

STANDING RULES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE ASCENSION

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STANDING RULES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE ASCENSION

I. MEETINGS

I-1. Presbytery shall hold four (4) stated meetings each year: the last Saturday in January, April, and July, and the first Saturday in November. Meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. unless the time is extended.

I-2. Each meeting shall ordinarily be opened with a worship service including preaching of the Word and shall include a season of prayer. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at the January stated meeting.

I-3. The quorum for all meetings shall be six teaching and six ruling elders with at least one-third of the organized churches of Presbytery being represented.

I-4. Called meetings of Presbytery may occur only under the provisions of *BCO* 13-12 and only at the request or concurrence of at least six (6) teaching elders and six (6) ruling elders, with at least one-third (1/3) of the organized churches of Presbytery being represented on the call. Meetings properly called to be held during a General Assembly shall be limited to consideration of matters required by and for General Assembly-related affairs.

I-5. Ordinarily Presbytery shall docket time at a meeting prior to General Assembly to consider issues which will arise at the Assembly, in order that commissioners may be better informed and prepared to deal wisely with the issues.

I-6. Optional attendance at all meetings shall automatically belong to honorably retired teaching elders, foreign missionaries, and chaplains.

I-7. Appropriate Excuses for Presbytery Meetings

A. All teaching elders and all ruling elders elected by their sessions to represent their congregations are members of Presbytery. It is a high and holy responsibility to serve in this primary judicatory of the Church. It is incumbent upon all members of Presbytery to be present at every

meeting of the judicatory and to remain until its adjournment. There are some conditions which make attendance at meetings of the Presbytery impossible. These are included in these rules and will help us all to "be of the same mind" in understanding what is expected of us.

- B. Presbytery, on its part, has a responsibility to be faithful to its stated times for adjournment. Business and personal commitments of members of the Presbytery are placed in unfair competition with Presbytery duties when Presbytery overrides its adjournment time. When Presbytery extends its meeting time, those members with pre-planned commitments should not be required to remain for the extended time. Presbytery may extend its time of meeting as long as it chooses, providing it has a quorum.
- C. Personal illness is a valid excuse for not attending Presbytery.
- D. Major crisis within the family or congregation requiring the pastor's or ruling elder's immediate attention are valid excuses.
- E. Vacation time has priority over Presbytery meetings when change of family vacation would work an undue hardship.
- F. General Assembly committee meetings are valid excuses, not because General Assembly is more important than Presbytery, but because General Assembly committee meetings are highly inflexible and are scheduled a year or more in advance. Presbytery will make every reasonable effort to coordinate its meetings with the stated General Assembly committee meetings.
- G. Churches should strive not to plan activities which will hinder their presbyters from attending the scheduled meetings of Presbytery. However, if the churches find it necessary to have activities when Presbytery is meeting or when urgent situations arise, presbyters shall be excused to fulfill their ministries in their churches.
- H. All exceptions not stated above will require Presbytery's approval.

- I. The Stated Clerk will record "excused" for all who fall within these guidelines, with no further approval expected from Presbytery.
- J. The Stated Clerk is to be notified in advance of the Presbytery meeting when one cannot attend, or if it is impossible to notify him in advance, he is to be notified as soon as possible after the meeting for recording in the minutes.
- K. The Stated Clerk shall publish annually a list of those not required to attend Presbytery meetings as approved at earlier sessions of Presbytery (professional requirements, foreign missionary, chaplain, retired).
- L. If a member (TE or representatives of a session) is absent from Presbytery for two consecutive meetings without proper excuse (including unexcused early departures prior to "stated times for adjournment" (cf. I-7.B)), the Stated Clerk will notify the individual (in the case of a TE) or session (in the case of REs) of his (their) delinquency, enclosing a copy of these guidelines, and indicating that Presbytery will be notified of the delinquency if he (or delegates) is (are) not present at the next meeting.
- M. In the case of candidates under the care of Presbytery, a conflict with actual class time shall be a legitimate excuse, as well as studying outside the geographical bounds of Presbytery.

I-8. Except as provided by *SR I-9*, meetings of the members shall be held at a church within the territory of the Presbytery of the Ascension, Inc., or at such place or places, either within or without the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as may from time to time be fixed by the Board of Trustees.

I-9. Meeting by Teleconference or Videoconference.

- A. A called meeting of Presbytery or any meeting of a commission or committee may be conducted by teleconference or videoconference provided that the meeting does not conduct any of the following kinds of

business: (a) the gathering of evidence (b) deliberation of guilt or innocence (c) deliberation of a censure or (d) an examination.

- 1) The call for the meeting must include the announcement that the meeting will be held electronically, must announce the platform that will be used, must explain how one can access that platform, and must provide contact information for the person or persons within Presbytery (or the commission or committee) who will provide technical support for any who cannot access the platform.
- B. 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.
- C. In a meeting conducted by teleconference or videoconference a participant shall seek the floor by use of a signaling mechanism if one is provided by the technology, or, if such mechanism is not available, 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.
- 1) Members shall not engage in debate via any "chat function" provided by the platform.
- D. Prior to any substantive business being conducted the chair of meeting or his designee shall demonstrate the mechanisms that will be used for seeking the floor and for recorded votes, and will make sure that all participants in the meeting have access to those mechanisms.
- E. The attendance for the meeting shall be determined by the list of those logging into the meeting. Should multiple members be accessing the meeting on the same device they shall make that fact know to the Stated Clerk. Should any member suggest the absence of a quorum the chair of

the meeting shall determine the presence of a quorum by a roll call of those registered.

- F. Should a power or connectivity issue render one unable to participate in all or part of the electronic meeting that member shall be treated as excused for the portion of the meeting for which they are unavailable. Should the chair of the meeting be rendered unable to participate for a time the person who would normally serve as chair *pro tem* shall assume the chair. If a power or connectivity issue should render both the Stated Clerk and Assistant Clerk unable to participate in the meeting, the meeting shall be paused to allow for the election of a clerk *pro tem* who shall serve until the Stated Clerk or Assistant Clerk is able to rejoin the meeting, or until the end of the meeting, whichever comes first. Should a power or connectivity issue make it impossible for a quorum to participate in the meeting for a period exceeding fifteen (15) minutes, the meeting shall automatically be adjourned.

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II. ELECTIONS

II-1. In all elections a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect.

II-2. The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall be elected to terms of one year. They shall be elected at the November stated meeting and shall take office at the January stated meeting. Ordinarily, the Vice-Moderator shall be the first nominee for moderator. The two offices shall be divided between ruling and teaching elders.

