

Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
Operating Procedures
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PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS
OPERATING PROCEDURES

Article I: Purpose

A. Mission Statement (5/6/2000)

We, the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, seek to be faithful to Jesus Christ by demonstrating and proclaiming the new reality in Christ through partnership with and support of our member congregations to establish justice, peace, and love.

B. Code of Conduct

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment, and the second is like it. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

1. To glorify Jesus Christ, head of the Church, the members of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys (PMV) will be guided by their ordination vows (W-4.4003), work together to discharge our duties in good faith, and with diligence and care, and use energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church. (Article I, Appendix 1)
2. During the conduct of presbytery or committee business, all members maintain their right to be present, to speak and to vote as long as self or special interests are fully disclosed. If the member with the conflict chooses either to participate or abstain in voting, this decision shall be recorded and reported. (F-1.0403 and MN Statute 317A.255)

Article II: Officers

The officers of presbytery act as the officers of the Corporation. Position descriptions for these officers are in Article II, Appendix 1-4. (Bylaws, Article II; Articles of Incorporation, Article VI)

Article III: Voting Membership

- A. When the number of teaching elders (G-2.0503) is greater than the number of ruling elders (G-2.0301), the stated clerk may invite additional ruling elder commissioners from constituent churches. This number will be determined and reported before the second stated meeting. If adjustment is necessary, the stated clerk will seek advice from the Commission on Presbytery Life.
- B. Ruling elders who chair the following committees shall be enrolled as members of the presbytery for the term of office:

Commission on Presbytery Life
Commission on Presbytery Operations
Commission on Leadership
Committee on Congregational Nurture
Committee on Representation
Presbyterian Women
Self-Development of People
Permanent Judicial Commission

(Bylaws, Article III; Articles of Incorporation, Article V)

Article IV: Organization (Bylaws, Article IV)

- A. Stated meetings of the presbytery shall be at the minimum twice (G-3.0304) a year. The Commission on Presbytery Life shall set the dates for Presbytery meetings and report them at the Annual meeting (the last meeting of the year). The Sacrament of Holy communion shall be celebrated at least once a year (G-3.0301b)
- B. Location: All meetings shall be at facilities which are reasonably able to accommodate attendance, keeping in mind the needs of people of all abilities and activities of the presbytery meeting including technological needs.
- C. Exceptions to the location and date of stated meetings may be made by the Commission on Presbytery Life to respectfully respond to special events or invitations.
- D. Quorum: A quorum of presbytery shall be any five teaching elders and five ruling elders present, provided that at least five constituent churches are represented by ruling elders
- E. Meeting notice: The notice of all stated and special meetings of presbytery shall be emailed to all enrolled members of presbytery and each congregation no later than ten days prior to the meeting. Each session moderator shall be responsible for informing his/her ruling elder commissioner(s).
- F. Hosting Presbytery Meetings (Article IV, Appendix 1)
- G. In order that all members can fully participate in a decent and orderly manner, the following process will be followed:
 - 1. When a session or continuing member of presbytery has an item of concern or new business for consideration, the item will be taken to the relevant committee or task force in writing. The stated clerk can be consulted for determining the relevant group. If the session or continuing member is not satisfied with the response, then a petition to the presbytery may be submitted through the stated clerk.
 - 2. New business at stated meetings of presbytery must be presented in writing to the presbytery moderator and stated clerk by noon of the meeting day.
 - 3. A presbytery packet of all meeting materials is posted to the presbytery website 10 days in advance of a stated meeting (Article IV, Appendix 2)

Article V: Commissions and Committees

Purpose: To fulfill the presbytery's mission and ministry, commissions and committees are formed; they shall be constitutionally mandated or formed as needed.

- A. Terms of Office: Members of commissions and committees of presbytery shall be elected for a term of three years and shall not serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. Having served a total of six years, members shall be ineligible for reelection to that same committee for a period of at least one year. Replacement of members whose terms have not expired shall be for the remainder of that term. Chairs of commissions and committees are elected for one-year terms and are ordinarily eligible for reelection twice. Commission and Committee member terms follow the calendar year. The officers (presbytery moderator and vice-moderator) will take office upon installation.

