

**Washington Presbytery**  
**BYLAWS – MANUAL - POLICIES**

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# **WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY OF PENNSYLVANIA CORPORATE BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I – Name**

1. The name of this presbytery shall be “Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania” hereinafter referred to as “Washington Presbytery.”
2. The geographic bounds of Washington Presbytery shall be Washington and Greene Counties of Pennsylvania, or as otherwise constituted by action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## **ARTICLE II – The Corporation**

1. Washington Presbytery is incorporated under the provisions of the Non-Profit Corporation Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under the title, “Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania.”
2. Washington Presbytery shall sit as a corporation whenever acting on any matter pertaining to the corporate affairs of the Presbytery. All actions shall be in accordance with the provision of the Articles of Incorporation (herein called Articles). Members of the Corporation are as defined by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereafter referred to as PC(USA), being Presbyterian Ministers of the Word and Sacrament ordinarily having ministerial duties within the bounds of the Presbytery; and Presbyterian elders within the Presbytery from time to time commissioned by their respective sessions as commissioners to Presbytery meetings, or from time to time enrolled as members of Presbytery whether or not sent by a session.
3. The principal place of business of the Corporation shall be located in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The location of the registered office of the Corporation is stated in the Articles. The board of directors (herein called Trustees) may from time to time change the address of its registered office by duly adopted resolution and amend its Articles or file the appropriate statement with the Department of State.
4. Washington Presbytery shall have a Board of Trustees as described in Article IX to oversee and manage the corporate affairs of the Presbytery.
5. All property held by Washington Presbytery is held in trust for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Other applicable provisions are contained in the Book of Order (G-4.0203).

## **ARTICLE III – Purpose**

Washington Presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the churches within its geographical bounds. It has the responsibilities and powers as enumerated in the Book of Order (G-3.03).

## ARTICLE IV – Bylaws

1. These Bylaws, along with the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation, constitute the basis for conducting the corporate affairs of the Presbytery. The Book of Order of the PC(USA) and the Washington Presbytery Administrative Manual constitute the basis for conducting the ecclesiastical affairs of the Presbytery.
2. Anything in these Bylaws or the Administrative Manual that is inconsistent with law or the Book of Order shall be deemed amended to be in compliance. Should the law or the Book of Order be amended, these Bylaws and Administrative Manual are deemed amended.
3. These Bylaws should be considered a supplement to the Book of Order and the Administrative Manual as a supplement to these Bylaws.
4. Anything that the Presbytery is required to do by law or by regulation or by the Book of Order and on which these Bylaws are silent shall be deemed included.

## ARTICLE V – Members

1. The Presbytery is a corporate expression of the church consisting of all the churches and ministers of the Washington and Greene Counties within the geographic bounds. When the Presbytery meets, each church will be represented by an elder or elders commissioned by the session as outlined in the Book of Order (G-11.0101).
2. Minister members of the presbytery shall be those Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are active, at-large or inactive members of the presbytery. Inactive members are restricted in their participation (see Book of Order G-2.0508).
3. Commissioned Lay Pastors shall be enrolled as elder members of the presbytery for the term of their commissions.
4. Each Officer, Committee Chairperson, member of Council or Trustee who is an elder shall be members of Presbytery for the tenure of their office whether or not commissioned by their session.

## ARTICLE VI – Meetings

1. Ordinarily, the Presbytery shall hold stated meetings on the third Saturday of January and on the second Tuesday of March, May, September and November. Presbytery Council shall establish the time, place, and docket for each Presbytery meeting. Ordinarily, the times for

meetings will be set at least six months prior to the meeting. Ordinarily, each meeting shall include times for worship, business, program and fellowship.

2. Ordinarily, the January stated meeting shall be the annual meeting of the Presbytery and the Corporation. The business of the annual meeting shall include the installation of officers and such other items of business relating to the affairs of the Presbytery as may properly come before the meeting.
3. The Moderator of Presbytery shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two ministers and two elders, the elders being of different churches. Written notice of a special meeting stating the place, day and hour of the meeting shall be delivered before the date of the meeting to each minister member and the clerk of session of each church either personally or by first class mail, facsimile or electronic mail. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no business other than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.
4. The President of the Board of Trustees shall call a special meeting of the Corporation when directed by the Presbytery; when requested by two or more Trustees; or when requested by (or with the concurrence of) two ministers and two elders, the elders being from different churches. Written notice of a special meeting stating the place, day and hour of the meeting shall be delivered before the date of the meeting to each minister member and the clerk of session of each church either personally or by first class mail, facsimile or electronic mail. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no business other than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.
5. The most recent edition of the *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary rules for Washington Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) except where the Constitution (Book of Order and Confessions) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these Bylaws provide otherwise.
6. At the request of two or more members, motions may be voted upon by ballot.
7. The quorum for all meetings of Presbytery shall be any three minister members and the elder members present, provided that at least three churches are represented by elders.
8. The presbytery and all standing or special committees, task forces, and boards (including, without limitation, the Board of Trustees) of the presbytery may meet by any digital or virtual means currently or hereafter available, subject to any policies or procedures as may, from time to time, be adopted by the presbytery.

## ARTICLE VII

### Officers of The Presbytery, Their Election And Duties

1. The officers of the Presbytery shall be the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Stated Clerk, Executive (or General) Presbyter, any Associate Presbyters and the Treasurer.

2. The Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be elected annually at the November meeting of Presbytery and shall be installed for one year terms as the first order of business at the January meeting of Presbytery. One nomination only shall be made by Presbytery's Nominating Committee at the November meeting of Presbytery. Additional nominations from the floor shall be permitted with the prior consent of the nominee. Election shall be by ballot in the event of one or more additional nominations.
3. The Stated Clerk and Treasurer shall be elected for three-year terms at the November meeting and shall take office at the January meeting of Presbytery following election. The Nominating Committee of Presbytery shall present nominees for these offices at the September meeting preceding the expiration of a term of service.
4. The Executive (or General) Presbyter and any Associate Presbyters shall be elected by Presbytery in accordance with the Book of Order (G-3.0110 and G-3.0111).
5. The duties of the Officers shall be those described in the Book of Order and the Washington Presbytery Administrative Manual.

## ARTICLE VIII – Committees of Presbytery

1. In the performance of its duties, Presbytery shall appoint such standing committees as specified in the Book of Order (G-3.0103, G-3.0109, G-3.0111) and may appoint other such committees it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the Presbytery. Currently the Standing Committees of Presbytery include: Presbytery Council, Committee on Representation, Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry and Nominating Committee. The chairs (or permanent alternate) of all Standing Committees shall have a vote on Presbytery Council. The Presbytery shall elect a Permanent Judicial Commission as described in Article XI.
2. Election of Presbytery Committee members and officers shall occur in the manner described in Article X for the nomination and election of Presbytery Council members and officers.
3. Provisions related to the meetings, responsibilities and operation of Presbytery Committees shall be those described in the Book of Order and the Washington Presbytery Administrative Manual

## ARTICLE IX - Board of Trustees

1. The Board of Trustees of the Presbytery shall consist of three Ministers and three Elders. These Trustees shall be elected in three classes each consisting of one Minister and one Elder. Each class shall hold office for three years, or less upon resignation or removal. No Trustee shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. The Executive Presbyter (General Presbyter) shall be a member of the Trustees, ex officio without vote.
2. The officers of the Corporation (Trustees) shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and other such officers or assistant officers as the Trustees may from time to time

elect. The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be Trustees, however, assistant officers (if any) do not need to be Trustees. Officers shall be elected annually by the Trustees on the first meeting of each calendar year and shall remain in office until a successor to such office is elected. Any officer elected or appointed to office may be removed by the persons authorized under these Bylaws to elect or appoint the same whenever in their judgment the best interests of the Corporation will be served.

3. The President shall preside at meetings of the Trustees and otherwise shall possess the powers and perform the functions usually appertaining to such office. The Vice President shall have all of the powers and perform all the duties of the President in his/her absence or during his/her inability to act.
4. The Secretary shall have and exercise all functions incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may be required by law. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and shall affix the seal on contracts, certificates and other documents requiring the same. The Secretary shall cause the notice of meetings of the Trustees, and of any meetings of committees of Trustees, to be given in accordance with these Bylaws and shall be the custodian of the permanent records of the Corporation.
5. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Corporation through its Trustees. The Treasurer shall render financial reports to Trustees not less frequently than quarterly.
6. Meetings of the Trustees may be called by the President at a time and place in Washington Presbytery as may be specified by such notice. Written notice stating the place, day and hour of a meeting of Trustees shall be delivered before the meeting to each Trustee either personally or by first class mail, facsimile or electronic mail. Such notice need not state the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, such meeting. Three Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a majority of Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Trustees. When necessary to accomplish business in a timely manner, Trustees may hold a meeting via telephone conference call.
7. Trustees by resolution duly adopted may designate and appoint one or more committees and delegate to such committees specific and prescribed authority of Trustees. However, the creation of such committees shall not operate to relieve Trustees, or any individual Trustee, of any responsibility otherwise imposed on such person by law.
8. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be the calendar year.
9. Except as otherwise provided by law, checks; drafts; promissory notes; orders for the payment of money and other evidences of indebtedness of the Corporation shall be signed by the Treasurer (or an Assistant Treasurer) and countersigned by the President or Vice President. Contracts, leases, assignments of securities or other instruments executed in the name of and on the behalf of the Corporation shall be signed by the President or Vice President whose signature shall then be attested by the Secretary or Treasurer (or an Assistant Secretary or Assistant Treasurer).