II-3. The Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer shall be elected to three-year terms, or to complete unexpired terms, and shall be eligible for reelection. They shall be elected at the November stated meeting and shall take office at the January stated meeting.

II-4. Committee members shall be elected to three-year terms, or to complete unexpired terms. They shall be elected at the January stated meeting and shall take office at the organizational meeting of their committee (see *SR IV-2.C.3*).

II-5. An *ad hoc* committee consisting of the chairmen (or some other representative) of each standing committee of Presbytery shall serve as the Nominating Committee of Presbytery. This committee shall bring nominations for committee vacancies, and for General Assembly positions such as the Nominating Committee, Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, committees of commissioners, and the permanent committees, agencies, and boards. Such nominations shall be made at the January stated meeting. The chairman of the Administration Committee (or the representative from the Administration Committee) shall serve as convener of the *ad hoc* committee, and the Stated Clerk shall be member *ex officio* without vote.

II-6. The Administration Committee shall make nominations for the offices of Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer.

II-7. Each church shall provide the Stated Clerk, at or before the November meeting of Presbytery, with a list of all ruling elders currently serving on session and the names of inactive elders whose interest in holding office or a committee position in Presbytery can be ascertained, including name, address, and telephone number. This information shall be made available to those responsible for making nominations.

III. OFFICERS

III-1. The officers of Presbytery shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer.

III-2. The *Moderator* shall preside at all Presbytery meetings and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the *BCO*. He shall preach the opening sermon or appoint someone to do so. He shall appoint such temporary or *ad hoc* committees as ordered to by Presbytery. He shall have the authority to appoint replacement members of commissions already appointed by Presbytery when vacancies occur and the work committed to the commission would be seriously delayed or inconvenienced by having to wait for a subsequent Presbytery meeting.

III-3. The *Vice-Moderator* shall preside at any meetings where the Moderator is absent and a new moderator is not due to be elected and whenever requested to do so by the Moderator. He shall perform any of the Moderator's duties necessitated by his absence or inability to act.

III-4. The *Stated Clerk* shall have the following duties:

- A. Notify each teaching elder, clerk of session, candidate, and committee member, in writing and at least ten days in advance, of every Presbytery meeting, accompanying such notice with a summary of the business to be transacted.
- B. Prepare, in consultation with the Moderator, the host pastor, and the committee chairmen, the docket for each meeting.
- C. Record, prepare, distribute, and present for approval the minutes of each meeting and, after approval, enter them into the permanent, bound book of minutes.
- D. Record each business meeting for reference, reserving each recording until the expiration of the time limits for appeals and complaints, and releasing same for use of anyone but the Stated Clerk only by vote of

Presbytery, excepting those instances where decisions are being contested through due process of appeal or complaint.

- E. Notify individuals and committees of their elections and appointments and of any specific duties enjoined.
- F. Conduct the official correspondence of the Presbytery, including receiving and referring of matters to appropriate committees and/or officers.
- G. Keep a roll of all teaching elders received into or ordained by Presbytery, including dates thereof; installations of pastors and others; dissolutions of pastoral relations; dismissions, etc.
- H. Keep a roll of all churches received into or organized by Presbytery, including dates thereof, etc.
- I. Keep lists of candidates, licentiates, and ruling elders of churches; also forms for licensure and ordination, applications for Lamb Fund aid, dismissal forms, etc.
- J. Grant certificates of dismissal for teaching elders or candidates in good and regular standing, when properly requested to do so by the Minister and Church Care Committee per *Standing Rule IV-3.D.7*.
- K. Publish annually updated editions of the directory and updated editions of the *Standing Rules of Presbytery* when needed.
- L. Handle Presbytery news and publicity, identification cards, and roll calls; be authorized to execute agreements approved by Presbytery.
- M. Be a "clearing house" for vacation preachers, both as to availability of men to preach and needs of churches for pulpit supplies, with no responsibility to see that such supplies are obtained and no prerogative of assignment, but simply as an informational listing service.
- N. Serve as the parliamentarian for the Presbytery.

- O. Administer, in cooperation with the Treasurer, the Presbytery insurance plans.
- P. Serve the membership of Presbytery in an advisory capacity as requested.
- Q. Refer to appropriate committees all overtures or communications from sessions and individuals which require action.

III-5. The *Assistant Clerk* shall prepare ballots and care for balloting and shall assist in assembling the roll for each meeting. The official roll shall be formulated from the attendance cards passed out at each meeting. He shall assist the Stated Clerk in the taking of the minutes and take the minutes in his absence. He shall perform any of the Stated Clerk's duties necessitated by his absence or inability to act.

III-6. The *Treasurer* shall have charge of all funds collected by and for Presbytery. He shall report to each stated meeting of Presbytery and shall present his books and vouchers for audit annually. He shall be bonded for an amount approximately equal to the annual budget.

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IV. COMMITTEES

IV-1. The standing committees of Presbytery shall be: Administration and Records; Candidates and Credentials; Christian Education; Minister and Church Care; and Missions.

IV-2. Organization of Committees

- A. Each committee shall be composed of ten (10) members.
- B. The membership of each committee shall be equally divided between ruling and teaching elders.
- C. Each class within the committee shall reflect parity between ruling and teaching elders.
- D. The Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer may be elected as full voting members of any except for the Administration and Records Committee. They shall be members *ex officio* and without vote of all committees of which they are not otherwise members.
- E. Each committee shall annually elect a chairman and a secretary. Each committee may elect other officers as it deems necessary.
 - 1) The chairman shall be responsible for calling and conducting the meetings of the committee, setting its agenda, reporting to Presbytery, and expediting the work of the committee.
 - 2) The secretary shall be responsible for recording and distributing the minutes of committee meetings, and for maintaining the records of the committee in conjunction with the Stated Clerk.
 - 3) Time shall be docketed at the January stated meeting of Presbytery to allow committees to meet and elect officers for the coming year.
- F. Each committee shall meet at least quarterly unless the chairman determines there is no business needing to be transacted.

- G. The quorum of each committee shall be fifty percent of the members of the committee, including at least one teaching elder and one ruling elder.

