

# Lowcountry Presbytery Standing Rules

Adopted: January 23, 2015, at the First Stated Meeting of the Lowcountry Presbytery  
Amended July 28, 2018. Amended November 5, 2020. Amended April 25, 2023.  
Amended July 22, 2023.

## 1 MISSION STATEMENT

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**1.1 The name of the Presbytery shall be Lowcountry Presbytery, Inc.**

**1.2 The mission of the Presbytery is as follows:**

“We exist as a regional church to extend God’s Kingdom in the Lowcountry by strengthening existing churches, planting new churches and cooperatively reaching out with the gospel, developing new leaders and caring for our shepherds.”

**1.3 Values and Distinctives:**

1.3.1 The distinctiveness of the PCA and therefore Lowcountry Presbytery lies in our stress on both reformation and revival. Without an emphasis on revival, “reformation” may become either a mimicking of political ideologies or sterile doctrinarism. Without an emphasis on reformation, “revival” may become a shallow pietism or mysticism. Only reformation and revival together can accomplish the Great Commission of our Lord.

1.3.2 As a presbytery we are the regional church of our individual churches joined together for the advancement of God’s kingdom. It is this advancement of God’s kingdom and Gospel message that unites us though we may differ in practice and style.

1.3.3 As a presbytery we are committed to the Scriptures and the historic Westminster Standards based firmly on a biblical theology that answers the questions and issues of each culture and people to which we minister.

1.3.4 As a presbytery we seek to be a band of brothers united together in our labors, sufferings and joys of ministry by providing a safe haven where we can laugh, cry, encourage and rebuke one-another for the advancement of God’s kingdom. Likewise, we also want to seek ways to be a haven for the wives of our elders and candidates.

1.3.5 As a presbytery we will seek not to allow the good and necessary administrative functions of the Presbytery to overshadow the connectional and encouragement aspects of Presbytery. To this end we will endeavor to encourage and empower our various committees to conduct the business of Presbytery electronically and in committee allowing for more time for Presbytery meetings to be about prayer, fellowship, encouragement and discussion of ways to expand God’s kingdom for His glory.

## 2 GOVERNMENT

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**2.1 The foundational principles and the basic organizational structure of Presbytery shall conform to the Scriptures and the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER of the Presbyterian Church in America. In matters not otherwise covered, ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER shall prevail.**

**2.2 No part of these Standing Rules can be set aside. To change the Standing Rules is to do so by amendment. To amend the Standing Rules, the proposed amendment shall be read at one stated meeting of Presbytery, docketed for the next Stated Meeting, read again, then voted upon. To amend the Standing Rules, the required affirmative vote necessary shall be two thirds (2/3) of the presbyters enrolled at the meeting. The vote to suspend the Standing Rules shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the presbyters enrolled at the meeting.**

- 2.3 Presbytery shall elect a permanent Parliamentarian, who is proficient in ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, to assure the decency and orderliness of meetings.**

## 3 OFFICERS

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The officers shall be: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees.

### 3.1 MODERATOR:

- 3.1.1 Moderator shall be elected at the November meeting and shall assume the office at the January Meeting and shall serve for one year until the following January Meeting.
- 3.1.2 At least two (2) nominees, gifted in conducting meetings, shall be submitted at the November Stated Meeting using the following procedure:
- 3.1.2.1 *Each nomination shall be submitted to the Administration Committee by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. In the event no nominations are made, the Administration Committee shall secure two (2) nominees.*
- 3.1.2.2 *Normally the position will be rotated between Ruling Elder and Teaching Elder.*
- 3.1.3 The chairman of any permanent committee shall not normally serve as Moderator as long as he chairs that committee.
- 3.1.4 MODERATOR DUTIES ARE:
- 3.1.4.1 *to ensure that Presbytery keeps in mind its mission statement and focus on reformation and revival. He shall be assisted in this by the Administration Committee.*
- 3.1.4.2 *to moderate all meetings in accordance with the Scriptures, the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER, these **Standing Rules**, and ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.*
- 3.1.4.3 *to appoint Ad-Hoc committees and assemble the Judicial Committee, when needed.*
- 3.1.4.4 *to be an ex-officio member of all permanent committees and commissions, excluding any Ad-Hoc Committees and Commissions.*
- 3.1.4.5 *to be a regular member of the Administration Committee.*
- 3.1.4.6 *to appoint a commission for ordination and/or installation of approved teaching elders.*
- 3.1.4.7 *to perform such other duties relating to his office as the court may direct.*

### 3.2 VICE-MODERATOR:

- 3.2.1 Vice Moderator shall ordinarily be the immediate past Moderator and shall serve at the request of the Moderator, or when the Moderator is unable to serve.