10. The duties and responsibilities of the Trustees shall be those as defined in the PC(USA) Book of Order, the Washington Presbytery Administrative Manual and any other such duties as may from time to time be delegated to the Trustees by the Corporation. The Trustees shall have the following responsibilities:
  - A. Overseeing and managing the corporate affairs of the Presbytery.
  - B. Having charge of all properties, bequests, and permanent funds belonging to the Corporation, and using them as the Corporation may direct.
  - C. Having charge of all matters of law connected with the business and work of the Corporation, and for this purpose retaining legal counsel and other advisors.
  - D. Making recommendations to Presbytery concerning architectural and financial plans for the erection of, or addition to, church and Presbytery buildings.
  - E. Making recommendations to Presbytery concerning all requests from congregations for permission to sell, mortgage or lease real estate (Book of Order, G-4.0206.a).
  - F. Reporting to the Corporation at least once a year, or as often as conditions may require.
  - G. Electing annually from their number a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and reporting the officers so elected to the Presbytery.
  - H. Causing the preparation of an annual audit of the Corporation as provided in Article XII.
11. Each person acting in the capacity as a Trustee shall be indemnified in accordance with the provisions described in Article XIII.

## ARTICLE X - Presbytery Council

1. In order to accomplish its business more efficiently, the Presbytery establishes a Presbytery Council in conformance with Book of Order (G-3.0109) and with such specific responsibilities and authorities as may be delegated by Presbytery. Council shall make a full report of its actions to Presbytery at its next stated meeting.
2. The officers of the Presbytery Council shall consist of the Chairperson; Stated Clerk; Executive (General) Presbyter; any Associate Presbyters; and Treasurer. The Chairperson shall be elected for a three-year term at the November meeting of Presbytery in accordance with the procedures for nominating and electing Presbytery officers described in Article VII. The Chairperson shall be installed as the first order of business at the January meeting of Council. The other officers shall be those officers of Presbytery as described in Article VII.
3. Members - The Presbytery Council shall consist of voting and non-voting members.

### Voting members

- A. The voting members shall include the Chairperson; the Chairs (or a permanent alternate) of the Standing Committees of Presbytery and Presbytery Council; the President of the Board of Trustees; and those duly elected at-large members, who shall be nominated from either laypersons / elders or ministers, or a combination, so as to best reflect layperson-clergy parity on Council. The Moderator of Presbytery and the Vice Moderator of Presbytery shall be ex officio members with vote.
- B. Non-voting members

The non-voting members shall include ex officio the Executive (or General) Presbyter, any Associate Presbyters, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer, and the President of Presbyterian Women.

4. Elections to Presbytery Council and the Standing Committees of Presbytery Council and Presbytery
  - A. Elections to Presbytery Council and the standing committees shall be held annually at the November meeting of Presbytery at which time the Nominating Committee shall present nominations for all positions to be filled, except positions on the Nominating Committee.
  - B. The Nominating Committee shall also present nominees to be elected as chairpersons of standing committees at the November meeting.
  - C. The term of office on the Council and standing committees of Presbytery Council and Presbytery shall be for three years beginning on the first of January next, following the election and confirmation. No Council or committee member shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. The term of service on Council for ex officio members shall coincide with their term of office.
  - D. When vacancies occur during the course of the year, the unexpired terms should be filled at the next meeting of Presbytery.
  - E. At any time of election, nominations from the floor of Presbytery shall always be in order.
5. Meetings

Ordinarily, the Presbytery Council shall hold stated meetings on the third Tuesday of February, April, June, July, August, October and December. The council chairperson shall establish the time, place, and docket for each Council meeting
6. Duties and Responsibilities

The Presbytery Council is responsible for the oversight of the life and work of the presbytery including:

  - A. Acting on behalf of Presbytery within the authorities so delegated by presbytery;
  - B. Proposing the docket for Presbytery its meetings;
  - C. Coordinating the ministries and programs of the presbytery;
  - D. Implementation of the mission of the presbytery as represented in its Mission Statement and other adopted goals;
  - E. Communicating the works of the presbytery;
  - F. Development and oversight of the presbytery's Administrative Manual;
  - G. Promulgating the Administrative Manual and communicating changes to presbytery ;
  - H. Presenting nominations for election to the Nominating Committee at the January meeting of presbytery; and
  - I. Other such duties as may be necessary/required or delegated to it by the presbytery.

In the performance of its duties, the Council may appoint such committees it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the Presbytery. Committees may be either Standing Committees or Ad Hoc Committees. Standing Committees shall have those duties and



responsibilities as described in the Administrative Manual. Ad Hoc Committees shall have those duties and responsibilities as granted by Council. The chairs (or permanent alternate) of all Standing Committees shall have a vote on Presbytery Council. While Council will review the work of these committees, for the purpose of coordinating it with the other work of the presbytery, its goal should be to affirm and communicate the decisions of these committees, not to override or rework them.

## ARTICLE XI - Judicial Commission

In accordance with the Book of Order (D-5.0101) the Presbytery shall elect a Permanent Judicial Commission with the duties, authorities and responsibilities as described in the Book of Order.

## ARTICLE XII – Records

1. The Presbytery shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted at least once each year to the synod for its general review and control. It shall report to the Synod and to the General Assembly every year the condition and progress of the church within its bounds during the year and all important changes which have taken place including ordinations; the receiving, dismissing, and deaths of ministers; and the organizing, uniting, dividing, or dissolving of churches.
2. Minutes and other official records of the Presbytery are the property of the Presbytery, and the Stated Clerk is responsible for their preservation.
3. Annually, the Presbytery shall send to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly lists of its ministers and churches and statistical and other information according to the requirements of the General Assembly.
4. A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be conducted every year by a committee of members versed in accounting procedures in writing and on record. Such auditors shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall not be related to the Treasurer (or Financial Secretary).

## ARTICLE XIII – Indemnification of Officers, Directors and Representatives

Each person who is or was a director or officer of the Presbytery shall be indemnified to the fullest extent now or hereafter permitted by law in connection with any actual or threatened civil, criminal, administrative action, suit or proceeding (whether brought by or in the name of the Presbytery or otherwise) arising out of their service to the Presbytery or to another organization at the Presbytery's request. Persons who are not directors or officers of the Presbytery may be similarly indemnified in respect of such service to the extent authorized at any time by the Presbytery Council. The provisions of this section shall be applicable to actions, suits, or proceedings commenced after adoption hereof, whether arising from acts or omissions occurring before or after the adoption hereof.

## ARTICLE XIV – Amendments

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing to the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee. That committee shall report proposed amendments at one stated meeting of Presbytery for information only. At the following stated meeting the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee shall present the amendments for action. A majority vote of Presbytery shall be sufficient to adopt an amendment.

### **Bylaws**

**Adopted 5-09-00**

**Article XII.4. Revised 5-10-16**

**Article VI, 8 added 10-20-20**

# **WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY MANUAL**

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## **I. THE PRESBYTERY**

### **A. Name**

1. The name of this presbytery shall be “Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania” hereinafter referred to as “Washington Presbytery.”
2. The geographic bounds of Washington Presbytery shall be Washington and Greene Counties of Pennsylvania, or as otherwise constituted by action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

### **B. Ecclesiastical and Corporate Body**

The members of the Washington Presbytery and the Corporation of Washington Presbytery are defined as being Presbyterian Church (USA) teaching elders on the active roll of the presbytery; and Presbyterian Church (USA) ruling elders within the presbytery from time to time commissioned by their respective sessions as commissioners to presbytery meetings, commissioned ruling elders assigned to specific churches or ministries authorized by the presbytery, or others enrolled by the presbytery whether or not sent by a session.