IV-3. Composition and Duties of Committees

A. Administration and Records Committee

- 1) The Committee shall oversee the work of the Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, and any secretarial staff employed by the Presbytery.
- 2) The Committee shall have the responsibility for preserving the history and historical data of Presbytery, working closely with the Stated Clerk. The person responsible for this job shall be known as the Presbytery Historian and may be a committee member or this responsibility may be delegated to an elder, a deacon, or to a non-ordained person. The Historian shall assemble and author a continuing narrative history of the Presbytery from its beginnings, submitting same annually to the Committee, and the Committee to Presbytery for approval and filing with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Historian shall assist local church historians in their duties as requested and able.
- 3) The Committee shall be responsible to prepare, or to have prepared by individuals of its choosing, an annual audit of the financial records of Presbytery. This is to be completed in time to be reported at the April stated meeting.
- 4) The Committee shall prepare the budget for Presbytery.
- 5) The Committee shall serve as the “Bills and Overtures Committee” of Presbytery to bring recommendations on any overture or proposal which does not fall under the jurisdiction of any other standing or *ad hoc* committee of Presbytery.

- 6) The Committee shall oversee the review of sessional records in accordance with the policies established in section X of these *Standing Rules*.

B. Candidates and Credentials Committee

- 1) The Committee shall oversee the preparation for ministry of men under care of Presbytery, (*BCO* 18-2,3,4,5,6), of licentiates (*BCO* 19-1,3,4), and of interns (*BCO* 19-7,9,10,12,13,14,15). To this end a presbyter, not necessarily a CCC member, shall be assigned to counsel each candidate, licentiate, or intern, and a status report shall be given at each stated meeting of the Committee. Also Presbytery does require attendance at all Presbytery meetings of all persons under care of Presbytery, unless granted a legitimate excuse or studying outside the geographical bounds of Presbytery.
- 2) The Candidates and Credentials Committee shall oversee Presbytery examinations in accordance with the applicable provisions of the *Book of Church Order* and the "Outline of Candidates and Credentials Committee Procedures."
- 3) The CCC is constituted as a commission when needed to authorize the Stated Clerk to grant certificates of dismissal for candidates in good and regular standing, when properly requested to do so, to appropriate bodies requesting such. In such a case the CCC may act as a commission only if time is of the essence in facilitating a transfer, and such action may be taken *only* in a face-to-face meeting of the commission or under the provisions of *SR* I-9.

C. Christian Education Committee

- 1) The Committee shall plan and conduct annual retreats.
- 2) The Committee shall plan and offer periodic youth camps.
- 3) The Committee shall offer periodic training events for leadership

development. These may be in the form of pastors' and wives' retreats; elders', deacons' and Sunday School seminars; etc.

- 4) The Committee shall provide oversight for a young adult ministry in the churches of the Presbytery that would provide spiritual challenge and social opportunities not always available in a single congregation.
- 5) Concerning national morality, the Committee shall seek to educate about the dangers of pornography, abortion, illicit drugs, alcoholism, sexual perversions, divorce, and other evils in our society and families; and to motivate members of Presbytery to get involved in the effort of contacting people in government to enact and enforce laws against these frightful evils.
- 6) The Committee shall provide oversight for the Presbytery Women in the Church (PresWIC).

D. Minister and Church Care Committee

- 1) The Minister and Church Care Committee is established in order that the spiritual and temporal welfare of the churches of the Presbytery may be enhanced and enriched (*BCO 11-4, 13-9*).

11-4 ...Although each court exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters specially belonging to it, the lower courts are subject to the review and control of the higher courts in regular gradation. These courts are not separate and independent tribunals, but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate organ.

13-9 It has power to... visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them....

- 2) The MCCC is established in order that the spiritual and temporal welfare of the ministers and churches of the Presbytery may be properly maintained.
- 3) Direct access to this Committee shall be had at all times by all teaching elders, sessions, and ruling elders in active service, in all matters relative to the spiritual or temporal welfare of their areas of service.
- 4) The Committee may visit and counsel with teaching elders and/or sessions where difficulties have arisen. Ordinarily, such visits will take place only at the request of those involved. However, should Presbytery determine that any or all of those matters noted in *BCO* 13-9.e and f (first two clauses) are in view, it may direct the MCCC to visit a church, session, or teaching elder even if there is no request from those involved.
- 5) To the MCCC the Presbytery shall assign the supervision of its churches without pastors.
 - a) Presbytery-appointed moderators of vacant churches shall be supervised by the Committee.
 - b) The Committee shall be available to assist churches in filling their pulpits during pastoral vacancies, including the possible appointments of interim pastors, stated supplies, or student supplies.
 - c) The Committee shall be available to advise churches regarding procedures for the calling of pastors (and associate or assistant pastors, where applicable).
 - d) The Committee shall be available to advise nominating committees regarding possible candidates. It is recommended that nominating committees consult with the MCCC regarding

the suitability of a candidate before his name is presented to the congregation.

- 6) Teaching elders and churches seeking the dissolution of the relationships established between them shall make such requests through the MCCC.
- 7) The MCCC is constituted as a commission when needed to dissolve pastoral relationships under the procedures established in *BCO* 23-1. It is also empowered as a commission to authorize the Stated Clerk to grant certificates of dismissal for teaching elders in good and regular standing, when properly requested to do so, to appropriate bodies requesting such. In both of the above cases the MCCC may act as a commission only if time is of the essence in facilitating transfers or a new status (e.g., both a church and a TE are convinced he should quickly be moved to the status of "without call") and if any dissolution is uncontested by either the congregation or the teaching elder. Such actions may be taken *only* in a face-to-face meeting of the commission or under the provisions of *SR* I-9.
- 8) Pastors considering other calls within the Presbytery shall consult with the MCCC early in the proceedings, in order that smooth transitions may take place and potential problems may be avoided.
- 9) All new calls of teaching elders (except for organizing pastors, which will come through the Missions Committee) in the jurisdiction of this Presbytery must be reviewed by the MCCC before submitting them to Presbytery for approval. Calls originating from non-PCA sources shall be handled in accordance with the procedures adopted by Presbytery for this purpose. [see minutes 89-9 & 89-42]
- 10) Changes in terms of call for teaching elders shall be presented to Presbytery through the MCCC, with recommendation, and shall be printed in the minutes of Presbytery as approved.