### 3.3 STATED CLERK:

- 3.3.1 Stated Clerk shall be elected at the November Stated Meeting to serve for three years, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> following, and shall perform the duties prescribed for this office in the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER and these **Standing Rules**. He shall be eligible to succeed himself and shall have access to the floor for all meetings.
- 3.3.2 STATED CLERK DUTIES ARE:
- 3.3.2.1 *to report to and be supervised by the Administration Committee.*
- 3.3.2.2 *to send a copy of the docket and previous Presbytery meeting minutes to each Teaching Elder and Clerk of the Session, at least ten days prior to each stated, or called meeting.*
- 3.3.2.3 *to receive and consider all communications and refer these to the appropriate committees.*
- 3.3.2.4 *to distribute to Presbytery any overture proposed to Presbytery for submission to the General Assembly, with a recommendation to refer the overture to an appropriate permanent committee for review and recommendation, or to refer it to a special committee to be appointed for that purpose (see Standing Rule 5.5.5).*
- 3.3.2.5 *to provide an annual cumulative attendance record of all Teaching Elders and Session Commissioners for the Shepherding Committee to give pastoral attention.*
- 3.3.2.6 *to keep the following permanent records in a secure manner.*

- a book of the ministers, containing the obligations to be signed upon admission into Presbytery and thereafter reaffirmed on an annual basis during registration at the January Stated Meeting, or by correspondence if the minister is absent.
- a list of elders, clerks of session.
- a book of candidates for the ministry showing when and how received and current status.

3.3.2.7 *to perform such other duties relating to his office as the court through the Administration Committee may direct. Expenses, supplies, and equipment for performing his duties and the keeping of records shall be provided by Presbytery through its budget.*

**3.4 OTHER JOBS under oversight of Stated Clerk:**

3.4.1 **Recording Clerk** may be employed by the Lowcountry Administration Committee to record the minutes of each meeting. This person may be a member of the court and shall be under the jurisdiction of the Stated Clerk. Any salary shall be determined by the Administration Committee and included in its budget for approval by Presbytery.

3.4.2 **Webmaster:** may be employed by the Lowcountry Administrative Committee to further the agenda of the Presbytery by facilitating the use of the web and cloud sharing to ease paperwork and streamline efficiency of the Presbytery and committees. Any salary or website costs shall be determined by the Lowcountry Administrative Committee and included in its budget for approval by Presbytery.

3.4.3 **EMPLOYEES:** shall be approved by Presbytery by two-thirds vote prior to employment. Employees shall not be permitted to vote on employee budget matters within any Permanent Committee they may serve on.

**3.5 TREASURER:**

3.5.1 **Treasurer** shall be elected by Presbytery ordinarily for a term of three years beginning at the January Meeting. He shall report to and be supervised by the Administration Committee who may also determine his salary, if any. The Presbytery may request that he be bonded, the cost of which shall be provided by Presbytery.

3.5.2 TREASURER DUTIES ARE:

3.5.2.1 *to receive from churches and individuals the funds necessary to defray the current expenses of Presbytery and disburse all funds in accordance with its directions. These are provided on an asking basis under a unified budget.*

3.5.2.2 *to prepare a financial statement for each Stated Meeting and compute the annual askings per church according to the budget. To keep churches and presbyters informed of the financial status of the Presbytery so that its mission can be effectively carried out.*

3.5.2.3 *to keep an account of all receipts and disbursements and report in written form to the Stated Meetings. Prior to the July Meeting an annual audit shall be prepared by qualified people other than those on the Administration Committee, if possible, at no expense to Presbytery, and submitted to the Administration Committee.*

**3.6 TRUSTEES:**

3.6.1 **Trustees** shall consist of four (4) Ruling Elders, elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Administration Committee. Three trustees shall constitute a quorum. They shall be divided into three classes of three-year terms. They shall meet as often as necessary or when requested to do so by Presbytery.