Exception to the above policy:

* Permanent Judicial Commission (D-5.0102, D-5.0103, and D-5.0105): The term of each member of a Permanent Judicial Commission shall be six years. No person who has served on a Permanent Judicial Commission for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until four years have elapsed after the expired six-year term.

- B. Commissions and committees may meet face to face, via video conferencing, conference phone call or other electronic means as long as there is a quorum present, the notice for the meeting includes an adequate description of how to participate in it and there is ample opportunity for deliberation. Each commission or committee has the opportunity to adopt further provisions.

- C. If a commission or committee is not chaired by co-chairs, then the commission or committee shall elect a vice-chair from among its members. The vice-chair takes over in the absence or unavailability of the chair.
- D. Every commission and committee shall appoint a clerk who shall file minutes promptly with the presbytery office and shall promptly report action items to the presbytery through the stated clerk. The requirement for meeting documentation applies to every meeting method, e.g., email, conference call, internet meeting, or other approved meeting method.
- E. Annually, each commission and committee shall submit a list of planned expenditures to the Commission on Presbytery Operations.
- F. Commissions and committees may co-opt additional persons for a designated time and organize task forces, as necessary.
- G. Presbytery commissions and committees are:

- 1. Commission on Presbytery Life

Membership: The nine at large members of the Commission on Presbytery Life elected by the presbytery shall be active Ruling and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Three members shall serve by virtue of office (the presbytery moderator, presbytery vice-moderator and the immediate past presbytery moderator) and the Presbytery Leader and the stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members.

Purpose: The Commission on Presbytery Life will:

- a. Plan engaging, informative and celebratory presbytery meetings, including the commissioner briefing and receiving the four church wide offerings.
- b. Provide ongoing oversight, review, and evaluation of Ministry Plan and Mission Design, proposing adjustments as appropriate
- c. Provide vision and strategy for the ongoing life of the presbytery
- d. Promote, encourage, and enable congregational participation in, and support of, Presbyterian mission, social justice concerns, and peacemaking initiatives, including but not limited to the presbytery's current mission connections:
 - i. Presbyterian Clearwater Forest
 - ii. Lakeshore Center at Okoboji
 - iii. New Worshipping Communities:
 - i. The Compassionate Way
 - ii. South Sudanese Fellowship
- e. Develop presbytery-sponsored events – both regionally and presbytery-wide – to enrich the lives and enhance the ministries of our congregations
- f. Nominate members to serve on the Committee on Representation
- g. Develop and administer a communication plan for the presbytery to include the application of appropriate technology to the work of the presbytery
- h. Encourage the formation of networks, task forces or other groups as necessary to implement the mission design.
- i. Encourage and equip our congregations, individually, and as networks
- j. Connect congregations with appropriate resources for their ministries

- k. Challenge congregations in the development of new collaborative mission and ministry initiatives.

2. The Commission on Presbytery Operations

Membership: The eight members of the Commission on Presbytery Operations elected by the presbytery shall be active Ruling and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The presbytery moderator, the presbytery leader and the stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members.

Purpose: The Commission of Presbytery Operations will:

