OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY

- A. The Officers of the Presbytery shall be the Moderator, Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect), Stated Clerk, and Treasurer.
- B. Moderator's Election and Term. Each year at the third stated meeting of Presbytery, the General Council of Presbytery shall present a nomination for Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect). The name of the nominee will be announced in the docket packet mailed/e-mailed prior to the meeting and will be placed in nomination at the meeting. The Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) shall take office on January 1 following his or her election. On the next January 1, the Vice-Moderator shall become the Moderator being formally recognized at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. The Moderator shall serve in that office for one year, or until his/her successor takes office.
- C. Moderator's Duties. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of Presbytery and perform all the duties prescribed in the *Book of Order*.
- D. Vice-Moderator's Duties. The Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) shall carry out the Moderator's duties when so requested by the Moderator, or when deemed necessary by

the General Council.

- E. **Stated Clerk's Duties.** The Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Presbytery and serve the Presbytery as its constitutional officer. The Stated Clerk shall perform those duties and functions prescribed in the *Book of Order* and those agreed upon by the General Council. He or she shall annually arrange for the records of all Sessions to be reviewed. Subject to the approval of the General Council, the Stated Clerk may appoint an Assistant Stated Clerk, whose term of service shall be the same as the Stated Clerk's. Should an investigating committee be necessary, the Stated Clerk and the chairs of the General Council and the Support Division shall together appoint one, following the "Rules of Discipline" in the *Book of Order*. The Stated Clerk shall be elected for a term set by Presbytery, and is eligible to be re-elected.
- F. **Treasurer's Duties.** The Treasurer shall be elected by Presbytery and have oversight of the finances of Presbytery and is responsible for ensuring that the financial policies and procedures are followed. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the funds of Presbytery as authorized, keep detailed account of all receipts and disbursements and report them to the General Council at each of its meetings and to Presbytery annually, and work with any financial campaign approved by Presbytery. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term set by Presbytery, and is eligible to be re-elected.

III. MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

- A. **Stated Meetings.** The Presbytery of Western North Carolina shall hold four stated meetings each year, some of which may be a part of celebrative events. The time and place shall be set by the General Council. In the scheduling of meetings, consideration shall be given to varied geographical locations throughout Presbytery and to work patterns of participants in the meetings.
- B. **Special Meetings.** The Moderator may call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of three teaching elders and three ruling elders, all elders being of different churches. Should the Moderator be unable or unwilling to act, the Stated Clerk may, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both Moderator and Stated Clerk are unable or unwilling to act, any five teaching elders and five ruling elders, all elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting. The synod may direct the Presbytery to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. The notice of a special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each teaching elder and to the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.
- C. **Meetings and Invitations.** Invitations to host meetings shall be received and acted on by the General Council.
- D. **Docket.** The Moderator and the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the General Presbyter, shall together prepare the proposed docket for each meeting of Presbytery, which shall be approved by the General Council. Copies of the proposed docket shall be sent electronically or be mailed to all teaching elders, clerks of sessions, and others as requested at least ten days before each meeting. There shall be a worship service during each meeting that shall include the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If circumstances permit, the pastor and session of the host church shall participate in this

worship service. Memorials for church professionals and ruling elders who have died in the preceding twelve months shall be included in the worship service of one stated meeting each year.

- E. In order to ensure fairness and access to all necessary information, any new business to be dealt with at a Presbytery meeting, not arising from a Presbytery committee, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in the packet no later than thirty days before the scheduled meeting of Presbytery. By a two-thirds affirmative vote, however, Presbytery may decide to consider other new urgent business, if brought to the Stated Clerk before 10:00 a.m. at the beginning of the Presbytery meeting. This new business shall be referred to the Bills and Overtures Committee for report later in that meeting.
- F. There shall be no distribution of materials at Presbytery meetings without prior approval from the General Council.
- G. Rules of Procedure. The rules that shall govern all the transaction of business in all meetings of Presbytery shall be in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), these Standing Rules (bylaws), and the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- H. Attendance and Voting. Each teaching elder shall attend each meeting of Presbytery, and each congregation shall be represented by at least one ruling elder at each meeting. Congregations are entitled to ruling elder commissioners based on the following active membership (BO: G-1.0402), as shown on the most recent statistical report:

0 - 250 members - 1
251 - 750 members - 2
751 - 1250 members - 3
1251 - 1750 members - 4

Honorably retired teaching elders shall be welcome at all meetings, but their necessary non-attendance shall be excused.

To ensure approximate parity in numbers between ruling elder and teaching elder commissioners:

- 1. All members of the General Council shall have voice and vote (if ruling elders).
- 2. All division, committee and sub-committee chairs shall have voice and vote (if ruling elders).
- 3. All Commissioned Lay Pastors shall have voice and vote.
- 4. All Certified Christian Educators, Certified Associate Christian Educators, and, in addition, other Christian Educators who have
 - earned at least a bachelor's degree (or its equivalent)
 - served in one or more educational ministries under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery (or one of its Sessions) for a minimum of two (2) years, and
 - been examined and recommended to Presbytery by the Christian Education Committeeshall have voice and (if ruling elders) vote, provided that these privileges shall end, pursuant to BO: G-2.1103, when such persons are no longer serving in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery

(or one of its Sessions).