- 11) The Committee shall receive the annual reports of teaching elders serving in non-PCA works and to report these to Presbytery in summary form. As part of these summaries, the Committee shall provide its assessment of whether the work continues to be a valid Christian ministry. Reports from pastors are due by the end of the second full week of February.
- 12) The Committee shall schedule regular reports to Presbytery by each teaching elder engaged in an extra-congregational ministry.
- 13) The Committee shall receive from each teaching elder who is without call an annual report summarizing the teaching elder's activities during his time without call and his efforts to find a new call. These reports shall be on forms provided by the Committee and are due by the end of the second full week in February. Throughout the year the Committee shall stay in touch with and report regularly on those teaching elders who are without call, assisting them in every way possible, including attention to their temporal needs, to the end that appropriate provisions of the *BCO* are satisfied.
- 14) The Committee shall meet with any teaching elder requesting to be granted honorably retired status. During this meeting the Committee shall ascertain how the man and his family will be fed spiritually during the retirement; will offer appropriate on-going spiritual care, will offer appropriate assistance in the transition to retirement; will remind the teaching elder that, even in retirement, he remains subject to this and other presbyteries through provisions of the *BCO* such as 8-7, 13-2, 19-1, and 21-1; and will remind the teaching elder of the responsibility to obtain the approval of the relevant presbytery(ies) before engaging in "regular" ministry.
- 15) The Committee shall contact at least annually all teaching elder members of Presbytery who are honorably retired. The Committee shall ascertain in what, if any, ministry activities these men are

engaged, and it shall provide spiritual and temporal assistance as appropriate.

- 16) Commissions appointed by Presbytery to deal with ministerial relations problems in local churches shall report to Presbytery through this Committee.
- 17) In normal course, the Committee will correspond with each church session (including those sessions of independent churches currently being served by PCA teaching elders) once a year *for the purpose of offering a visit which may either be accepted or declined*.
- 18) If accepted, a ruling elder of the Committee, accompanied by a ruling elder of his choice approved by the Committee, shall visit the church and promote its spiritual welfare. (A teaching elder, if available, may replace a ruling elder for the visitation, but the difficulty of the frequent vacating of pulpits is recognized.)
- 19) Ideally the two ruling elders would visit the particular church during the Sunday morning worship service and meet with the session sometime during the day with items to be discussed including the following:
 - a) the session's general evaluation of the spiritual climate of the church, e.g., attendance, stewardship, evangelistic outreach, missions involvement, nurture and discipleship, and church discipline;
 - b) areas of need where Presbytery can assist them;
 - c) significant problems, if any, that are currently being addressed by the session.However, the above format is not meant to be binding. The Committee and the respective session would be free to determine time, items to be discussed, etc.

20) The visiting elders will submit a report of their visit to the MCCC.

21) The Committee shall assist in supporting and revitalizing particular churches when requested by their sessions.

E. Missions Committee

1) Direct access to the Committee shall be available to any member of the Presbytery.

2) The Committee shall promote the formation of new churches within the Presbytery by

a) Assisting and advising interested core groups, and

b) Taking the initiative to identify needy areas and develop core groups there.

3) The Committee shall assist the Presbytery in exercising oversight over all mission churches within the Presbytery, either directly or through the session when a mission church is sponsored by a particular church, giving counsel and assistance as necessary and/or requested, and receiving reports from the mission churches either directly or through the session.

4) A member of the Missions Committee shall be assigned to each mission church and core group, to act as supervisor of the work of the group. He shall be in contact with the mission pastor or group at least monthly and shall report their needs and progress at each Committee meeting.

5) *Vacated*

6) All newly organized churches should seek to be off the Committee's budget as soon as possible.

- 7) The Committee shall act as the liaison between Presbytery and any existing congregations seeking affiliating with the PCA in our Presbytery. See *SR IX*.
- 8) The Committee shall coordinate all matters in relation to the General Assembly Mission to North America Committee as they apply to our Presbytery, and to keep GA-MNA informed of our church planting efforts.
- 9) The Committee shall promote the work of evangelism within the Presbytery.
- 10) Calls to organizing pastors for mission churches sponsored by the Presbytery shall be initiated through the Committee.
- 11) The Committee shall propose the annual budget for the work of this committee, to be presented to the Administration Committee.
- 12) The Committee shall be responsible for fraternal relations with other Reformed bodies within the bounds of Presbytery, bringing appropriate recommendations as needed.
- 13) The Missions Committee shall assist churches in implementing Word/Deed ministries of mercy in areas such as: inner city, children, senior adult, prison, disaster response. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (I John 3:18)
- 14) The Committee shall be available to advise and assist churches to implement and activate one or all of the Mercy Ministries/Word and Deed Programs.
- 15) The Committee shall be responsible for organizing the Presbytery for world missions.
- 16) The Committee shall assist local churches in world/home missions

through:

- a) mission conferences or their equivalent by contacting the churches of the Presbytery and missionaries to plan the annual Round Robin Conference and encouraging the support of Missions in all the Presbytery's churches;
 - b) use of audio-visual aids;
 - c) literature;
 - d) suggested sermon texts;
 - e) advising church members interested in serving overseas.
- 17) The Committee shall plan and coordinate the itineration of missionaries and candidates throughout the Presbytery.
- 18) The Committee shall maintain communications with the missionaries of Presbytery with concern for their care and welfare.
- 19) The Committee shall coordinate all matters in relation to the General Assembly Mission to the World Committee as they apply to our Presbytery, and to keep GA-MTW informed of our Mission Conferences and short-term mission efforts.

IV-4. Miscellaneous Rules Relating to Committees

- A. Travel expenses of committee members to and from committee meetings and in the conduct of committee business shall be eligible for reimbursement at a mileage rate to be fixed annually by Presbytery. Meals necessitated by lengthy committee meetings or extended business shall also be eligible for reimbursement. Vouchers shall be submitted to the Treasurer through the respective committee chairmen and charged to the committee operational budgets.
- B. Deacons may be elected to any committees which do not deal with the oversight of teaching elders.

- C. Every committee member shall have the right to attend Presbytery meetings, including executive sessions, but shall not be able to vote unless a regularly elected delegate.
- D. Each committee shall keep careful minutes and records of its meetings and operations and submit same to the Stated Clerk at least annually for preservation.
- E. Each committee shall report to Presbytery in writing once a year, summarizing its activities, etc., according to a schedule developed by the Stated Clerk.

V. GENERAL OPERATING POLICIES

V-1. All expenses of commission members on commission business shall be eligible for reimbursement. These shall be submitted to the Treasurer through the respective commission chairmen and charged to the Administration budget.

V-2. In the unlikely event of the dissolution of Presbytery, all assets are to be distributed to the member congregations, each such congregation to receive a proportion of the total assets equal to the proportion of its contributions to Presbytery for the exact two-year period preceding the date of such dissolution.

V-3. The Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer shall be, by virtue of office, the trustees of Presbytery. They shall receive and convey property where appropriate, under the direction of and in behalf of the Court.

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VI. GENERAL RULES CONCERNING CHURCHES

VI-1. All changes in terms of call are to be reported as soon as possible by the calling body to the Stated Clerk for approval by the Presbytery.