3.6.2 TRUSTEE DUTIES SHALL BE:

3.6.2.1 *to receive, hold and manage, when occasion requires, the properties of the Presbytery and shall convey and dispose of the same according to the terms of the trust, in conformity with the Standards and policies of the Presbyterian Church in America*

## 4 COMMITTEES:

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### 4.1 PERMANENT COMMITTEES ARE:

- 4.1.1 **ADMINISTRATION** – “exists as a regional church to extend God’s Kingdom”
- 4.1.2 **SHEPHERDING AND CHURCH VITALITY** – “strengthening existing churches”. This committee is tasked with caring for Teaching Elders within the Presbytery and encouraging strong churches within the Presbytery.
- 4.1.3 **MNA AND MTW** – “planting new churches and cooperatively reaching out with the gospel”. This includes church planting liaison with other ministries of MNA, and MTW missions.
- 4.1.4 **CAMPUS MINISTRIES** – Oversees the RUF campus ministries and the Campus Fellowship at the Citadel.
- 4.1.5 **CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS** – “developing leaders”. This committee is tasked with examining candidates, overseeing internships, and developing both new and encouraging existing leaders.
- 4.1.6 **JUDICIAL** – “the exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary as discipline maintains: the glory of God, the purity of His Church, and the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners” (BCO 27-3).

**4.2 All permanent committees shall seek to have an equal number of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders. The committee members shall be divided into three classes as equal as possible numerically, and shall serve for three years and shall be eligible for re-election to succeeding terms. The quorum for each committee shall be one-third of its membership.**

**4.3 ELECTIONS: of permanent committee members shall be held at the "November Stated Meeting and those elected shall begin their term of office after the January Stated Meeting.**

- 4.3.1 Permanent Committee officers shall be elected by each Committee between the November and January Stated Meetings of each year. Newly elected officers shall assume their duties after the January Stated Meeting. Each permanent committee shall elect at least a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary.
- 4.3.2 The Administration Committee, after consulting Permanent Committee Chairmen, and after all nominees have been contacted before their nomination for their consent and willingness to actively serve if elected, shall submit their nominees at the November Stated Meeting.
- 4.3.3 The Administration Committee shall endeavor to involve every church in the work of Presbytery by seeking to place at least one Ruling Elder from each church on some Presbytery committee in order to facilitate Presbytery wide parity.
- 4.3.4 Vacancies on any permanent committee shall be filled by Presbytery upon recommendation by the Administration Committee, at the request of the committee which has the vacancy.

**4.4 AUTHORITY: of each permanent committee shall be an executive nature in order to accomplish the duties assigned to it by Presbytery. Each permanent committee shall make annual budgeting requests to the Administration Committee not later than September 1<sup>st</sup> for presentation and approval at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery in November.**

**4.5 ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – “exists as a regional church to extend God’s Kingdom”**

- 4.5.1 ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE shall consist of four (4) at large members elected by Presbytery, together with one (1) representative from each of the other permanent

committees. It shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its primary duties of administration, stewardship, nominations, supervision of the Stated Clerk and implementation of Mission Statement.

4.5.2 ITS DUTIES SHALL BE:

- 4.5.2.1 *to supervise the work of the Stated Clerk and Treasure and to nominate persons to fill these offices.*
- 4.5.2.2 *to prepare and present to Presbytery at its November Stated Meeting a budget for the following year which shall be subject to amendments by Presbytery.*
- 4.5.2.3 *to promote stewardship within the congregations of Presbytery.*
- 4.5.2.4 *to prepare the docket for each Stated Meeting using the approved format in keeping with the themes and emphasis as established by the host church and to submit a resolution of thanks to the host church of the stated meetings of Presbytery (naturally fitting at the conclusion of the Administration Committee report or at the conclusion of lunch while the host church workers are present, if the business will continue after lunch).*
- 4.5.2.5 *to provide a slate of nominees for the Permanent Committees and Offices of Presbytery as well as nominations for the General Assembly Permanent Committees to be included in the docket for the November meeting. Nominations may be sent to the Stated Clerk beginning September 1.*
- 4.5.2.6 *to provide a slate of nominees for the General Assembly Committees of Commissioners to be included in the docket for the January meeting. If no one is elected to serve in any of these positions at the January meeting, the Administration Committee is granted the power of commission to fill any vacancies. Nominations may be sent to the Stated Clerk beginning November 1.*
- 4.5.2.7 *to review and present the minutes of every Presbytery meeting.*
- 4.5.2.8 *Provide for and facilitate the review of Sessional Records at the January Stated Meeting. This may be accomplished by having the entire presbytery function as a committee of the whole to review these records.*
- 4.5.2.9 *to make other recommendation to Presbytery for its welfare and efficient operation and to assign to the Stated Clerk and Treasurer any duties as may be necessary.*

**4.6 SHEPHERDING AND CHURCH VITALITY COMMITTEE– “strengthening existing churches”**

The Shepherding Committee shall consist of eight (8) members who shall meet quarterly or as necessary to fulfill its primary duties of pastoral care and oversight of our ministers and their wives and the churches they serve.