### **C. Membership**

1. Ruling elders are elected by the session as commissioners to the presbytery for a particular meeting as defined in the *Book of Order* 3.0301. Churches with 500 or less members have one ruling elder commissioner. Churches with 501-1000 members have two ruling elder commissioners. Churches with 1001-1500 members have three ruling elder commissioners.
2. Commissioned ruling elders currently serving in authorized ministries are ruling elders with vote in the presbytery, and are not the commissioner elected by the session.
3. Ruling elders appointed to serve as presbytery officers or members of Presbytery Council are voting elders.
4. Teaching elder members are PC(USA) teaching elders within the bounds of Washington Presbytery who are called and installed to pastoral relationships, or serving in validated ministries, or who are honorably retired members.
5. Validated Ministries, in conformity with G-2.0503a, are approved by the presbytery upon recommendation of Committee on Ministry and the following shall apply:
  - a) Representatives of the Committee on Ministry shall discuss with the employing organization and the teaching elder the need for shared support (including pension/retirement planning), accountability and discipline. Act 33/34 clearance shall be on file.
  - b) Those serving in validated ministries shall agree to serve on the Pulpit Supply Roster or in some form of pastor-congregation relationship.
  - c) The Committee on Ministry or the executive presbyter shall have face to face contact at least annually for the purpose of ongoing review of a member’s validation and for nurture and support.
6. Members at Large are teaching elders who hold membership in the presbytery in accordance with G-2.0503b.
7. All teaching elder members shall be involved in the work of the presbytery through committee work or other assignment on behalf of Washington Presbytery, except where health and condition preclude participation.

8. All members shall abide by the Standards of Ethical Behavior, live in accordance with their vows of ordination in obedience to the Word of God and the Constitution of the PC (USA), be in conformity with the present mission of Washington Presbytery and be exemplary models of Christian conviction and character.

#### **D. Mission**

1. Purpose  
Washington Presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the churches within its geographical bounds. It has the responsibilities as enumerated in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0301).
2. The Washington Presbytery Mission Statement {Approved 2010}

"As followers of Jesus Christ,  
through the power of the Holy Spirit,  
we will glorify God by:  
Growing Leaders  
to  
Challenge Congregations  
to  
Engage our Community."

#### **WORKING VALUES OF WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY**

- a) We value our connection with the PC (USA).
- b) We promote collaboration among congregations.
- c) We encourage new ideas and ways of doing ministry.
- d) We plan, reflect and evaluate with an "outcome" based process.
- e) We commit to fellowship and Christian love.

#### **E. Bylaws and Manual**

1. These Bylaws and Manual, along with the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation, and the *Book of Order* of the PC (USA) constitute the basis for conducting the corporate affairs of the presbytery.
2. Anything in these Bylaws and Manual that is inconsistent with law or the *Book of Order* shall be deemed amended to be in compliance. The *Book of Order* supersedes the authority of these Bylaws and Manual.
3. Anything that the presbytery is required to do by civil law or by regulation or by the *Book of Order* and on which these Bylaws and Manual are silent shall be deemed included.

## **II. OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY**

#### **A. Election of Officers**

1. The elected officers of the presbytery include:
  - a) Moderator
  - b) Vice Moderator
  - c) Executive Presbyter
  - d) Stated Clerk

- e) Treasurer
- f) Chairperson of Presbytery Council
- g) All officers except the executive presbyter and stated clerk shall be nominated by presbytery's Nominating Committee, open to nominations from the floor, and elected by the presbytery.
- h) The executive presbyter shall be elected in accordance with the procedure described in Section II, Article D. 2 of this Manual.
- i) The stated clerk shall be elected in accordance with the procedure described in Section II, Article E. 4 of this Manual.

## **B. Moderator**

1. Purposes: The purposes of the office of moderator are to:
  - a) Represent and interpret the mission of Washington Presbytery
  - b) Perform the duties specified in the *Book of Order*
  - c) Preside at all meetings of the presbytery and see that business is conducted in accordance with the *Book of Order*, Robert's Rules of Order and other applicable procedures (G-3.0105)
2. Term: The moderator shall serve for a term of one (1) year, beginning the first day of January in the year following election. The moderator shall be installed as the first order of business at the January meeting of presbytery.
3. Duties: The moderator shall
  - a) Perform those duties specified in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0104).
  - b) Be available to represent the presbytery and interpret the mission and actions of presbytery to the congregations and people within the presbytery.
  - c) Preside when available at ordinations, installations, and (services of reception under care).
  - d) Appoint an investigating committee with full power to act upon appointment when the stated clerk informs the moderator that a written statement of an alleged offense has been filed. The moderator shall act in consultation with the stated clerk. The moderator shall announce the appointments at the next stated meeting of the presbytery for the information of the presbytery.
  - e) Appoint committees and commissions as authorized by action of the presbytery. After presbytery has approved an ordination and/or installation, the moderator has the power to appoint an administrative commission for the respective ordination and/or installation, and shall report that appointment to the next stated meeting of presbytery.
  - f) Serve on the Presbytery Council's Planning and Visioning Committee.
  - g) Serve as an ex officio member with vote on Presbytery Council during his/her moderatorial year.
  - h) Has the right to attend, as an ex-officio member without vote, meetings of all committees and boards of the presbytery during his/her moderatorial year.
  - i) May present a moderatorial address at the January meeting beginning his/her term in office.
4. Qualifications: The moderator shall:
  - a) Be a ruling elder or teaching elder.

- b) Be a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the bounds of Washington Presbytery.
- 5. Accountability:
  - a) The moderator shall be accountable to the presbytery.
  - b) The moderator should seek guidance and advice from the stated clerk.

### **C. Vice Moderator**

- 1. Purposes: The purposes of the office of vice moderator are to:
  - a) Perform the duties of the moderator in the absence of the moderator.
  - b) Provide the vice moderator with the opportunity to learn more about the functioning of the presbytery in anticipation of her/him succeeding to the office of moderator.
- 2. Term: The vice moderator shall serve for a term of one (1) year, beginning the first day of January in the year following election. The vice moderator shall be installed as the first order of business at the January meeting of presbytery.
- 3. Duties: The vice moderator shall:
  - a) Perform the duties of moderator in the absence of the moderator;
  - b) Perform other such duties as may be determined from time-to-time by the presbytery;
  - c) Serve on the Presbytery Council's Planning and Visioning Committee; and
  - d) Serve as an ex officio member with vote on Presbytery Council during his/her vice-moderatorial year.
- 4. Qualifications: The vice moderator shall be:
  - a) A teaching or ruling elder; and
  - b) A member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the bounds of Washington Presbytery.
- 5. Accountability:
  - a) For duties prescribed by the *Book of Order*, the vice moderator shall be accountable to the presbytery; and
  - b) The stated clerk shall provide administrative guidance and direction to the vice moderator.

### **D. Executive Presbyter**

- 1. Purpose(s):

The executive presbyter shall be the pastor to the presbytery to provide pastoral leadership through vision casting to transform, challenge, consult and facilitate congregational mission among members of Washington Presbytery.
- 2. Term: There is no set term for the office of executive presbyter.
- 3. Duties:
  - a) To promote the vision and support the mission and priorities of Washington Presbytery;
  - b) To review, evaluate and facilitate their implementation among all program committees of the presbytery;
  - c) To train and mentor church leaders in the planning and fulfillment of vital ministries by their congregations;

- d) To facilitate mission partnerships and experiences among congregations of Washington Presbytery;
- e) To encourage shared ministries both domestic and international;
- f) To develop a communication network within the presbytery that effectively supports necessary participation, collaboration and information flow;
- g) To maintain collegial relationship, with face to face communication at least annually with every teaching elder/commissioned ruling elder member of Washington Presbytery and to provide critical pastoral care to their families;
- h) To equip and empower congregations and leaders in the exploration and pursuit of effective pastoral leadership for their ministries;
- i) To facilitate continuing education opportunities and the preparation of church leaders;
- j) To pastor and pray for Washington Presbytery leaders and their families;
- k) To represent the presbytery through participation in the life and worship of congregations, including regularly preaching throughout the presbytery;
- l) To hire, suspend, fire, supervise and evaluate all presbytery staff in conjunction with the Personnel Committee;
- m) To motivate and coordinate the presbytery staff (paid and volunteer) to ensure both administrative efficiency and priority fulfillment;
- n) To serve on the Presbytery Council's Planning and Visioning Committee (PVC), this includes development of the Council meeting agenda, in consultation with the stated clerk and Council Chairperson;
- o) To provide direction for the worship of the presbytery in consultation with the PVC; and
- p) To participate and communicate with the Synod of the Trinity, the General Assembly, and ecumenical partners.