VI-2. Each session shall determine its own ability to pay a supply preacher. Each session should communicate its rate to a supply preacher before his coming and should pay him promptly.

VI-3. Each clerk of session shall report regularly to the Stated Clerk the election and installation of new ruling elders and the decease or removal of ruling elders. Full names, addresses, and telephone numbers shall be included.

VI-4 Presbytery's Understanding of Requirements for Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons

- A. The steps of *BCO* 24-1 must be followed for election to office, election to active service on the session or diaconate, and to subsequent reelections if the congregation has established fixed terms for active service on the session or diaconate.
- B. The relevant steps of *BCO* 24-6 must be followed any time a man is elected to office, elected to active service on the session or diaconate, or is reelected to active service on the session or diaconate following a period in which the man has not been serving on the relevant board. This reflects the understanding that the time off from active service constitutes a release of the man from "his official relation." If, however, a man is reelected to a subsequent term with no break in service the installation steps of *BCO* 24-1 need not be followed because there has been no break in the man's "official relation." (*BCO* 24-8)
- C. If a congregation establishes, in its by-laws, fixed terms for active service on the session or diaconate and if the congregation wishes to establish a practice whereby men whose current terms on the session or diaconate are ending can be reaffirmed for service on that same board without

following the steps of *BCO 24-1*, then the following procedures must be followed:

- 1) The church's by-laws must specify that men currently serving on the session or diaconate are automatically put before the congregation for a "continue"/"not continue" vote at the end of their by-law mandated term (unless the man chooses to step down), which vote must be by secret ballot; and
- 2) The session must determine whether the man's views have changed since his examination for that particular office; and
- 3) If the vote of the congregation is that the man is not to continue in active service then the steps listed in *BCO 24-7* must be followed. (See Minute Explanatory in Appendix to the *Standing Rules*)

VII. RULES FOR BUSINESS

VII-1. The Presbytery of the Ascension, being a particular presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America, recognizes that the Constitution of the said Presbyterian Church in America is in all its provisions obligatory upon it and its members. Except as otherwise specifically provided herein or in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the standard for parliamentary procedure.

VII-2. No member of Presbytery may speak more than twice on the same question until all other members have had the same privilege.

VII-3. All overtures from sessions (or other communications requiring action) which are received by the Stated Clerk at least 30 days prior to a stated meeting shall be referred by him to the committee under whose jurisdiction the matter falls (see *SR IV*). The committee shall consider the matter and shall make some recommendation to the Presbytery at that stated meeting. The recommendation can take the form of concurring, not concurring, asking for more time to study the matter, or amending the proposal or overture. The original proposal shall be included with the mailing for the meeting.

VII-4. All overtures from sessions (or other communications requiring action) which are received by the Stated Clerk less than 30 days prior to a stated meeting may be dealt with by the appropriate committee under the provisions of *SR VII-3* if the committee is able to do so. Otherwise, the matter shall be treated as new business (see *SR VII-5*). The original proposal shall be included in the mailing for the meeting if time allows. Otherwise, the proposal shall be distributed at the stated meeting.

VII-5. Any item of new business shall be considered by Presbytery at the meeting where the item is introduced only with the approval of two-thirds of those present. Otherwise, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate committee for recommendation and consideration at the next stated meeting (or called meeting as appropriate).

VII-6. Amendments to Standing Rules.

- A. Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of those enrolled at a meeting may temporarily suspend provisions of these rules, provided that such provisions are not mandated by the Constitution.
- B. All proposed amendments to these standing rules shall be presented in writing at one stated meeting, read aloud by the Stated Clerk, and then docketed for action at the next stated meeting. A two-thirds vote of those voting is required to adopt an amendment. No amendment may be adopted which is contrary to the Constitution.

VIII. STATEMENT GOVERNING INTERNSHIP

VIII-1. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this program of internship is to help candidates for the gospel ministry to be prepared to handle the responsibilities, duties, and involvements of the pastoral ministry. It is recognized that Presbytery is the final judge of trials for ordination and as such must take on the responsibility for oversight of the entire program of theological and practical training for the ministry. This becomes evident to us from the Biblical view of the minister and ministerial training. The minister must be knowledgeable in the Scriptures and committed to the infallible authority of the Word of God (I Tim. 3:14-17; 4:13; II Tim. 2:15; Titus 2:15) The minister must also be knowledgeable in doctrine and committed to sound doctrine (II Tim. 1:13-14; I Tim. 6:3,4; Titus 1:13, 2:1). The minister should as well be evangelistic (II Tim. 4:5; Matt. 28:18-20) and have a pastor's heart (Acts 20:19-35). Though this is not a comprehensive list, it shows forth the rationale and some goals of ministerial training and helps us to see that not all training can be done in a classroom. Thus we have the reasoning behind this program of internship.

VIII-2. Statement of Procedures

A. General Procedures

The candidate for the ministry should come to the Candidates and Credentials (CCC) with a specific internship proposal. This will guarantee that the program for each candidate is custom-made to suit his own needs. This process should be started at the completion of the candidate's first year of seminary. A candidate need not be licensed in order to begin an internship. The Committee upon receipt of a proposal shall counsel with the candidate and propose revisions where they are needed. The Committee shall also ensure that areas in which the candidate has shown deficiencies or problems are included in the program. These areas of trouble may come to the attention of the Committee from academic grades, personal oversight, or licensure exams. The guidelines in section "B" of this statement should be

viewed as our Presbytery's understanding of the full scope of ministerial duties mentioned in *BCO 19-7*; ordinarily they are to be included in every internship program. To help the Committee and the candidate in assessing progress, part of the proposal shall be a timetable of tentative dates when the candidate anticipates completion of various aspects of the program. When the proposed program is acceptable to both the candidate and the CCC, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the establishment of an internship. Presbytery itself being satisfied shall proceed to approve the candidate as an intern (*BCO 19-9,10*). At this time the CCC shall assign to each intern a supervisor to counsel him and evaluate his progress. The supervisor will be expected to work closely with the vice-chairman of CCC and to provide a report on the candidate for each Committee meeting. The CCC shall then give a report of progress to the Presbytery at each stated meeting of Presbytery (*BCO 19-12*).

It should also be noted that internships will ordinarily fall into one of the following two types, which are defined here and explained more fully in section VIII-2.B.

Type A (the 3+1). This plan allows the candidate to attend an established seminary to receive his academic training under the guidance of Presbytery. Upon receipt of his degree, an additional year would be required to complete his practical training with supervision from the men of his Presbytery. This final year would be the internship year.