The Duties and Responsibilities of the Shepherding Committee include, but are not limited to:

**4.6.1 SHEPHERDING OF TEACHING ELDERS**

- 4.6.1.1 *Providing pastoral oversight and continuing education for teaching elders of Presbytery.*
- 4.6.1.2 *For ministers without a call and ministers laboring out of bounds and/or engaged in work not under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery including, but not limited to, foreign missionaries, military and institutional chaplains, and those who have been called to service with the denomination’s agencies:*
  - Providing pastoral encouragement, assistance and counsel
  - Requesting/requiring a written annual report that includes a summary of their activities from the past year, future plans, and current circumstances. The committee will recommend to Presbytery any appropriate action as needed in accordance with BCO 13-2 and 34-10.
- 4.6.1.3 *Maintaining communication with and oversight of retired or incapacitated ministers and widows and orphans and representing their interest before Presbytery and the General Assembly.*
- 4.6.1.4 *Providing diaconal counsel and evaluating the need for assistance on behalf of the*

*Presbytery to ministers when possible needs are made known.*

4.6.1.5 *Determining the recipient for the offering collected during the Presbytery worship service.*

#### **4.6.2 RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCHES AND TEACHING ELDERS**

4.6.2.1 *Consulting and advising sessions of churches without a pastor and providing information and assistance in securing a pastor.*

4.6.2.2 *Handling the uncontested resignation of a teaching elder. The Chairman, with the concurrence of the Vice-Chairman and at least two other committee members, after receiving written notice from a Teaching Elder in good standing of his uncontested resignation, may constitute themselves a Commission and dissolve the relationship, declare the pulpit vacant, and grant the Teaching Elder permission to leave the field, or dismiss him to another Presbytery. A Report of this action will be made at the next stated meeting of Presbytery.*

4.6.2.3 *Handling all contested requests for dissolution. A report of this action will be made at the next stated meeting of Presbytery.*

4.6.2.4 *Communicating with and advising teaching elders in their relation to their session and their church.*

4.6.2.5 *Counseling and advising teaching elders and churches within the bounds of Presbytery by acting as peacemakers to parties in dispute on non-judicial matters. This involvement may be at the request of the pastor and/or the session or as directed by the Presbytery.*

4.6.2.6 *Examining the original pastoral calls and recommending them for action. Providing salary and benefit information and keeping records of such information for review and advice.*

#### **4.6.3 CHURCH VITALITY**

4.6.3.1 *Encouraging and developing ways for member churches to share information about ministry opportunities such as: conferences; retreats; concerts; etc. around the Presbytery. Encouraging churches to provide reports of ministry for sharing among the churches of the Presbytery and for inclusion in the Presbytery minutes.*

4.6.3.2 *Encouraging full participation by all teaching and ruling elders within the Presbytery in presbytery business. Following up with presbyters who are absent without excuse from more than one stated meeting of Presbytery in a calendar year.*

4.6.3.3 *Developing and coordinating a vital prayer ministry within the Presbytery.*

4.6.3.4 *Encouraging and promoting community and communication among the members of Presbytery.*

4.6.3.5 *Establishing, coordinating, and overseeing regular events for elders' wives at Presbytery meeting.*

4.6.3.6 *In the event that the Session of any particular church is reduced to one Ruling Elder, the Shepherding Committee shall inquire into the situation and shall assist in whatever way is agreeable to that Session to train new Ruling Elders in order to facilitate the long-term health of that church.*

#### **4.6.4 MISCELLANEOUS**

4.6.4.1 *Memorializing deceased Teaching and Ruling Elders as part of its report to Presbytery.*

#### **4.7 MNA AND MTW COMMITTEE – “planting new churches and cooperatively reaching out with the gospel.”**

**The MNA and MTW Committee shall consist of six (6) members who shall meet quarterly or as necessary to fulfill its primary duties of planting churches and encouraging missions.**

4.7.1 The goal of the MNA and MTW Committee is to facilitate the planting of new churches and find ways to cooperatively reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This committee will focus on two primary areas: Mission to North America and Mission to the World.