#### 4. Mode of Election:

- a) When a vacancy occurs in the office of the executive presbyter, Council shall nominate to presbytery the names of at least five (5) presbyters to a special nominating committee, which shall be so constituted so as to comply with the *Book of Order* principles of participation and representation. When elected, this executive presbyter Nominating Committee shall be convened by the moderator for the purpose of electing a chair from among its own membership.
- b) The executive presbyter Nominating Committee shall begin its work by consulting synod and the presbytery's Committee on Representation. Both teaching and ruling elders and men and women, regardless of race, ethnic origin, disability, or marital status, are eligible for all administrative staff positions. The special nominating committee shall also conduct its work in compliance with the church-wide plan for equal opportunity.
- c) The candidate nominated by the executive presbyter Nominating Committee shall be the only nominee. Presbytery shall vote by secret ballot. A super-majority vote of 2/3 shall elect. On the election of executive presbyter, if it appears that a substantial minority of the voters



- are averse to the nominee who has received a majority of the votes, and that they cannot be persuaded to concur in the call, the moderator shall recommend to the majority that they not prosecute the call. If the presbytery is nearly unanimous, or if the majority insists upon their right to call an executive presbyter, the moderator shall forward the call to the synod, certifying the number of those who do not concur in the call and any other facts of importance. The moderator shall also inform the person being called of the nature and circumstances of the decision. If the person elected accepts the call, the stated clerk shall so advise synod and shall make provision for the service of installation at a meeting of presbytery.
5. Qualifications: The executive presbyter shall be a teaching elder or ruling elder.
  6. Accountability: The executive presbyter shall be accountable to the presbytery through its Council and the Personnel Committee of the presbytery. The executive presbyter shall make regular reports at the presbytery meetings.
  7. Evaluation: The Personnel Committee shall implement annually a process of evaluation in conjunction with the Planning and Visioning Committee and report to the presbytery.
  8. Termination:
    - a) The call and employment of the executive presbyter may be terminated by his/her resignation or retirement.
    - b) Notification of his/her resignation, shall be made to the Presbytery Council, synod executive, and synod Committee responsible for personnel as early as practical prior to the date of retirement or resignation, but no less than 30 days.
    - c) The call and employment of the executive presbyter may also be terminated upon recommendation by Council at one stated meeting of presbytery, for action at the next meeting. Presbytery shall vote by secret ballot. A super-majority vote of 2/3 is required.
    - d) A motion from the floor to terminate the call and employment of the executive presbyter shall be referred to Council for review and advice to be acted upon at the next stated meeting of presbytery. Presbytery shall vote by secret ballot on the recommendation of Council. A super-majority vote of 2/3 is required.

#### **E. Stated Clerk**

1. Purpose(s): The purposes of the office of stated clerk are to:
  - a) Maintain the official records of the presbytery
  - b) Author the official communications involving the presbytery.
2. Term: The stated clerk shall serve for a term of three (3) years, beginning the first day of January in the year following election.
3. Duties: The stated clerk shall:
  - a) Perform the duties of the office as described in the *Book of Order* G-3.0104 and G-3.0305.
  - b) Give official notice of the time and place of presbytery meetings.

- c) Record the actions of the presbytery. In the course of performing this function, the stated clerk may utilize the services of a recording clerk as authorized by the presbytery.
- d) When presbytery convenes, form the roll and put it in the hands of the moderator.
- e) Handle all reports and papers for presbytery in cooperation with the executive presbyter.
- f) Help inform and update the presbytery on the contents of the Washington Presbytery Manual
- g) Handle all papers covering judicial matters submitted by other bodies.
- h) Preserve presbytery records and furnish extracts from them when required by another governing body of the church.
- i) Provide staff services to and report the actions of the Permanent Judicial Commission.
- j) With the cooperation of the executive presbyter, assist the Presbytery Council in preparing the docket for presbytery meetings.
- k) Be the secretary of the Presbytery Council. In the course of performing this function, the stated clerk may utilize the services of a recording clerk as authorized by the Presbytery Council.
- l) Assist in the development of the Presbytery Council agenda, in cooperation with the Council chairperson and the executive presbyter.
- m) Provide guidance and direction to the moderator, Council Chairperson and executive presbyter.
- n) Assist others in questions concerning the *Book of Order*.
- o) Provide staff services to the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee including arranging for annual review of session minutes.
- p) Serve as an ex-officio member of Presbytery Council, without vote.
- q) Serve on the Presbytery Council's Planning and Visioning Committee.
- r) Present presbytery minutes for annual synod review.
- s) Assist the Personnel Committee with the selection, training and performance review of any Recording Clerks.
4. Mode of Election: The stated clerk shall be nominated by presbytery's Nominating Committee in consultation with the Personnel Committee, open to nominations from the floor, and elected by the presbytery.
5. Qualifications: The stated clerk shall be:
- a) A teaching or ruling elder.
- b) A member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the bounds of Washington Presbytery.
6. Accountability:
- a) For duties prescribed by the *Book of Order*, the stated clerk is accountable to the presbytery.
- b) Acting through the executive presbyter, the Personnel Committee provides administrative supervision of the stated clerk.
7. Evaluation: The presbytery shall conduct an annual review of the work and compensation of the stated clerk which shall be implemented by the Personnel Committee in conjunction with the Planning and Visioning Committee and reported to the presbytery.

**F. Treasurer**

1. Purposes: The purposes of the office of treasurer are to:
  - a) Serve as the chief financial officer of the presbytery.
2. Term: The treasurer shall serve for a term of three (3) years, beginning the first day of January in the year following election.
3. Duties: Upon direction of the Trustees and/or the presbytery, the treasurer shall:
  - a) Oversee the receipt of funds sent to the presbytery.
  - b) Authorize the payment of bills and disbursement of funds as directed in the annual budget or by special action of presbytery.
  - c) Provide periodic reports as requested by the Trustees and required by the denomination and governmental entities.
  - d) Administer presbytery mission funds according to the annual presbytery mission program or as directed by presbytery.
  - e) Provide a written report to the November meeting of presbytery of the names of all churches that have failed to pay their per capita apportionment.
  - f) Submit at the March meeting of presbytery a report of monies received and expended during the prior year, which together with all books, papers and vouchers shall be referred to the Audit Committee for examination and report.
  - g) Provide verbal and written reports regarding the financial status of the presbytery at each meeting of presbytery and Presbytery Council in the manner set forth by these bodies.
  - h) File with the Presbytery Council within 150 days from the end of the year the audited report for the previous year.
  - i) Be required to furnish bond, in such sum as presbytery shall determine, the expense to be borne by presbytery.
  - j) Oversee and review the financial reports of the bookkeeper.
  - k) Correspond with governing bodies, churches and funding sources regarding, for example, per capita assessments, mission giving and the use of funds.
  - l) Implement decisions regarding:
    - (i.) creating and managing endowment fund(s) for the presbytery.
    - (ii.) the transfer of funds within the presbytery.
    - (iii.) fiduciary and investment responsibilities for the presbytery.
    - (iv.) use of the Line of Credit
  - m) Assist with budget preparation.
  - n) Serve as an ex-officio member without vote of the Board of Trustees.
  - o) Serve as ex-officio member without vote of the Presbytery Council.
4. Mode of Election: The treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Board of Trustees, nominations open to the floor, and elected by the presbytery.
5. Qualifications: The treasurer shall:
  - a) Be a teaching or ruling elder.
  - b) Be a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the bounds of Washington Presbytery.

- 429 c) Possess an understanding of business and financial transactions  
430 appropriate to the duties to be performed.
- 431 6. Accountability:
- 432 a) For duties prescribed by the Manual, the treasurer is accountable to  
433 executive presbyter and the Presbytery.
- 434 b) The Board of Trustees provides guidance and direction to the treasurer  
435 in financial matters.
- 436 7. Evaluation: An annual review of the work of the treasurer shall be  
437 conducted by the Board of Trustees, Personnel Committee, and the Planning and  
438 Visioning Committee and then reported to Council.
- 439

## 440 **G. Council Chairperson**

- 441 1. Purposes: The purposes of the office of Council Chairperson are to:
- 442 a) To preside at all meetings of the Presbytery Council and help provide  
443 leadership to the Planning and Visioning Committee;
- 444 b) To assure that business is conducted in accordance with the *Book of*  
445 *Order*; Robert's Rules of Order and other applicable procedures.
- 446 2. Term: The Chairperson shall serve for a term of three (3) years, eligible for re-  
447 election to a second term. No person shall serve for consecutive terms, either full  
448 or partial, aggregating more than six years. The term begins the first day of  
449 January in the year following election. The Chairperson shall be installed at the  
450 January meeting of Presbytery.
- 451 3. Duties: The Chairperson shall:
- 452 a) Serve as chair, a member with vote on Presbytery Council during  
453 his/her term of office
- 454 b) Preside (or designate someone to preside) at all meetings of  
455 Presbytery Council.
- 456 c) Provide leadership and direction to Council to enable it to accomplish  
457 its duties and responsibilities. This includes development of the Council  
458 meeting agenda, in consultation with the stated clerk and executive  
459 presbyter.
- 460 d) Appoint committees of Council authorized by action of the Council  
461 not otherwise provided for.
- 462 e) Serve as chair of the Presbytery Council's Planning and Visioning  
463 Committee.
- 464 f) Have the right to attend as an ex-officio member without vote  
465 meetings of all committees of the Presbytery Council during his/her term  
466 of office.
- 467 4. Qualifications: The Council Chairperson shall be:
- 468 a) A ruling or teaching elder.
- 469 b) A member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the bounds of  
470 Washington Presbytery.
- 471 5. Accountability:
- 472 a) For duties prescribed by this Manual, the Council Chairperson shall be  
473 accountable to the Presbytery Council.
- 474 b) The executive presbyter and stated clerk shall provide guidance and  
475 direction to the Council chair.