Type B (Concurrent). This plan allows the candidate to attend an established seminary to receive his academic training and, concurrently with that training, also to complete his internship. It should be noted that this option will in no way lessen the minimum requirements, and thus a candidate will probably still require an extra amount of time to complete all his academic and internship requirements.

When the intern reaches the point of completing one-half of his internship, he shall meet with the CCC or its representative for a progress report and evaluation. If the candidate or the CCC thinks it is necessary or advisable,

then changes in the internship may be proposed. These changes, if approved by the Committee and Presbytery, will become part of the internship as a whole.

Upon completion of the internship the candidate shall present himself to the CCC for approval. If approved by the Committee, the candidate will present briefly a survey of his internship experience before Presbytery, and Presbytery will agree or disagree that the internship has been satisfactorily completed (see *BCO 19-13*). If the internship has not been satisfactorily completed, the candidate will bring to CCC a plan for a further internship that will make up for the noted deficiencies. The approval of the completion of an internship may be done without a call. However, Presbytery will not proceed to ordination trials or ordination until such time as the candidate has completed his internship and does have a call. (The approval of the completion of an internship and ordination exams may take place at the same meeting of Presbytery, if the candidate does have a call [*BCO 19-13*]).

B. Guidelines for Types A and B (3+1 and Concurrent)

All written work is turned in to the supervisor in duplicate as completed. One copy is to be kept by the supervisor and the other forwarded to the vice-chairman of the CCC.

1) Preaching

a) Do

- 12 preaching sessions
 - (4 to be observed by the supervisor or person approved by the supervisor; a written evaluation to be provided to the candidate)
 - (for at least 6 of the above preaching sessions the candidate to be in charge of the complete worship service)

- observe 2 baptismal services
- observe 2 funeral services (assist if possible)
- observe 2 weddings

b) Write

- the order of worship and sermon outline for each of the following situations (each sermon to be from a different text):
 - 4 Sunday morning services
 - 2 Sunday evening services
 - 2 communion services
 - 2 baptismal services
 - 2 funeral services (one for a child)
 - 2 wedding services

2) Teaching

a) Do

- teach a weekly course for at least 2 quarters (12 weeks each), such as home Bible study, Sunday School or catechism class, etc.
- teach 3 other short series of 2 to 4 sessions with people of different age groups and backgrounds for the above teaching if possible
- observe a prospective member series
- observe a missions conference or several missions speakers

- observe if possible an actual pre-marital counseling series
- participate, if possible and when practical, in retreats and youth camps

b) Write

- a course outline for the study of one of the Gospels of at least 12 weeks and not more than 24 weeks (to be assigned by a pastor being worked with or the supervisor)
- an outline of a doctrinal course of at least 12 weeks
- an outline of a prospective member series
- an outline of a missions conference including key people to contact for help
- an outline of a pre-marital counseling series
- an outline of a pre-baptismal session with parents
- an annotated bibliography (2 pages per book) on at least 5 books about counseling (not more than 8 books)
- an outline for a week of devotions for young people

3) Visiting

a) Do

- visit 15 church members (at least 5 to be active ruling elders if possible)
- visit 5 visitors to the church (non-members)
- visit 5 infrequently attending members
- visit 5 shut-ins

- visit 10 hospital patients
- visit 2 people in jail (if possible)
- visit 5 people in nursing homes
- make 5 evangelistic calls on non-Christians

b) Write

- a list of Scriptures which would be useful for hospital visits, and how and why each should be used (no more than 3 pages)
- a list of Scriptures which would be useful in visiting in the home of an infrequently attending member and how and why each should be used (no more than 3 pages)
- an outline of an evangelistic visit
- a short paper of 2-4 pages on whether or not visitation is to be a priority in the pastoral ministry and why
- a summary of your experiences in each of the 8 types of visits in the "Do" section (no more than 1 page per type)

4) Administration

a) Do

- observe and participate if possible in the preparation of the church bulletin for 12 weeks
- read *Robert's Rules of Order*
- help to plan a special church event, i.e., V.B.S., retreat, etc.
- attend at least 3 diaconate meetings

- attend at least 3 session meetings
- attend at least 3 Presbytery meetings
- attend at least 3 Presbytery committee meetings
- attend a budget meeting of a local church
- attend a meeting of a congregation

b) Write

- a summary of your observations at the diaconal, session, Presbytery, Presbytery committee, budget, and congregational meetings (no more than 1 page on each type of meeting)
- an agenda for a congregational meeting (hypothetical)
- a schedule of your week noting your work patterns on an hour-by-hour basis

5) Personal

a) Do

- maintain a normal devotional and family life
- meet with your supervisor at least every 3 months to evaluate your internship. It will be expected that the supervisor will give feedback as to his observations of the candidate's work.
- meet with a qualified teaching elder or ruling elder about stewardship of personal finances

b) Write

- a personal devotional log of prayer and Bible study

- a monthly statement of goals and plans to be sent to the supervisor by the beginning of each month along with completed written materials according to schedule
- a self-evaluation of your internship every quarter and given to the supervisor at the quarterly meeting
- a 4–6-page paper on the role of the pastor's wife in the local church

6) To finish the internship

a) Do

- have the session or sessions worked with send letters of recommendation citing the above-mentioned areas that they observed
- have supervisor send a recommendation

b) Write

- a self-evaluation of your internship (5 pages maximum)

VIII-3. Statement of Policy

A. Finances

It is realized by the nature of this program that extra time will be spent by the candidates in preparation for the ministry, and extra time means extra financial responsibility. So remembering that a laborer is worthy of his hire, and that those ministered to are to supply the needs of those who minister to them, the Presbytery will expect the churches or fields where interns labor to provide proper compensation for the work being done. When the church or field does not have the financial means to compensate an intern the intern may have the option of non-church-related employment during the time involved. However, this need for non-church-related employment

will not reduce the requirement for a complete internship, and may thus require a longer overall time commitment. If a candidate cannot find a church or field for internship that will allow for his financial needs, then the CCC shall encourage him to seek an internship in another presbytery where his needs may be met. The Presbytery shall also encourage the home churches of candidates to help financially throughout the educational process if possible.

B. Changes in policy

Presbytery reserves the right, if actual experience makes it evident that some aspects and details of this stated program prove to be unworkable or unfeasible, to make the necessary adjustments in the program in order to ensure that it is a realistic and viable program for training ministerial candidates. Presbytery shall report all such adjustments in the present program to the Certification Committee of the General Assembly for its approval.