5. All ruling elder commissioners to the Synod Assembly and to the General Assembly shall have voice and vote as long as their terms last.
 6. All exempt staff of Presbytery shall have voice.
 7. All racial/ethnic congregations and other congregations designated by the General Council shall elect an additional ruling elder commissioner.
 8. Only teaching elders who are active members (including honorably retired teaching elders) or members-at-large of Presbytery, as defined by the *Book of Order*, shall have voice and vote.
- I. The quorum for stated meetings of Presbytery shall be at least fifty commissioners including twenty teaching elders and ruling elders commissioned by at least twenty sessions. The quorum for special meetings shall be half of the above.
- J. Corresponding Members and Visitors. The Presbytery may give voice but not vote to any of the following:
- Official representatives from the Synod or the General Assembly.
 - Teaching or ruling elders from another Presbytery, a Reformed Church in communion with the Presbyterian Church (USA), or any other Christian church.
- Other visitors are welcome to attend as observers, unless the Presbytery, for good reason, votes to go into executive session.

IV. PRESBYTERY GENERAL COUNCIL

- A. Purpose. The General Council shall ensure that the priorities of Presbytery are carried out by the Divisions, committees, and other units, as well as the staff of Presbytery, and that these priorities are reflected in the Presbytery budget. It shall coordinate the many parts of Presbytery to contribute to the life and witness for Christ of the whole Church. It shall foster positive attitudes within the Presbytery and encourage its members to engage in regular prayer regarding the mission of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, the Synod of Mid-Atlantic, the General Assembly and the whole Presbyterian Church (USA). The General Council is the servant of Presbytery and has only those powers provided by these Standing Rules or authorized by Presbytery.
- B. Membership. The General Council shall be composed as follows:
1. Voting Members
 - Immediate Past Moderator of Presbytery, who shall serve as chair for one year.
 - Moderator of Presbytery, who shall serve as vice-chair for one year.
 - Chair (or his or her designee) from each Division.
 - Moderator of the Presbyterian Women of Presbytery.
 - Six at-large Members, selected by the Nominating and Representation Committees (giving due consideration to geography and experience, with equal number of teaching and ruling elders) and elected by Presbytery, serving three year staggered terms (two on, two off each year). These may be nominated and elected for an immediate second three year term, after which they may not serve on the board for at least one year before being eligible again.
 - Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) of Presbytery, who shall serve as secretary

- Treasurer
2. Non-Voting Members*
- General Presbyter
 - Stated Clerk
 - Any staff of Presbytery chosen by the General Presbyter
 - One commissioner to the Synod Assembly selected by the Nominating and Representation Committees
 - One recent commissioner to the General Assembly selected by the Nominating and Representation Committees
- (*At its discretion, the Board may annually grant voting privileges to any of the above)
- C. Leadership Team. The chair, vice-chair, secretary, two at-large members elected from the Board, the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk shall form a leadership team for the General Council, whose duties shall be to
- Make preparations for each meeting of the Board
 - Submit recommendations to the Board
 - Carry out assignments given by the Board
 - Take appropriate action on urgent matters that cannot wait for the next Board meeting, such action to be reported at the next meeting
- D. Functions: The General Council shall have the following responsibilities:
1. To lead Presbytery in setting appropriate goals in accord with its Mission Statement.
 2. To coordinate the mission and programs of Presbytery.
 3. To review the work of all Divisions, committees and other units of Presbytery, offering helpful advice as warranted.
 4. To approve the proposed annual budget prepared by the Building Relations Division ensuring that Presbytery's priorities are reflected therein, for submission to Presbytery; and to make adjustments to the budget approved by Presbytery, provided that such are reported to the next meeting of Presbytery.
 5. To refer work to, and to hear recommendations from, the Divisions, committees and other units of Presbytery.
 6. To approve the proposed docket for the Presbytery meetings prepared by the Moderator and Stated Clerk, in consultation with the General Presbyter.
 7. To serve as the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery Corporation, with the right to designate some of their members to exercise that responsibility on behalf of the General Council.
 8. To consider requests from congregations regarding the exercise of their property rights under G-4.0206 in the *Book of Order*, and recommend appropriate actions to Presbytery.
 9. To recommend persons for the Nominating and Representation Committees of Presbytery, and for the offices of Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) and if necessary, Moderator.
 10. To approve the appointment of persons by the Nominating and Representation Committees to fill vacancies on committees in cases of emergency (subject to ratification by Presbytery).

11. To act as a hearing board in matters which may be appealed from the Operations Division.
12. To refer actions of the General Assembly and Synod to Divisions and committees for study and interpretation.
13. To keep Presbytery informed of its work through reports at each meeting.
14. To review Presbytery's fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in the *Book of Order* (G-3.03).
15. To authorize celebrations of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at retreats, camps, conferences and special gatherings under the jurisdiction of Presbytery.
16. To recommend personnel policies to Presbytery for all its employees, which shall embody the inclusiveness required in the *Book of Order*.
17. Between meetings of Presbytery, to act on behalf of Presbytery in urgent matters by a two-thirds majority vote, provided that a full report of such action is given to Presbytery at its next meeting.