- 476 6. Evaluation: The Presbytery Council shall conduct a triennial review of the  
477 work of the Council Chairperson.  
478

479 **II. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PRESBYTERY**  
480

481 **A. Presbytery Council**

- 482 1. Purpose: In order to accomplish its business more efficiently, the Presbytery  
483 establishes a Presbytery Council (“Council”). Council shall:  
484 a) Set goals and do strategic planning for the Presbytery;  
485 b) Have general oversight of the committees of Presbytery Council;  
486 c) Have general oversight of the ecclesiastical responsibilities of the  
487 Presbytery as a governing body; and  
488 d) Ordinarily, meetings of Council will address issues that relate to the  
489 Presbytery as a whole, or that would otherwise benefit from discussion  
490 between committees.  
491 2. Membership  
492 a) The officers of the Presbytery Council shall consist of the Chairperson,  
493 stated clerk, executive presbyter, and treasurer.  
494 b) Voting members of Presbytery Council shall include the Council  
495 Chairperson, the Chairs (or alternate) of the standing committees of  
496 Presbytery, the president of the Board of Trustees, moderator of the  
497 Presbyterian Women, and up to six (6) duly elected at-large members in  
498 order to balance representation. The at-large members shall be divided  
499 into three classes of one member each, each class being elected for a term  
500 of three (3) years. Moderator and vice moderator of Presbytery shall be ex  
501 officio members with vote.  
502 c) Non-voting members of Council shall include ex officio the executive  
503 presbyter, stated clerk, treasurer and recording clerk.  
504 3. Election  
505 The Chairperson and the at-large members of Council shall be nominated  
506 by the Nominating Committee, open to nominations from the floor, and  
507 elected by the presbytery.  
508 4. Meetings  
509 a) Ordinarily, the Council shall hold stated meetings on the second  
510 Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October, and December.  
511 b) The Council chair, executive presbyter, and stated clerk shall establish  
512 the time, place and docket for each Council meeting.  
513 c) The Chair of the Council has the authority to call a special meeting of  
514 the Council and shall do so when requested by two or more Council  
515 members. Written notice of a special meeting stating the place, day and  
516 hour of the meeting shall be delivered before the date of the meeting to  
517 each Council member either personally or by first class mail, facsimile or  
518 electronic mail. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and  
519 no business other than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.  
520 d) The most recent edition of the *Robert’s Rules of Order* shall be the  
521 parliamentary rules for Council.  
522 5. Duties: Presbytery Council is responsible for the oversight of the life and  
523 work of the presbytery including:

- 524 a) Acting on behalf of presbytery within the authorities so delegated by  
525 presbytery;  
526 b) Proposing the docket for presbytery meetings;  
527 c) Coordinating the ministries and programs of the presbytery;  
528 d) Implementing the mission of the presbytery as represented in its  
529 Vision and Mission Statement and other adopted goals;  
530 e) Communicating the works of the presbytery;  
531 f) Facilitating a review of the Manual and communicating to presbytery  
532 changes deemed necessary;  
533 g) Receiving and reviewing requests for approval of events and their  
534 dates that are to be included in the schedule of presbytery activities, and  
535 recommending such calendar events for adoption by presbytery;  
536 h) Serving as the agency through which all other organizations, not  
537 named in the Manual, shall relate;  
538 i) Developing and implementing presbytery's public relations policies;  
539 and  
540 j) Attending to any other such duties as may be necessary, required or  
541 delegated to it by the presbytery.
- 542 6. Authority to Act: In the performance of its duties, the Presbytery Council  
543 may  
544 a) Delegate certain functions to staff;  
545 b) Refer matters that come before it to appropriate committees of the  
546 presbytery or Presbytery Council;  
547 c) Appoint, in addition to Standing Committees, such committees or  
548 groups it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the presbytery.
- 549 7. Accountability: The Presbytery Council shall be accountable to presbytery  
550 and shall report directly to presbytery in all matters.  
551

552 **B. Board of Trustees**

- 553 1. Purpose: The purpose of the Board of Trustees is to manage the business of  
554 the Corporation of Washington Presbytery consistent with *Book of*  
555 *Order* (Chapter 4) and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of  
556 Pennsylvania. It shall oversee the financial matters of Washington  
557 Presbytery in keeping with the principles of biblical stewardship and  
558 using sound fiscal policies. The trustees will endeavor to manage the  
559 presbytery's financial resources in ways that promote the mission,  
560 ministry and supporting services of the presbytery and its member  
561 churches.
- 562 2. Membership
- 563 a) The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine (9) members, including the  
564 Chair who are teaching and ruling elders. At least four (4) trustees shall  
565 be ruling elders and at least four (4) shall be teaching elders.
- 566 b) The Board Trustees will consist of three classes of three (3) members  
567 each who are elected for three-year terms. All these are voting members.
- 568 c) The executive presbyter, treasurer, and bookkeeper shall serve as ex-  
569 officio non-voting members of the Board of Trustees.
- 570 d) The officers of the corporation (Board of Trustees) shall be president,

571 vice president, and secretary. The elected treasurer of Washington  
572 Presbytery shall be the treasurer of the corporation.

573 e) The president shall preside at meetings of the trustees and otherwise  
574 shall possess the powers and perform the functions usually appertaining to  
575 such office. The vice president shall have all of the powers and perform  
576 all the duties of the president in his/her absence or during his/her inability  
577 to act.

578 f) The secretary shall have and exercise all functions incident to the  
579 office of secretary and such other duties as may be required by law. The  
580 secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the corporation and shall  
581 affix the seal on contracts, certificates and other documents requiring the  
582 same. The secretary shall cause the notice of meetings of the trustees, and  
583 of any meetings of committees of trustees to be given in accordance with  
584 these bylaws and shall be the custodian of the permanent records of the  
585 corporation.

586 g) The treasurer shall render financial reports to trustees not less  
587 frequently than quarterly.

### 588 3. Elections

589 a) Elections to the Board of Trustees shall be held annually at the  
590 November meeting of presbytery at which time the nominating committee  
591 shall present nominations for all positions to be filled. Terms of office  
592 begin January 1 of the year following election.

593 b) No Trustee shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial,  
594 aggregating more than six years.

595 c) When vacancies occur during the course of the year, the unexpired  
596 terms should be filled at the next meeting of presbytery.

597 d) At any time of election, nominations from the floor of presbytery shall  
598 always be in order.

599 e) Except for the treasurer, officers shall be elected annually by the  
600 trustees at the first meeting of each calendar year and shall remain in  
601 office until a successor to such office is elected. Consistent with the by-  
602 laws of the corporation, the treasurer shall be elected by the presbytery for  
603 a term of three (3) years. Any officer elected or appointed to office may  
604 be removed by the persons authorized under the bylaws to elect or appoint  
605 the same whenever, in their judgment, the best interests of the corporation  
606 will be served.

### 607 4. Meetings

608 a) Meetings of the trustees may be called by the president at a time and  
609 place in Washington Presbytery as may be specified by such notice.  
610 Written notice stating the place, day and hour of a meeting of trustees shall  
611 be delivered before the meeting to each trustee personally or by first class  
612 mail, facsimile or electronic mail. Such notice need not state the business  
613 to be transacted at, or the purpose of, such meeting. Three (3) trustees  
614 shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a  
615 majority of trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall  
616 be the act of the trustees. When necessary to accomplish business in a  
617 timely manner, trustees may hold a meeting via telephone conference call;

618 b) Upon request of the president of trustees, the moderator shall call a

meeting of the presbytery. Other provisions for the meetings of Washington Presbytery apply as found in the manual. The president of the Board of Trustees shall call a special meeting of the corporation when directed by the presbytery, when requested by two or more trustees, or when requested by (or with the concurrence of) two (2) teaching elders and two (2) ruling elders who are from different churches. Written notice of a special meeting stating the place, day and hour of the meeting shall be delivered before the date of the meeting to each teaching elder member and the clerk of session of each church either personally or by first class mail, facsimile or electronic mail. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no business other than that listed in the notice shall be transacted;

c) The trustees shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the president or by two (2) members of the board. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings.

