

DRAFT (August 30, 2011)

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS FOR CHURCHES

[NOTE: The Session should review this Model Manual, making any desired choices or changes that do not conflict with the *Book of Order* before adopting it and recommending it to the Congregation for adoption.]

I. PURPOSE

The _____ Presbyterian Church is a member church in the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia 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.

III. MEETINGS

The Session shall hold stated meetings _____ [*“monthly” is recommended*]. Special meetings may be called in accordance with G-3.0203 of the *Book of Order*.

The Congregation shall hold an annual meeting in _____ [month] and may hold special meetings as necessary. Business at that these meetings shall limited to, the following as:

- electing ruling elders, deacons and trustees;
- calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associated pastor;
- changing existing pastoral relationships, by means such as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution;
- buying, mortgaging, or selling real property;
- requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption as permitted by the *Book of Order*, G-2.0404;
- review of the Church Budget for the current year as adopted by the Session (for information only);
- election of members to serve on the current year's nominating committee (G-2.0401);
- 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 accordance with G-1.0501 of the *Book of Order*. Both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

IV. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Reasonable notice *as determined by the Session [a minimum of 24 hours is recommended]* shall be given for 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 accordance with G-1.0502 of the *Book of Order*. The meeting may be convened following the notice given on the second Sunday.

V. QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

The quorum for Session meetings shall be the moderator and _____ of ruling elders in active service on the Session and the moderator and _____ ruling elders for receiving new members.

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.

VI. INCORPORATION

The Congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed in accordance with G-4.0101 of the *Book of Order*, if such has not already been done.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with G-1.03 of the *Book of Order*, 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 accordance with G-1.04 & G-3.0204.

The session shall maintain registers as required by G-3.0204b.

Other registers _____ [list] deemed necessary by the session shall also be maintained (G-3.0204b).

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

VIII. WORSHIP

The Session shall ensure that services of worship of God are regularly and reverently held in accordance with *Book of Order*, Directory for Worship and G-3.0201.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated _____ [*“at least quarterly”*] as well as at other appropriate times, as the Session may decide in accordance with W-2.4009.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in accordance with the principles of the Directory for Worship of the *Book of Order*.

IX. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with G-2.0401, the Congregation shall elect a nominating committee of at least three active members of the congregation with at least one ruling elder currently serving on the session.

The Nominating Committee of the _____ Presbyterian Church should consist of the following:

- There shall be _____ members on the committee.
- _____ 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.
- _____ of the members shall be designated by the deacons, if any.
- _____ of the members, who are not elders currently on the Session or deacons currently in service, may be designated by church organizations, and one may be a member-at-large [*This number must always be the majority of the committee, depending on the number of elders and deacons (if any) chosen*].
- Members of the committee shall be elected annually, and no one shall serve more than _____ [“three” recommended] 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 be 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 meeting.
- Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just and inclusive in accordance with F-1.0403, and G-3.0103, G-3.0104 & G-2.0401.

X. SESSION

The Congregation shall elect _____ [*No specific number is recommended, except that it works best if that number is divisible by three*] ruling elders distributed into three equal classes (as near as possible), one class of whom shall be elected each year at the 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 ruling elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years (G-2.0404).*

A ruling 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 (G-2.0404).*

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

Those elected as ruling elders shall be prepared and examined by the Session in accordance with G-2.0402 of the *Book of Order*.

The Session shall elect a clerk for a term of _____ years (G-3.0104).

The Session shall elect a treasurer for a term of _____ years (G-3.0205).

XI. DEACONS

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

XII. RECORDS

The Session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accordance with G-3.0107 & 3.0204 of the *Book of Order*, and shall submit any requested records to the Presbytery in accordance with G-3.0108.

XIII. COMMITTEES

The Session, in accordance with G-3.0201, shall establish, discharge, and review the actions of any committee or other organization within the Congregation.

XIV. 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, 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.