IX. PROCEDURE FOR RECEIVING ESTABLISHED CONGREGATIONS INTO THE PRESBYTERY OF THE ASCENSION

IX-1. All inquiries from interested parties, pastors, ruling elders, or sessions concerning an organized congregation's affiliation with the Presbytery of the Ascension are to be referred to the Missions Committee of the Presbytery through its chairman. The Clerk of the Presbytery is to be notified in writing immediately by the Missions Committee Chairman of the expressed interest of all congregations seeking entrance into the Presbytery. The Chairman will provide written assurance to the inquirers of the Presbytery's sincere interest in the possibility of the party to become a part of the ministry of the PCA, of Presbytery's commitment to maintain the standards of theology, government, and professional ministry as reflected in the Constitution, and of our appreciation for God's blessings on their previous ministry.

IX-2. An initial interview of the whole session with the Missions Committee as a whole or its representatives is necessary for the purpose of the clarification of facts, specific congregational needs and the assisting of the congregation in forming and fixing its strategic goals. More than one interview may be deemed necessary and useful by either party.

IX-3. A minimum six-month period normally shall elapse between the Committee's taking a congregation under its care and oversight and the congregation's actual reception into the Presbytery. Once the Committee and the Session of a congregation agree to the goal of reception, both the Committee and the Session will vote to affirm such action. The congregation through its Session's action will then enter a six-month care and oversight period as a candidate for membership in the Presbytery of the Ascension.

IX-4. The pastor and ruling elders or ruling elder candidates will use this six-month period to study carefully the polity, mission, and theology of the PCA.

IX-5. The Missions Committee will encourage, assist, and enable the inquiring congregation in its careful analysis of the PCA. Consistent with this, the Committee will provide to the Session

- a *Book of Church Order* (if needed) for study;
- copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (if needed) for study;
- other teaching helps (will be offered).

IX-6. All teaching and ruling elders are examined thoroughly and must be individually approved. Ruling elders will be individually interviewed and acted upon by a commission of Presbytery. This is the standard procedure for all new officers coming into the Presbytery regardless of their source (see *BCO* 13-8). Teaching elders are examined by the Candidates and Credentials Committee and the Presbytery as a whole. The examination for ruling elders includes a close review of the genuineness of their affirmation of Jesus Christ as Savior from the guilt of sin and as Lord of life, their adherence to the Westminster standards and understanding of the PCA government and their commitment to the peace and unity of the Church.

IX-7. Upon the Committee's approval, the congregation would vote at a properly called congregational meeting to petition for membership in the Presbytery of the Ascension of the PCA.

IX-8. Upon an affirmative vote to request membership in the Presbytery of the Ascension of the PCA, the Missions Committee will then present its report to Presbytery for its action.

IX-9. Upon an affirmative vote of Presbytery to receive the congregation, a date for reception and the specifics of a reception service will be presented for a Presbytery commission to carry to completion.

IX-10. If the congregation is currently related to another denomination of Christians rather than being independent in status, our Missions Committee will seek to work in cooperative coordination with that body. We especially require this of ourselves should the congregation be a part of a NAPARC body.

X. REVIEW OF SESSION RECORDS

X-1. General

- A. It is the right and duty of the Presbytery to review, at least once a year, the records of the churches within its jurisdiction (*BCO* 13-9.b, and 40-1 through 6).
- B. This annual review shall be done on Saturday at the October stated meeting of Presbytery in the following manner:
 - 1) Presbytery shall constitute itself as a committee of the whole for the purpose of review of sessions from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. as needed.
 - 2) The officers of the Administration and Records Committee shall be the officers for the committee of the whole.
 - 3) All session records not previously reviewed together with those requiring a written response to exceptions of substance, shall be presented to the Committee.
 - 4) All presbyters shall be provided review report sheets.
 - 5) The minutes shall be distributed for review in such a manner as to be reviewed by two presbyters not representing the church whose minutes they are reviewing.
 - 6) The Administration and Records will review the individual reports and prepare the report for Presbytery action.
 - 7) The Stated Clerk of Presbytery shall type and mail to each clerk of session the complete report concerning his session including notations, exceptions of form, and exceptions of substance. This is to be permanently inserted in the session's minute book where the review concluded.
 - 8) All business not concluded in this committee of the whole shall be conducted throughout the year by the Administration and Records Committee.

- C. The report of the Committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:
- 1) A list of the minutes, by churches, received by the Committee.
 - 2) A list of the churches which have not submitted minutes.
 - 3) A report concerning the minutes of each church.
 - 4) Any recommendation to the Presbytery.

X-2. Guidelines for Examining Session Records

- A. Session minutes shall be examined for conformity to:
- 1) the primary and secondary standards of the Church, as to the substance of the actions recorded (*BCO 40-2*);
 - 2) The Presbytery's "Guidelines for Keeping Session Records," as to form, structure, and minimum content; and
 - 3) appropriate standards as to the use of English language.
- B. The findings of the Committee with respect to the minutes of each church shall be reported under the following categories as appropriate:
- 1) **NOTATIONS:** Typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation, non-prejudicial statements of fact, and other minor variations in form, may be reported under this category. Also failures to provide proper or sufficient information or identification, prejudicial misstatements of fact, etc., may be reported under this category.
 - 2) **EXCEPTIONS OF FORM:** Violations of the Presbytery's "Guidelines for keeping Session Records," rules of order, etc. should be reported under this category. These exceptions shall be sent to the stated clerks of sessions who do not have to respond in writing to the Presbytery to this category of exception.

If corrections in form are not reflected in subsequent minutes, they shall become exceptions of substance. Exceptions of form shall also

be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery so he may aid sessions in matters of form.

- 3) EXCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE: Apparent violations of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, actions out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly or of the Presbytery, matters of impropriety and important delinquencies and significant violations of Presbytery's by-laws should be reported under this category.

C. Notations and exceptions in the Committee's report shall be disposed of as follows:

- 1) Notations shall be sent to the sessions without being read before the Presbytery or recorded in its minutes.
- 2) Exceptions of form shall be sent to the sessions without being read before the Presbytery or recorded in its minutes.
- 3) Exceptions of substance shall be read before the Presbytery, and disposed of as the Presbytery determines and if adopted printed in the Presbytery's minutes.
- 4) That the minutes of the session be approved (a) without exception or (b) with exceptions of form; and (c) with exceptions of substance as noted.