#### 5. Duties:

The duties and responsibilities of the trustees shall be those as defined in the PC(USA) *Book of Order*, the manual and any other such duties as may from time to time be delegated to the trustees by the corporation.

The Trustees shall have the following responsibilities:

a) Overseeing and managing the corporate affairs of the presbytery;

b) Having charge of all properties, bequests, and permanent funds belonging to the corporation, and using them as the corporation may direct;

c) Having charge of all matters of law connected with the business and work of the corporation, and for this purpose retaining legal counsel and other advisers;

d) Making recommendations to presbytery concerning architectural and financial plans for the erection of, or addition to, church and presbytery buildings;

e) Making recommendations to presbytery concerning all requests from congregations for permission to sell, mortgage or lease real estate (*Book of Order*, Chapter 4);

f) Reporting to the corporation and the presbytery at least once a year a financial accounting of all funds managed by the trustees, which report shall include year end balances;

g) Electing annually from their number a president, vice president, and secretary, reporting the officers elected to the presbytery. The treasurer of the presbytery shall serve as the treasurer of the Board of Trustees. (see also 2.d., above);

h) Causing the preparation of an audit of the corporation as provided in Article XII of the Bylaws and section IV.A.3.(d) of the Presbytery Manual;

i) Overseeing all endowment and investment funds of the presbytery unless otherwise decided by the presbytery;



- j) Oversee all financial operations of Washington Presbytery;  
k) Propose, coordinate, and administer all budgets of presbytery;  
l) Provide direction to the treasurer and bookkeeper concerning financial matters;  
m) Assure that all financial records are timely, clear and accurate; and provide an acceptable audit trail and make provision annually for a full financial review in writing and on record;  
n) Provide relevant, timely, and understandable financial reports to the presbytery, member congregations, and other governing bodies;  
o) Inform member congregations of their per capita obligations and status on a regular basis; and  
p) Review annually all presbytery bonding and insurance coverage.
6. Authority to Act:  
The Presbytery Board of Trustees, by resolution duly adopted, may designate and appoint one or more committees and delegate to such committees specific and prescribed authority of trustees. However, the creation of such committees shall not operate to relieve trustees, or any individual trustee, of any responsibility otherwise imposed on such person by law. The trustees are empowered to act by the presbytery's bylaws, the *Book of Order*, and authority granted to it by Presbytery Council in order to carry out its purpose. The annual budget of presbytery must be approved by presbytery before it is implemented. Significant changes in policy or practice which impact congregations or committees of presbytery must be approved by either the presbytery or Presbytery Council before they are implemented. In the performance of its duties, the Presbytery Board of Trustees may appoint such task forces or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.
7. Accountability:  
The Board of Trustees shall be accountable to presbytery and shall report directly to presbytery in all matters. Trustees shall also report to council as requested.
8. Procedures:  
a. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.  
b. Except as otherwise provided by law, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money and other evidences of indebtedness of the corporation shall be signed by the treasurer (or an assistant treasurer) and countersigned by the president or vice president. Contracts, leases, assignments of securities or other instruments executed in the name of and on the behalf of the corporation shall be signed by the president or vice president whose signature shall then be attested by the secretary or treasurer (or an assistant secretary or assistant treasurer).
9. See also below, sec. IV. D. (1-5), "Use of Presbytery Funds".
10. The president of the trustees, or her/his designated representative, shall have voice and vote at presbytery meetings.

### **C. Permanent Judicial Commission (See D-5.0 in the Book of Order)**

1. As required in the *Book of Order* D-5.0101, the presbytery shall elect a Permanent Judicial Commission composed of teaching elders and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible.

- 715 2. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall be composed of nine (9) members  
716 divided into three (3) classes, nominated by the nominating committee and  
717 elected by the presbytery.  
718 3. The Permanent Judicial Commission at all times shall function under the  
719 direction of the Rules of Discipline contained within our Constitution's *Book of*  
720 *Order*.  
721 4. The commission shall elect from its members a moderator and a clerk.  
722 5. Two members of the commission shall be designated to review any petition for  
723 review and thereby would not take part in any trial.  
724 6. The quorum for the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be a majority of the  
725 members less the two members with administrative review responsibility. (D-  
726 5.0204)  
727 7. The stated clerk shall report to the presbytery annually the makeup of the  
728 Permanent Judicial Commission and the Reserve Roster of the last three  
729 classes of the PJC.  
730 8. In the event of potential judicial process, the stated clerk will arrange for the  
731 training of the Permanent Judicial Commission as soon as possible after the  
732 appointment of an investigating committee. Other training may be from time  
733 to time available.  
734

735 **D. Committees Of The Presbytery** –Except to the extent that the Book of Order or this  
736 manual expressly provides to the contrary, the composition of each committee  
737 shall be divided into three (3) equal classes of members, with each member  
738 serving a term of three (3) years, and no person shall be eligible to serve on a  
739 committee more than six (6) consecutive years.  
740

741 **1. Committee on Representation (required by *Book of Order*).**

742 In accordance with the provisions of G-3.0103, presbytery shall establish and  
743 elect a Committee on Representation.

744 a) Purposes and Duties

745 i. The committee shall advise the presbytery with respect to its  
746 membership and to that of its committees and boards in  
747 implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness to  
748 ensure fair and effective representation in the decision-making of  
749 the church.

750 ii. The committee shall serve both as an advocate for the  
751 representation of racial ethnic members, women, different age  
752 groups, and persons with disabilities and as a continuing resource  
753 to the presbytery in these areas. The Committee on Representation  
754 shall review the performance of presbytery in these matters and  
755 shall report annually to it with recommendations for any needed  
756 corrective action. The Committee on Representation shall consult  
757 with the nominating committee of the presbytery.

758 iii. The committee shall report annually, in writing to presbytery  
759 both its observations concerning the work of the nominating  
760 committee and its efforts to serve as a resource for the nominating  
761 committee.

762 b) Membership: The committee shall consist of five people, in the

Following categories:

- i. one racial ethnic male
- ii. one racial ethnic female
- iii. one youth male
- iv. one youth female
- v. one person with a disability

As used herein, the term “racial ethnic” shall be defined as presbyterians being of African, Hispanic, and Asian descent, and Native Americans. The Term “youth/young adult” shall be defined as a presbyterian between the ages of 16-21.

c) Election: The chair and members of the committee shall be nominated by the nominating committee, open to nominations from the floor, and elected by the presbytery.

d) Accountability: The Committee on Representation shall be accountable to presbytery and shall report directly to presbytery in all matters.

e) Authority to Act: In the performance of its duties, the Committee on Representation may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.

## **2. Committee on Ministry**

a) Purpose: The purposes are to:

- i. Serve as pastor and counselor to the teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders and other positions as defined in the *Book of Order*.
- ii. Facilitate the relations between congregations, teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders and other positions as defined in the *Book of Order* and the presbytery,
- iii. Settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery when possible and expedient; and
- iv. Perform those duties and responsibilities authorized by the presbytery.

b) Membership: The Committee on Ministry shall have twelve (12) members. Six (6) shall be teaching elders and six (6) shall be ruling elders. The term of office shall be three (3) years. No committee member shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years.

c) Election: The chairperson of the members of the committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee, open to nominations from the floor, and elected by the presbytery.

d) Meetings

- i. The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings;

- 811                   ii. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place and  
812                   docket for each committee meeting; and  
813                   iii. Minutes of the Committee on Ministry shall be kept and actions  
814                   on behalf of the presbytery shall be reported to the presbytery  
815                   and become part of the minutes of the presbytery.
- 816 e) Duties - The Committee on Ministry shall:
- 817                   i. Provide guidance to sessions in matters pertaining to the  
818                   compensation of teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders,  
819                   and church professionals;
- 820                   ii. Communicate the interests of the Board of Pensions in  
821                   presbytery and provide information regarding the benefits plan  
822                   and to advise particular churches on matters relating to the  
823                   benefits plan and the board;
- 824                   iii. Assist teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders in the  
825                   relocation process;
- 826                   iv. Confer with the sessions of particular churches without pastors  
827                   with respect to compensation and reimbursement to moderators  
828                   appointed by presbytery.
- 829                   v. Visit regularly and consult with each teaching elder and  
830                   commissioned ruling elder of the presbytery;
- 831                   vi. Visit with each session of the presbytery at least once every  
832                   three years, discussing with them the missions and ministries of  
833                   the particular church and encouraging full participation in the  
834                   life and work of the presbytery and of the larger church;
- 835                   vii. Consult with the Committee on Representation to provide  
836                   equal opportunity employment for teaching elders and  
837                   candidates;
- 838                   viii. Supervise the presbytery's Pastoral Assistance Fund in  
839                   partnership with the executive presbyter. The committee, at its  
840                   discretion, may withhold from public announcement the names  
841                   of applicants for aid from the Board of Pensions or  
842                   presbytery's Pastoral Assistance Fund.
- 843                   ix. The committee shall recommend to presbytery the composition  
844                   of administrative commissions related to ordination/installation  
845                   of teaching elders;
- 846                   x. Create and maintain a pulpit supply roster; and
- 847                   xi. Require of and collect as frequently as required by law, from  
848                   each commissioned ruling elder, certified Christian educator,  
849                   pastor member of the presbytery or other clergy serving a  
850                   Washington Presbytery congregation(s), and any person on the  
851                   Pulpit Supply Roster such background checks and clearances  
852                   as the Committee may from time to time determine to be  
853                   appropriate or required, including but not limited to the  
854                   Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Record, the  
855                   Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and the Federal  
856                   Criminal History Background Check. Non-compliance shall be  
857                   reviewed by the Committee, which may immediately remove  
858                   the person from the Pulpit Supply Roster and may recommend

to presbytery sanctions, including but not limited to notification to local church sessions, revocation of status as commissioned ruling elder, or revocation of presbytery permission to labor as a certified Christian educator.