- a. Between the meetings of the presbytery, take actions on behalf of the presbytery to approve particular congregation's property selling, encumbering, and/or leasing (G-4.0206)
- b. Provide oversight for the presbytery's budgeted and designated finances, according to the presbytery's Fiscal Accountability Policies (Manual of Operations: Article V, Appendix 1)
- c. Provide oversight for the presbytery's property (Manual of Operations: Article V, Appendix 1)
- d. Act as Trustees of the presbytery in accordance with the presbytery's Fiscal Accountability Policies (Manual of Operations: Article V, Appendices 1, 2 and 3)
- e. Provide oversight of the presbytery staff and implement the presbytery's approved personnel policies (Article V, Appendix 10, including G-3.0110):
 - 1) Hiring and dissolving relationships with presbytery employees and other contracted services.
 - 2) Conducting annual reviews of the presbytery leader and stated clerk
 - 3) As necessary hire additional temporary leadership staff to fulfill the presbytery's mission.
- f. Be responsible for maintaining communications with the Synod of Lake and Prairies and the General Assembly (G.3.0302: c, d, and e)
- g. Appoint and dissolve administrative commissions (except for administrative commissions for ordination and/or installation of teaching elders) if need arises (G-3.0109b)
- h. Receive proposed changes to Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Operating Procedures and recommend action to presbytery.
- i. Act on grant/scholarship requests from congregations seeking support:
 - i. for new, collaborative mission and ministry initiatives
 - ii. for well-articulated growth-oriented goals (Isaiah 43:19)
 - iii. for upgrading technologies
 - iv. for conferences, workshops, other learning opportunities

3. Commission on Leadership –

Membership: The fifteen members of the Commission on Presbytery Leadership elected by the presbytery shall be active Ruling and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The presbytery moderator, the presbytery leader and the stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members.

Purpose: The Commission on Leadership will:

- a. Provide support, resources, and care for our Pastoral Leaders (teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders) including the delegated presbytery authority to:
 - 1) Approve terms of calls (G-2.0504, G-2.08 and G-3.0109b3)
 - 2) Approve temporary pastoral relationships and contracts (G-2.0504b)

- 3) Examine for presbytery membership and determine the category for membership (G-2.0503, G-2.0505, G-2.0506, G-2.0507, G2-0508)
- 4) Appoint Administrative Commissions for installation and/or ordination (G-3.0109 b2)
- b. Work with congregations and Pastoral Leaders in all areas of their relationships, including pastoral transitions including the delegated presbytery authority to:
 - 1) Dissolve pastoral leader's relationships (G-2.09)
 - 2) Appoint Session Moderators (G-1.504)
- c. Act on grant requests from individuals seeking support for conferences, workshops, other learning opportunities
- d. Work with inquirers and candidates on behalf of the presbytery as they move through the process of preparation for ministry as outlined in the Book of Order (G-2.06 and G-2.07) and the Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry from the General Assembly
- e. Provide for the training, examination, and nurture of ruling elders seeking to be commissioned to pastoral service assuring that the training meets Book of Order guidelines (G-2.10)
- f. Work with congregations in exploring non-traditional staff models

4. Committee on Congregational Nurture

Members: The nine members of the Committee on Congregational Nurture elected by the presbytery shall be active church members and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The presbytery moderator, the presbytery leader and the stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members.

Purpose: The Committee on Congregational Nurture will:

- a. Develop relationships with and among the presbytery's congregations with a strong commitment to their overall health and well-being
- b. Conduct regular visits to each congregation
- c. Communicate the particular needs or concerns of the congregations to the appropriate presbytery entity.
- d. Recruit the members of and secure training for the Presbytery Mediation Team

5. Committee on Representation –

Membership: The six members of the Committee on Representation elected by the presbytery shall be active ruling and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The presbytery moderator, the presbytery leader and the stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members.

Purpose: The Committee on Representation will:

- a. Fulfill the constitutional responsibilities assigned to it in the Book of Order, G-3.0103.
- b. Serve as the Nominating Committee of the presbytery, striving to fulfill presbytery's mandate of diversity and inclusivity.
- c.

6. Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) –

Membership: The seven members of the Permanent Judicial Commission Leadership elected by the presbytery are active ruling and teaching elders as defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Purpose: The Permanent Judicial Commission will:

- a. Fulfill the constitutional responsibilities assigned to it in the Book of Order, G-3.0109a.

7. Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery (PWP)

Membership: All women within the presbytery who in any way choose to participate in, or be supportive of, Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery may be members of Presbyterian Women.