- 4.7.2 ITS DUTIES SHALL BE:
- 4.7.3 **MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA:** primary duties of evangelism, church planting, special ministries (e.g., minority mercy works, special needs ministry, disaster relief, support of Chaplains) and implementation of the Mission Statement of the Lowcountry Presbytery.
- 4.7.3.1 *to assist churches of presbytery in evangelism and revitalization.*
- 4.7.3.2 *to establish new congregations within the bounds of Presbytery according to methods prescribed in the MNA Policy Manual.*
- 4.7.3.3 *to provide financial aid to churches and guide them toward a self-supporting status, when possible.*
- 4.7.3.4 *to assist aid-receiving churches in their building plans, budget planning, pulpit supply and procurement of full-time pastors and staff.*
- 4.7.3.5 *to recommend evangelist and church planting salaries.*
- 4.7.3.6 *to oversee and guide special ministries.*
- 4.7.3.7 *to work with PCA MNA Disaster Relief and other MNA ministries.*
- 4.7.3.8 *to maintain contact, to regularly correspond with members of the Presbytery who are laboring out of bounds with chaplaincy and publish their quarterly reports to the Presbytery and to encourage members of the Presbytery to subscribe to The Guardian.*
- 4.7.4 **MISSION TO THE WORLD:** primary duties of encouraging mission candidates, short-term missions, liaison with churches and implementation of the Mission Statement of Lowcountry Presbytery.
- 4.7.4.1 *to promote the cause of world missions.*
- 4.7.4.2 *to act as liaison between the General Assembly, MTW Committee and the churches of Presbytery.*
- 4.7.4.3 *to examine and counsel with members of congregations who desire to serve as foreign missionaries.*
- 4.7.4.4 *to promote and coordinate involvement in short-term missions (IMPACT) summer missions and short-term projects among churches.*
- 4.7.4.5 *to sponsor MTW candidates and missionaries in their deputation and home ministry assignments.*
- 4.8 CAMPUS MINISTRIES**
- 4.8.1 The Campus Ministries Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members who shall meet quarterly or as necessary to fulfill its primary duties of supporting Campus Ministries.
- 4.8.2 ITS DUTIES SHALL BE:
- 4.8.2.1 *to carry out and oversee by advising and supervising the Campus Ministries under its jurisdiction according to the principles and policy set fourth in the “Manual For Campus Ministries, Presbyterian Church in America” (Passed by the 1979 General Assembly of the PCA).*
- 4.8.2.2 *to be responsible for budgeting and funding of the ministries under its jurisdiction.*
- 4.8.2.3 *to determine the needs of campus work within the boundary of Presbytery and priorities of new works.*
- 4.8.2.4 *to inform the churches and people of the Presbytery of the campus works, their purpose, progress and needs.*
- 4.8.2.5 *to organize new works on campuses and to seek out and train qualified staff workers for these ministries.*
- 4.8.2.6 *to initiate the call for campus ministries..*
- 4.9 CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE – “developing leaders”**
- 4.9.1 Candidates and Credentials shall consist of nine (9) members who shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its primary duties of examination of candidates, oversight of

internships and implementations of the Mission Statement. The goal of the Candidates and Credentials Committee is to cultivate, encourage and motivate godly men to serve Christ's kingdom for His glory.

4.9.2 ITS DUTIES SHALL BE:

- 4.9.2.1 *to encourage men to consider the Gospel Ministry.*
- 4.9.2.2 *To assist candidates in discerning their call to the ministry. If the committee cannot affirm that sense of call, the committee shall help the candidate to understand possible reasons not to enter into the ministry at this time.*
- 4.9.2.3 *to determine the fitness of men recommended as candidates by Sessions, to direct them in the preparation process, and to present them for examination.*
- 4.9.2.4 *to counsel and oversee candidates and their families throughout the process of preparation for ministry. It will be the committee's duty to assign an overseeing elder from the committee to meet with him (and his spouse when applicable) at regular intervals and could help the candidate navigate his way through the process. The overseeing elder would then report to the committee quarterly concerning the candidate's progress.*
- 4.9.2.5 *To promote and supervise the Internship Program through the Theological Education Sub-Committee.*
- 4.9.2.6 *To examine candidates for licensure and ordination, according to the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER, ensuring that all written parts of the examination shall be presented to the Candidates and Credentials Committee Chairman at least four (4) weeks prior to the meeting of Presbytery, at which the candidate expects to apply for ordination or licensure, in order that he may be examined by the Committee.*
- 4.9.2.7 *To give a detailed examination of all applicants, as well as a majority vote of the committee, before recommending candidate to Presbytery, with a disclosure of the vote. These exams should engage students in areas of biblical knowledge, theological soundness, experiential Christianity, and pastoral wisdom. Exams should require candidates to go beyond rote memory and assess the candidate's ability to apply Scripture and theology with pastoral wisdom appropriate to the candidate's age, experience, and call.*
- 4.9.2.8 *To examine candidates in a manner that represents the interests and concerns of the Presbytery. The committee must be aware of pressing theological issues in order to assess the candidates' ability to properly respond to those issues.*
- 4.9.2.9 *To provide candidates with helpful and timely feedback prior to committee and/or floor exams. The committee also should provide helpful rubrics for evaluating candidates, especially concerning written and preached sermons.*
- 4.9.2.10 *To examine ordained ministers seeking admission to the Presbytery according to the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER. All such ministers shall be examined by the Committee before they are presented to Presbytery.*
- 4.9.2.11 *To see that biographical and positional statements are sent to Commissioners before any candidate is presented to Presbytery for admission.*
- 4.9.2.12 *To oversee the work of the Internship Sub-Committee which is responsible for the Internship Program of Lowcountry Presbytery. This sub-committee shall consist of three (3) members, appointed by the Candidates and Credentials committee, and one (1) appointed by the Moderator from the Presbytery at large.*