D. The sessions shall take note in their minutes of exceptions taken by the Presbytery, together with the corrections or explanations adopted by the session to rectify them. Sessions shall advise the next meeting of Presbytery, through its Administration and Records Committee, of the disposition they have made of the exceptions in this manner:

- 1) Session agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its actions (if possible) and promises to be more careful in the future. Or,
- 2) Session respectfully disagrees with the exception, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery for action, through the Administration and Records Committee.

- E. The Committee shall examine such reports and shall report to the Presbytery its judgment as to the suitability of the disposition that has been made.

X-3. Guidelines for Keeping Session Records

- A. The minutes of session should be kept in a book with numbered pages. The numbering of paragraphs is encouraged. Churches shall provide a current copy of their by-laws with their minutes.
- B. The opening paragraphs of the minutes should contain the following:
 - 1) The kind of meeting: stated, called, adjourned;
 - 2) The name of the church;
 - 3) The date, time, and place of the meeting;
 - 4) The name of the moderator and clerk *pro tem* if applicable;
 - 5) If the minutes of the previous meeting were not approved at that meeting, a record of their having been read and approved by this session should be indicated, including the date of the minutes so approved;
 - 6) The names of those present, including visitors, along with a listing of those absent.
- C. The contents of the minutes should include the following items:
 - 1) The names of persons leading in opening and closing prayers at all sessions.
 - 2) In the event of a called meeting, the portion of the call stating the purpose of the meeting should be recorded verbatim in the minutes.
 - 3) The minutes should record the actions of the session, including all motions adopted and business transacted, together with such additional information as the session deems desirable for historical purposes. Ordinarily in church courts motions that are lost are not included in the record, unless an affirmative vote for the lost motion

is recorded, in which case the lost motion must be shown. Each main motion should normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which they pertain. Main motions may be recorded in the same paragraph if they are closely related and pertain to the same item of business. It may be desirable to number these paragraphs consecutively, and to give a title over each paragraph indicating succinctly the content of the business included. This is not mandatory, but is desirable for the later reading of the minutes. For historical purposes, some note as to the extent of and kind of debate may be included, but minutes should never reflect the clerk's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.

- 4) The minutes shall record at least once annually the frequency and/or dates for the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 - 5) Session minutes shall record all actions relative to congregational meetings. All congregational meeting minutes shall be included in the session minute book, and session minutes shall note their receipt. Congregational meeting minutes shall be reviewed by Presbytery only with regard to their conformity to the procedural requirements set forth in the *Book of Church Order*.
 - 6) When the session (or congregation) is carrying out a task prescribed in the Constitution (such as examining and receiving members, nominating, training, electing, ordaining, and installing officers; calling meetings of the congregation; carrying out the specific duties of *BCO* 12-5,7; or implementing the Rules of Discipline) the minutes shall reflect the completion of each action prescribed in the respective constitutional process.
- D. All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his ruling, should be included for the sake of any case that may be carried to a higher court.
- E. The minutes should be signed by the clerk.

- F. The stated clerk of session is responsible for the custody of the minutes of the session. He is responsible for presenting the minutes to Presbytery for review at the stated time.
- G. The minutes of the session should include a copy of the report from the Presbytery concerning the minutes reviewed.

XI. LIABILITY OF TRUSTEES

A trustee of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless:

- (1) The trustee has breached or failed to perform the duties of his office under this article; and
- (2) The breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to:

- (1) The responsibilities or liability of a trustee pursuant to any criminal statute; or
- (2) The liability of a trustee for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state, or federal law.

A trustee of the Corporation shall stand in a fiduciary relation to the Corporation and shall perform his duties as a trustee, including his duties as a member of any committee of the board upon which he may serve, in good faith, in a manner he reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Corporation, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances. In performing his duties, a trustee shall be entitled to rely in good faith on information, opinions, reports or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, in each case prepared by any of the following: (1) One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom the trustee reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented; (2) Legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters which the trustee reasonably believes to be within the professional or expert competence of such person; or (3) A committee of the board upon which he does not serve, duly designated in accordance with

law, as to matters within its designated authority which the trustee reasonably believes to merit confidence.

A trustee shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if he has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his reliance to be unwarranted.

Absent breach of fiduciary duty, lack of good faith or self-dealing, actions taken as a trustee or any failure to take any action shall be presumed to be in the best interest of the Corporation.

XII. INDEMNIFICATION

The Corporation shall indemnify each of its trustees, officers, and employees whether or not then in service as such (and his or her executor, administrator and heirs), against all reasonable expenses actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of any litigation to which the individual may have been a party because he or she is or was a trustee, officer or employee of the Corporation. The individual shall have no right to reimbursement, however in relations to matters as to which he or she has been adjudged liable to the Corporation for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duties, or was derelict in the performance of his or her duty as trustee, officer or employee by reason of willful misconduct, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of the duties of his or her office or employment. The right to indemnity for expenses shall also apply to the expenses of suits which are compromised or settled if the court having jurisdiction of the matter shall approve such settlement.

The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to, and not exclusive of, all other rights to that which such trustee, officer or employee may be entitled.

A trustee shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if he has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his reliance to be unwarranted.

Absent breach of fiduciary duty, lack of good faith or self-dealing, actions taken as a trustee or any failure to take any action shall be presumed to be in the best interest of the Corporation.

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APPENDIX

Minute Explanatory for Presbytery's adoption of SR VI-4:

There has been debate within Presbytery, and throughout the Denomination, as to how the procedures of *BCO* 24-1 apply with regard to Ruling Elders and Deacons who were previously ordained and to those men who are seeking reelection because their congregation uses a "term system" for its officers. In 2017, Presbytery submitted a non-judicial reference to the PCA's Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) (see Presbytery minutes at 17-25.6 and 17-34.6 for the action and text of the reference). The CCB responded as follows: "It is the opinion of the CCB that the *BCO* is silent as to which sections of *BCO* 24-1 are to be applied to reelection of officers. As such it remains the prerogative of the lower courts (*BCO* 11-4) to interpret the application of *BCO* 24-1 as it relates to the reelection of officers. It is the opinion of the CCB that the provisions of *BCO* 24-1 apply to all men who have no "official relationship" (see *BCO* 24-8) to that particular church in that office. For men who have an official relationship with the church, the application of the provisions of *BCO* 24-1 in their circumstances is left to the interpretation of the lower courts." (See M45GA pp.330-331) In view of the CCB's advice, the Presbytery of the Ascension has adopted the following understandings of the application of *BCO* 24-1 (and following) so as to protect the rights of congregations under *BCO* Preliminary Principle 6, and to protect the theological and ecclesiastical integrity of our sessions]