f) Authority for Final Approval –

In specific circumstances listed below, the Committee on Ministry may act on behalf of presbytery without referring the action to presbytery for final approval. All such actions shall be reported to the presbytery at the next stated meeting of the presbytery:

- i. Add or remove presbyters from the pulpit supply roster;
- ii. Appoint a moderator to a session currently without a moderator;
- iii. Grant approval for a CRE to administer the sacraments outside of his/her regular commission;
- iv. Dissolve a pastoral relationship when the congregation and teaching elder or CRE concur; and
- v. Dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries.

g) Authority to Act – Ordinarily, the committee shall report the following for action by the presbytery. In situations where schedules and costs create an undue hardship upon a congregation, the committee has authority to act on behalf of the presbytery in the matters set forth below. Any three voting members of the committee, present at the time of such committee action may at that time dissent, and the committee shall to refer the matter to presbytery.

- i. Find calls issued by churches to be in order and approve temporary pastoral relationships;
- ii. Facilitate, guide and approve agreements between teaching elders or commissioned ruling elders and churches;
- iii. Examine teaching elders or commissioned ruling elders transferring from other presbyteries required by Form of Government;
- iv. Dissolve as pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder concur; and
- v. Dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries.

All such actions shall be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery. In the performance of its duties, the committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.

h). Accountability - The Committee on Ministry shall be directly accountable to, and shall report directly to, presbytery.

i). Financial Responsibility - The committee, working in conjunction with the executive presbyter is responsible for oversight of the Pastoral Assistance Fund.

### 3. Committee on Preparation for Ministry

a) Purpose: The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall assist the presbytery in preparing those who are called to be ordained as teaching elders in accordance with *Book of Order* (G-2.0601 through G-2.0805).

The committee shall also assist the presbytery in the preparation of ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, in accordance with G-2.1001 through G-2.1004.

b) Membership: The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall have six (6) members, of whom three (3) shall be ruling elders and three (3) shall be teaching elders.

c) Election: The chairperson and the members of the committee shall be nominated by presbytery's Nominating Committee, open to nominations from the floor, and elected by the presbytery.

d) Meetings: The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and shall, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place and docket for each committee meeting.

e) Duties - The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall:

- i. Be responsible for a program of recruitment to church vocations in cooperation with the Congregational Vitality Committee;
- ii. Assist the presbytery in preparing those who are called to be ordained as teaching elders in accordance with *Book of Order* (G-2.0601 through G-2.0805). The committee also shall assist the presbytery in the preparation of ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, in accordance with G-2.1001 through G-2.1004;
- iii. Counsel with pastors and sessions as they relate to inquirers and candidates from particular churches, as guided by the "Handbook for Committees on Preparation for Ministry" (PCUSA resource);
- iv. Interview prospective inquirers and candidates and report recommendations to the presbytery for action;
- v. Meet at least annually with each inquirer and candidate under care of the presbytery; and
- vi. Administer presbytery's financial aid fund according to the committee's "Preparation for Ministry Policies" document, and report the amounts to presbytery.

f) Financial Responsibility - The Committee on Preparation for Ministry is responsible for oversight of: scholarship fund and any funds designated by Presbytery Council.

g) Authority to Act: In the performance of its duties, the committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.

h) Accountability: The committee shall be directly accountable to, and shall report directly to, presbytery.

#### **4. Nominating Committee (required by the Book of Order G-3.0111)**

a) Purpose: The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to nominate qualified members to fill all vacancies for presbytery offices and on continuing committees (except the Nominating Committee), Presbytery

Council, Board of Trustees, and any other bodies that require election by the presbytery. The committee shall seek to discern gifts and requirements for ministry, ensuring that nominations are made in conformity with the church's commitment to unity and diversity (G-3.0103, G-3.0111 and F-1.0403)

b) Membership: The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members: two (2) teaching elders, two (2) female ruling elders and two (2) male ruling elders. The executive presbyter shall be a member ex officio, without vote.

c) Election

i. The members of the Nominating Committee shall be nominated by the Planning and Visioning Committee, which shall present their nominations for the Nominating Committee at the November meeting of presbytery.

ii. In no case shall any teaching elder who has been a member of this presbytery for less than one year be nominated to the committee.

iii. The term of office shall be for three (3) years. No Nominating Committee member shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years.

d) Meetings

i. The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and shall, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings.

ii. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place, and docket for each committee meeting.

e) Duties: The Nominating Committee shall:

i. In consult with the stated clerk, maintain a list of qualified teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, ruling elders, deacons, and members of congregations, who are recognized for their commitment to Jesus Christ and who are available for service at presbytery, synod, and General Assembly;

ii. Nominate the members of Presbytery Council and the members and officers of all committees of presbytery (except the Nominating Committee), in accordance with the principles of unity in diversity (F-1.0403) and participation and representation (G-3.0103);

iii. In the case of salaried presbytery officers, such as the stated clerk, the Nominating Committee shall work in consultation with the Personnel Committee to ensure that terms of compensation, expectations and search criteria are clearly articulated;

iv. Nominate commissioners, alternate commissioners, and youth advisory delegates to synod and General Assembly in accordance

- with the requirements of those councils and the guidelines adopted by presbytery;
- v. Nominate qualified representatives who are active members of congregations of the presbytery to organizations with which presbytery is affiliated as directed by Presbytery Council, including Presbyterian Scholarship Fund; and
  - vi. Nominate others as directed by presbytery or Presbytery Council.
- f) Authority to Act - In the performance of its duties, the Nominating Committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.
- g) Accountability -The Nominating Committee shall be accountable to presbytery and shall report directly to presbytery in all matters.
- h) Procedures
- i. At the September meeting of presbytery, the Nominating Committee shall declare its intention to announce nominations at the November meeting of presbytery;
  - ii. At the September meeting of presbytery in the appropriate year, the Nominating Committee will nominate individuals to fill the offices of stated clerk or treasurer. Elections for these offices will take place at the November presbytery meeting. These officers will assume their duties on the first of January following election;
  - iii. At the November meeting of presbytery, the Nominating Committee shall make nominations for the offices of: moderator; vice moderator; and any other vacant positions as required in this Manual. Those elected will assume their duties on the first of January following election;
  - iv. Nominations may be made from the floor, provided that the persons nominated have consented to serve;
  - v. The nominations of chairs of the committees of presbytery shall also be made at the November meeting; and
  - vi. The committee shall present nominations for commissioners to the General Assembly at the January meeting of presbytery in the year of the General Assembly, and to synod no later than the May meeting of presbytery.

## **5. Congregational Vitality Committee**

- a) Purpose - It is the task of the committee to promote a biblical understanding of what it means to be the Body of Christ including:
- i. Disciple-making,
  - ii. Fellowship,
  - iii. Worship,
  - iv. Stewardship,
  - v. Congregational planning and self-study, and
  - vi. Christian practices/disciplines.
- b) Membership - The committee shall consist of nine (9) members, including the chair, who are teaching elders and members of congregations, with at least one half being members of congregations. Any



- assigned presbytery staff persons shall be ex officio, non-voting member(s) of the committee.
- c) Authority to Act: In the performance of its duties, the Congregational Vitality Committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.
- d) Election: The chair and the members of the committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the presbytery.
- e) Meetings
- i. The committee shall hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee;
  - ii. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place, and docket for each committee meeting; and
  - iii. A quorum for the committee shall be one third of the elected membership of the committee.
- f) Duties - The committee shall:
- i. Support congregations in identifying ministry needs and offer consultation to find new directions to meet those needs, keeping in mind the special circumstances of small churches;
  - ii. Implement self-studies for strategic planning by congregations at the time of a transition or at the request of the congregation;
  - iii. Provide for spiritual and educational needs of congregations and leaders with attention to making disciples through training, materials, and events;
  - iv. Through the Resource Center and its director, seek to provide appropriate resources and equipment for congregations of the presbytery;
  - v. Support and oversee presbytery ministry teams focused on youth, men, women, older adults, etc.;
  - vi. Oversee new congregational development:
    - a. New church development teams;
    - b. Financial grants for new church development;
    - c. Financial grants for local congregational outreach; and
    - d. Encourage attention to regional demographics for the purpose of identifying trends and opportunities;
  - vii. Promote biblical stewardship practices; and
  - viii. Submit an annual budget to the Board of Trustees in preparation of the presbytery budget.