Purpose: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

Article VI: Presbytery Task Forces

Purpose: To accomplish specific tasks for the presbytery which are not currently being addressed by another presbytery committee.

- A. Requests for task forces may be submitted to the presbytery. The presbytery shall approve or deny requests.
- B. Membership is determined by passion and interest. Chairs shall be elected by the presbytery. The Committee on Representation shall present names for chairs of presbytery task forces in consultation with the task force.
- C. The task force shall submit a budget request to the Commission for Presbytery Operations for presbytery approval.
- D. Task forces are dissolved by the presbytery when the task is completed or when the interest has diminished.
- E. Presbytery task forces shall be listed in the Presbytery Operating Procedures.

Article VII. Amendments

Purpose: To make changes to the Operating Procedures or its Appendices:

- A. The Operating Procedures shall not contradict the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, the federal or state laws, the presbytery's Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws.
- B. For changes to the Operating Procedures: a presbytery committee or presbytery member shall send the suggested changes to the stated clerk who will refer them to the Commission on Presbytery Operations. The Commission on Presbytery Operations may recommend to presbytery the change for approval or suggest revisions or appoint a task force to study the issue.
- C. Proposed changes to the Operating Procedures shall be determined by a presbytery simple majority vote. If the proposed change has legal implications, the presbytery attorney shall be consulted, and the recommendation be reported.
- D. All proposed changes must be sent to members of presbytery and clerks of session no later than ten business days prior to the stated meeting.
- E. For changes to the appendices: a committee or commission is in charge of its own handbook or instructional manual and can make any changes it desires as long as these changes do not contradict the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, or Federal and/or Minnesota law; if in doubt, consult the stated clerk. Any proposed changes to any of the Policies within the appendices require presbytery

approval. These policies include the Fiscal Policy, the Attorney Service Agreement, the Crisis Communication Plan, the Sabbatical Leave Policy, the Compensation Policy, Personnel Policies, the Inclusive Language Policy, the Chemical Dependency Policy, the Gambling Policy, the Sexual Misconduct Policy, Candidate/Inquirer Indebtedness and Records Maintenance Policy.

- F. The stated clerk is granted authority to make non-substantive changes to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and the Operating Procedures, such as formatting, spelling, punctuation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution or Minnesota Law references.
- G. A dated hard copy of all changes to the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and the Operating Procedures must be maintained forever in the presbytery office.

Article VIII. Records Management and Maintenance

Purpose: To preserve legal documents.

A. Required Presbytery Records

- 1. An official hard copy of presbytery minutes which after seven years will be sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society.
- 2. All committee clerks are responsible to promptly file minutes at the presbytery office.
- 3. Legal cases and loan agreements (satisfaction plus twenty years).

B. Required Congregational Records, Storage and Maintenance

- 1. When received, the presbytery shall store Bylaws, charter, incorporation records, annual reports, correspondence, newspaper articles, photographs, Church Information Form, and bulletins from special occasions.
- 2. The current records will be kept in a fire-proof, locked file cabinet at the presbytery office. These records will not leave the presbytery office.
- 3. Review of files will be limited to the presbytery leader, the stated clerk, the Commission on Leadership chair, the current teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder and the clerk of session.
- 4. Records of dissolved/closed/transferred churches will be kept at the presbytery office for two years, and then sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for permanent storage.

C. Required Teaching Elder and Commissioned Ruling Elder Records Storage and Maintenance

- 1. The following types of records shall be permanent for teaching elder/commissioned ruling elder: current Clergy Information Form, Ministry Information Form, actions taken by the Commission on Leadership, letters, legal cases, contracts, pastoral agreements, newspaper articles, photographs (when received).
- 2. These records will be kept forever in a fire-proof locked cabinet in the presbytery office. These records will not leave the presbytery office.
- 3. Review of files will be limited to the presbytery leader, the stated clerk, the Commission on Leadership chair.
- 4. The teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder has access to his or her own file under supervision of the presbytery leader, the stated clerk, or the Commission on Leadership chair.

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