**4.10 JUDICIAL COMMITTEE**

- 4.10.1 JUDICIAL: shall consist of a standing committee chairman and a secretary elected by Presbytery for a three-year term. One of these men shall be a teaching elder and one a ruling elder not from the same church. They shall be called upon as needed to implement discipline and deal with judicial matters of this court.



4.10.2 ITS DUTIES SHALL BE:

- 4.10.2.1 *to be available to deal with personal or general, private or public offenses as regulated by the Rules of Discipline, Chapter 29.*
- 4.10.2.2 *to call at least two (2) other presbyters to look into an offense when made aware of such. These additional presbyters shall not be from the same church as the party under investigation.*
- 4.10.2.3 *to contact the Moderator requesting the appointment of at least two (2) Teaching Elders and two (2) Ruling Elders to examine, consider and report the offense, if justified, to Presbytery. After the Moderator appoints these additional Elders they shall be a Commission of the Presbytery empowered to conduct an investigation and hear confessions.*
- 4.10.2.4 *to make sure that a full record of its proceedings are kept.*
- 4.10.2.5 *The Judicial Committee (JC) is conferred standing power as a BCO 15-1 Commission to act for Presbytery to fulfill the investigative duties of BCO 31-2 (first paragraph). While the SJC has authority to conduct the official investigation, it does not have authority to render a final determination on “strong presumption of guilt” or to institute process (second paragraph of 31-2). It may only make recommendations in those areas.*
- 4.10.2.6 *Confessions - JC also has authority as a BCO 15-1 Commission to act for Presbytery to investigate confessions and determine if and when a “full statement” has been made, in accord with BCO 38-1. But JC does not have authority to proceed to a judgment and censure, but instead, after it has approved the full statement (acting as Presbytery in that regard), it will make a debatable recommendation to Presbytery regarding judgment and censure.*

## 5 MEETINGS:

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### 5.1 STATED MEETINGS:

- 5.1.1 shall convene at 9:00 A.M. and adjourn by 4:00 PM.
- 5.1.2 They will ordinarily be held on:
- the **fourth Saturday of January**
  - the **fourth Tuesday of April**
  - the **fourth Saturday of July** and
  - the **first Thursday of November**
- 5.1.3 The Presbytery shall meet at a place determined at the previous stated meeting upon invitation of the host church or institution. If no place has been selected the Administration Committee shall secure an invitation for the next meeting.
- 5.1.4 The host church for each Stated meeting shall be responsible (1) to arrange for the preaching of the Word (they are encouraged to invite a candidate for ordination to preach if available), (2) to plan and conduct the worship service including the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and (3) to submit the order of service to the Recording Clerk prior to the meeting of Presbytery (the recording clerk shall keep a template which can be made available to the host churches).
- 5.1.5 Meeting by Teleconference or Videoconference

- 5.1.5.1 *A meeting of Presbytery may be conducted by teleconference or videoconference, provided the meeting does not include any of the following business: (a) the gathering of evidence; (b) deliberation of guilt or innocence; or (c) deliberation of a censure.*

*Meetings of a commission or committee of Presbytery may be conducted by teleconference or videoconference. However, the consideration of evidence in a potential disciplinary case or deliberation upon an active disciplinary case may only be discussed in person, except for the Judicial Committee or an appointed judicial commission. If a commission or committee determines that an issue upon which they are deliberating warrants the involvement of the Judicial Committee or a judicial commission, it shall cease the use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing technology and schedule (if necessary) a further in-person meeting.*