V. DIVISIONS AND COMMITTEES

- A. The Presbytery shall have the following Divisions in accordance with its Mission Statement. These Divisions should include, but are not limited to, the following tasks:
 1. **Support** (Equipping Congregation):
all matters relating to congregational life, teaching elders, pastoral relations, educators, and church transformation, including churches with smaller membership.
 2. **Witness** (Sharing God's Love):
local and global missions, new church development, and evangelism.
 3. **Discipleship** (Making Disciples):
spiritual development, education, youth, higher education, and camping.
 4. **Leadership** (Developing Leaders):
officer training, development of leaders, school for the laity, stewardship, worship, and nominations/representation.
 5. **Operations** (Building Relationships):
finance, property, personnel, budget, planning, and judicial matters.

- B. General Regulations:
 1. Subject to the approval of Presbytery, the General Council shall determine the general responsibilities and the number of members of each Division.
 2. Working with the General Council, each Division shall determine the committees/sub-committees it deems necessary, as well as the number of members and the duties of each.
 3. Members of the Divisions and committees shall be selected by the Nominating and Representation Committees and elected by Presbytery. Members of the sub-committees shall be selected by the relevant Division and confirmed by the General Council. Normally, no more than half of these members should be teaching elders.
 4. Normally, members of the Divisions and committees shall serve a three-year term, may be re-elected, but may not serve more than six consecutive years, after which they may not serve on the same body for at least one year before being eligible again.
 5. All Divisions and committees should report to Presbytery through the General Council to enable it to coordinate activities in Presbytery. The Board may not

- alter any Division or committee report, but may offer advice to Presbytery concerning Division or committee recommendations.
6. Divisions and committees shall develop and implement plans and programs that carry out their goals as adopted by Presbytery, and evaluate and report to Presbytery their activities annually. Many committees may need to meet as a whole only a few times a year, with sub-committees working on specific tasks during the rest of the time. Divisions and committees may also meet by telephone conference, emails, or other suitable methods.
 7. Divisions and committees shall be encouraged to be creative and to explore new avenues of ministry with accountability to Presbytery through the General Council.
 8. Divisions and committees shall annually submit their budget requests to the Operations Division. They shall carry out their responsibilities within the approved budgets, unless an overrun is approved in advance by the General Council.
 9. Ordinarily, a person may serve on only one Presbytery Division or committee at the same time. Normally, there should not be more than one representative of any one church on the same Presbytery Division or committee at the same time (except congregations having more than two hundred active members may have more than one representative on the same committee).
 10. Divisions and committees chairs will contact any committee member after three meetings in a year have been missed (without a reasonable excuse approved by the committee) and inquire as to their ability and willingness to serve at this time, and will advise the committee member that a further unexcused absence will result in removal from the committee. It will be the responsibility of the committee chair to inform the Nominating and Representation Committees when members have missed half of the committee meetings; and the Nominating and Representation Committees shall replace such members as soon as possible.
 11. Terms of office for Division and committee chairs shall be one year, with no chair serving more than two consecutive terms. Each committee chair shall be nominated specifically for that position by the Nominating and Representation Committees, but still be one of the total membership of the committee. In extenuating circumstances, a third year as chair may be recommended to Presbytery.
 12. Each committee may co-opt additional members as desired, who shall have voice but no vote in the committee deliberations.
 13. Divisions and committees are encouraged to suggest to the Nominating and Representation Committees suitable persons for new members and new chairs.
 14. Each committee may, on its own initiative, create one or more on-going working groups for long-term projects or temporary task forces for specific short-term projects. Both working groups and task forces will report to the creating committee. When a task force has completed its assignment, it shall cease to exist. The membership and a statement of purpose of all working groups or task forces shall be reported to the General Council within a month after their formation.
 15. Each Division and committee shall keep accurate minutes and copies of all minutes should be submitted to the Stated Clerk.
 16. The quorum for each Division and committee shall be a majority of its members.
 17. Sub-committees should comply with all the above regulations and shall report to the Division and General Council through their committees.

VI. PRESBYTERY STAFF

Presbytery shall hire staff as required to fulfill its mission and responsibilities. The General Presbyter shall be head of staff. Staff shall be responsible to Presbytery, reporting through the General Council, and not be responsible to a single Division or committee or sub-committee. All Divisions, committees, and sub-committees shall have support and resourcing. The "Personnel Manual of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina" provides guidelines and policies for hiring, supervising and terminating staff, and for the provision of salary and benefits.

VII. AMENDMENT

These Standing Rules for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina shall be periodically reviewed by the General Council, with any changes recommended to Presbytery. Such proposed amendments may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any stated meeting of the Presbytery.

Approved by Presbytery of WNC
October 21, 2011