*The Judicial Committee or a judicial commission may employ teleconferencing or videoconferencing for efficiency, but it is required that all participants ensure secrecy and safeguard the confidentiality of discussions. Negligence or failure to maintain secrecy may result in disciplinary action. Anyone with concerns about the secrecy of electronic communication must promptly report them to the chairman or convener for resolution.*

*Meetings of any sort by teleconference or videoconference should not ordinarily be recorded; however, if Presbytery, a commission, or a committee determines the need to record a meeting, the chairman or convener must disclose that the meeting is being recorded to all participants.*

- 5.1.5.2 *A virtual meeting would be held by the decision of the Administrative Committee requiring two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the present and voting members of the Committee to agree to call the virtual meeting. Each committee, including the Administrative Committee, should appoint a vice-chair who can function in the absence of the chairman.*

- 5.1.5.3 *The opportunity for simultaneous communication being central to the deliberative character of a meeting, a meeting conducted by teleconference or videoconference shall employ technical means that ensure that all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time, or, if a videoconference, to see and hear each other at the same time.*

- 5.1.5.4 *In a meeting conducted by teleconference or videoconference, a participant shall seek the floor by announcing his name and church affiliation. The chair of the meeting shall recognize a speaker by name. Participants shall take care to avoid speaking at the same time. Participants in the same room shall not converse with each other while another has the floor.*

- 5.1.5.5 *A vote may be conducted by common consent; however, if there is any dissent, a roll call vote shall be conducted.*

## **5.2 CALLED MEETINGS:**

- 5.2.1 shall normally not be held except as provided for in the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER (BCO 13-12).

## **5.3 RULES OF THE FLOOR:**

- 5.3.1 "Privilege of the floor" is defined as the right to speak on the floor of Presbytery. Any speaker who rises to speak must introduce himself, along with his status as a Teaching or Ruling Elder and his call.

- 5.3.2 Meetings of Presbytery are open, unless otherwise voted upon by Presbytery. Guests are welcome to be seated and to listen to the proceedings; however, they do not have the privilege of the floor. A guest seeking the privilege of the floor must request permission, and the moderator is empowered to grant or deny it. If any member of the court (a Teaching Elder or delegated Ruling Elder, per BCO 13-1) should object to the decision of the moderator, the question will be voted upon by Presbytery for a majority vote.
- 5.3.3 In addition to the members of the court (Teaching Elders and delegated Ruling Elders), all Ruling Elders installed at churches within the bounds of the presbytery have the privilege of the floor, but only those who are members of the court (per BCO 13-1) may vote or make a motion.
- 5.3.4 Honorably retired Teaching Elders maintain full membership in the court (BCO 23-2). A Ruling Elder emeritus (BCO 24-10) from a church within the bounds of the presbytery continues to have the privilege of the floor, but he may not vote or make a motion.
- 5.3.5 A motion to enter Executive Session is a question of privilege. Only members and delegates of Presbytery have the right to remain in Executive Session, and all guests must be excused. The Moderator shall determine whether any guests are necessary for the proceedings, along with how much of the proceedings they may remain and when they may address Presbytery. If an objection to the Moderator's determination is raised, Presbytery will vote on the matter.

Before considering the business at hand in executive session, the Moderator shall ensure the doors to the meeting room are shut and the sound system is only operating in the meeting room. The Moderator shall read section 5.3.5 of the Standing Rules and solemnly remind everyone present of the requirement of secrecy. Any violation of secrecy by a member of the court may result in discipline. Any guests allowed to remain must also be exhorted that they are honor-bound not to reveal the proceedings of Executive Session. The minutes from the proceedings of an Executive Session must be read and acted upon only in Executive Session.

Before exiting Executive Session, Presbytery must determine what information may be communicated to other parties. If the business conducted will carry over into another meeting, the Moderator shall appoint someone to provide a summary of the matter at the next meeting once Presbytery enters Executive Session again. Presbytery shall decide what information may be communicated publicly. Presbytery shall also determine whether any privileged information needs to be communicated to its committee members not present in the execution of their work. Additionally, Presbytery shall consider whether any special communication is needed in the resolution of the business to other parties (individuals, churches, or other organizations).

#### **5.4 ABSENCES:**

- 5.4.1 All Presbytery Commissioners should attend every meeting unless providentially hindered. When providentially hindered from attendance the presbyter must request Presbytery for an excuse from the Stated Clerk, stating, via email or letter, his reason for his non-attendance. Failure to comply with this will mean his absence is unexcused. The Presbytery will determine if a requested absence is excused. Members of Presbytery are expected to arrive on time and to attend all sessions.

## **5.5 SPECIAL PROVISIONS:**

- 5.5.1 Teaching Elders without charge, or laboring outside the geographical bounds and/or jurisdictions of Presbytery, shall present a written report through the Shepherding Committee to each November Stated Meeting concerning their activities. Those who are honorably retired, or permanently disabled, are exempt from this requirement.
- 5.5.2 Leave of Absence and permission to Labor Outside the Bounds of Presbytery shall be granted on a yearly basis, except for missionaries outside the United States and military chaplains, for whom this permission shall be regarded as granted for the duration of their ministry. Missionaries and chaplains shall be expected to communicate with the Presbytery, through the Stated Clerk, at least once a year.
- 5.5.3 In the event that the Session of any particular church is reduced to one Ruling Elder, that Session shall notify the Shepherding Committee of its precarious situation and shall consider what cooperation with the Shepherding Committee may be agreeable in order to facilitate the training of new Ruling Elders.

## **5.6 MISCELLANEOUS**

- 5.6.1 **MINISTRY EQUIPPING PRESENTATIONS:** shall be optional at the direction of the Administration Committee. The time should reinforce the mission statement of the Presbytery and seek to bring revival and reformation to the Presbytery.
- 5.6.2 **FELLOWSHIP:** The Administration Committee is encouraged to make sure that some of the meetings of the Presbytery are focused less on administrative tasks and more on fellowship, worship and prayer to enhance the 'band of brothers' emphasis under the Mission Statement.
- 5.6.3 **FUNDS** for current expenses of Presbytery shall be provided by an operational asking from each congregation, at an annual rate as established by the Administration Committee. This asking is to be based on a church's annual tithes and offerings as reported on the church's statistical report. Disbursements from these funds is authorized in keeping with the approved budget within the following guidelines:
  - 5.6.3.1 ***NO DEFICIT SPENDING.***
  - 5.6.3.2 *Funds may be redistributed by recommendation of the Administration Committee with the approval of Presbytery, with the exception of designated funds.*
  - 5.6.3.3 *Presbytery shall operate under a unified budget that allows for designated giving in particular instances.*
  - 5.6.3.4 *Designated gifts may not be applied to the unified budget.*

- 5.6.4 STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES: Since the stewardship priority of Presbytery is the advancement of the church by evangelism and church planting, then when any permanent committee budget balance (Other than MNA and MTW, Campus Ministries, and Candidates and Credentials), exceeds 100% of current askings, the Administration Committee shall propose to Presbytery the disbursement of those excess funds to one or more of the Committees of Presbytery with underfunded needs.
- 5.6.5 OVERTURES: for proposed overtures to the General Assembly:
- 5.6.5.1 *Any overture proposed to Presbytery for submission to the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk in writing for distribution to Presbytery with the call of a stated meeting.*
- 5.6.5.2 *The Stated Clerk shall include with the distribution a recommendation to refer the overture to an appropriate standing committee for review and recommendation, or to refer to a special committee to be appointed for that purpose.*
- 5.6.5.3 *The overture shall ordinarily first be considered under new business at a stated meeting of presbytery, the question being, "Shall the overture be referred to a committee as recommended by the Stated Clerk?" The only amendment permitted shall be as to the committee of reference. However, the presbytery may bypass referral to committee and proceed to debate by a two-thirds vote.*
- 5.6.5.4 *The proposer, or a proponent, of the overture under consideration shall first speak to the question, explaining the purpose of the overture and setting forth its merits, and he shall have the opportunity for a closing speech whenever debate, by whatever means, comes to an end.*
- 5.6.5.5 *Should the overture be referred, the committee of reference shall report its review and recommendation to the next stated meeting of Presbytery, or before the next stated meeting at a special meeting called for that purpose.*
- 5.6.5.6 *The deliberations of the committee of reference shall be public, notice of the date, time and place provided to Presbytery by the Stated Clerk, and said committee shall hear from the proposer of the overture, as well as any interested member of Presbytery.*
- 5.6.5.7 *Should the overture not be referred or taken up in debate the matter shall have been disposed of.*
- 5.7 DOCKET FOR STATED MEETINGS:**
- 5.7.1 The Docket will be proposed by the Administration Committee for the approval by the Presbytery at each Stated meeting. The following docket is given as a sample only:
- WORSHIP SERVICE
  - CALL TO ORDER
  - ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
  - PRAYER
  - PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - LUNCH
  - CONTINUATION OF DOCKETED BUSINESS
  - ADJOURNMENT
- 5.7.2 Committees are requested to report verbally only if a written report is insufficient, or if Presbytery must approve an action of the Committee.