## **6. Missional Outreach Committee**

- a) Purpose - The purpose of the Missional Outreach Committee is to challenge and equip congregations to take the name of Jesus and the Gospel message into the world through word and deed, raising the conscience of the church to issues that need the application of biblical Christian principles such as gospel evangelism, one's need for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, hunger, aging, peacemaking, minority issues, racial injustice, and other issues as appropriate.
- b) Membership

- 1098 i. The committee shall consist of nine (9) members, including the  
1099 chair, who are teaching elders and members of congregations  
1100 with at least one half being members of congregations. Any  
1101 assigned presbytery staff persons shall be ex officio, non-voting  
1102 member(s) of the committee.
- 1103 ii. The committee may co-opt non-voting members and appoint  
1104 such ad hoc ministry groups, as it deems necessary to accomplish  
1105 its mission.
- 1106 c) Election - The chair and the members of the committee shall be  
1107 nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the presbytery.
- 1108 d) Meetings
- 1109 i. The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and shall,  
1110 with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or  
1111 by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a  
1112 scheduled meeting announced at the previous meeting and in  
1113 minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to  
1114 deal with specific announced business that arises between stated  
1115 meetings.
- 1116 ii. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place and  
1117 docket for each Committee meeting.
- 1118 iii. A quorum for the committee shall be one third of the elected  
1119 membership of the committee.
- 1120 e) Duties - The Missional Outreach Committee shall:
- 1121 i. Encourage sessions and congregations to live Christ-like  
1122 lifestyles for the purpose of spreading the Gospel message  
1123 through:
- 1124 a. Learning how to share how Christ has worked in our  
1125 lives;
- 1126 b. Articulating the Good New of Christ;
- 1127 c. Meeting human (emotional, spiritual and physical) needs  
1128 by:
- 1129 • Encouraging local, hands-on, personal outreach, and  
1130 • Facilitating local, regional, and international  
1131 partnerships;
- 1132 ii. Communicate to presbytery and its member churches the  
1133 outreach work of the General Assembly, the Synod of the Trinity  
1134 and Washington Presbytery;
- 1135 iii. Recommend to Board of Trustees a missional outreach budget  
1136 which will include: Presbyterian Church (USA)-affiliated  
1137 ministries, congregational missional outreach grants, and other  
1138 possible outreach ministries; and
- 1139 iv. Create linkages between congregations and mission  
1140 opportunities.
- 1141 f) Authority to Act
- 1142 i. In the performance of its duties, the Missional Outreach  
1143 Committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or  
1144 individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.

- ii. Requests for Missional Outreach grants will be received, reviewed, and approved by the committee.
- g) Accountability: The committee shall report to the Presbytery.

## 7. Personnel Committee

- a) Purpose: To provide encouragement, guidance, and resourcing to the presbytery and its member churches in areas of personnel policies, equitable compensation, and fair employment practices.
- b) Membership: The Personnel Committee shall consist of six (6) members, including the chair, who are teaching elders and members of congregations, with at least one half being members of congregations.
- c) Election: The chairperson and the members of the committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the presbytery.
- d) Meetings -
  - i. The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings and shall, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings; and
  - ii. The committee chair shall establish the time, place, and docket for each committee meeting.
- e) Duties - The Personnel Committee shall:
  - i. Review and recommend amendments to Personnel Policies of Washington Presbytery (appendix D of this Manual);
  - ii. Support the administration of presbytery in accordance with those policies;
  - iii. Approve recommended person descriptions, job descriptions and consultant contracts as provided by the Executive Presbyter;
  - iv. Review and recommend to Presbytery Council the annual salary budget, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter;
  - v. Conduct annual performance reviews for all staff positions and contracted consultants;
  - vi. Participate (as a committee, or through its chair) in the annual performance review of the Executive Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer;
  - vii. Respond to personnel-related questions coming from Presbytery Council, committees, and congregations;
  - viii. Counsel periodically with the Executive Presbyter and other presbytery staff members, and be available to assist and advise all staff and serve as a liaison with Presbytery Council or presbytery as needed; and
  - ix. Present to Presbytery Council any annual reports and special requests from staff members.
- f) Authority to Act:

- i. In the performance of its duties, the committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission; and
- ii. In the performance of its duties, the committee is authorized, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter, to terminate employment or eliminate job positions.

## 8. Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee

- a) Purpose - The purpose of the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee is to oversee matters of the presbytery dealing with church polity.
- b) Membership - The committee shall consist of six (6) members, including the chair, who are teaching elders and members of congregations with at least one-half being members of congregations. The Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk shall be ex officio members, without vote.
- c) Election - The chairperson and the members of the committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the presbytery.
- d) Meetings
  - i. The committee shall ordinarily hold stated meetings or regular meetings and shall, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the chair or by two (2) members of the committee. A stated meeting is a scheduled meeting announced at a previous meeting and in committee minutes, while a special meeting is called for a particular time to deal with specific announced business that arises between stated meetings; and
  - ii. The committee chairperson shall establish the time, place and docket for each committee meeting.
- e) Duties - The Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee shall:
  - i. Conduct annual administrative review of the proceedings and actions of the presbytery and its congregations and sessions, in accordance with the requirements of *Book of Order* G-3.0107 and G-3.0108;
  - ii. Review minute and roll books of sessions and report results to the presbytery;
  - iii. Provide for the reading of presbytery minutes;
  - iv. Provide for the training of clerks of session;
  - v. Review the by-laws and manual of the presbytery regularly for consistency with presbytery function and for consistency with any changes in the *Book of Order*;
  - vi. Review all amendments to the manual, make recommendations to presbytery regarding such amendments through Presbytery Council, and publish and distribute revisions to the manual when amendments are adopted by the presbytery;
  - vii. Review all overtures submitted by members, committees, or sessions of presbytery, or referred to presbytery by other councils, for consideration and recommendation;

- 1238 viii. Gather and preserve records of historic events within the  
1239 presbytery and acquaint the presbytery with their significance;  
1240 ix. Encourage sessions and individuals to preserve records of  
1241 historical value and interest, in keeping with *Book of Order* G-  
1242 3.0107;  
1243 x. Be responsible to the Stated Clerk for the roll of attendance and  
1244 requests for excused absences; and  
1245 xi. Encourage ecumenical relations.  
1246 f) Authority to Act - In the performance of its duties, the committee may  
1247 appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or individuals as it deems  
1248 necessary to accomplish its mission.  
1249

## 1250 9. Planning and Visioning Committee

- 1251 a) Purposes  
1252 i. Consider and evaluate the vision, mission, and planning  
1253 objectives of presbytery as a whole;  
1254 ii. Provide guidance to the council as to the planning of  
1255 presbytery meetings;  
1256 iii. Support presbytery's Mission Statement; and  
1257 iv. Design and facilitate a periodic process of evaluation for the  
1258 whole presbytery to determine needed changes in emphasis,  
1259 organization, or spiritual health.  
1260 b) Membership - The Planning and Visioning Committee shall consist of  
1261 the moderator, the vice moderator, the chair of Presbytery Council, the  
1262 Executive Presbyter and the stated clerk.  
1263 c) Meetings - The committee shall meet when called by the chair of the  
1264 council or as otherwise directed by the presbytery or Presbytery Council.  
1265 The chair of council will act as the moderator of the committee.  
1266 d) Duties - The Planning and Visioning Committee shall:  
1267 i. Annually review and revise as needed the vision, mission, and  
1268 planning objectives of the presbytery and reflect ~~and~~ commend  
1269 any changes needed in the bylaws and manual;  
1270 ii. Submit to council for review and to presbytery for approval ~~any~~  
1271 changes to the manual;  
1272 iii. Consult with the Executive Presbyter regarding the worship of  
1273 the presbytery;  
1274 iv. Oversee location of presbytery and council meetings;  
1275 v. Nominate members to the Nominating Committee, as well as  
1276 nominate the chairperson of that committee; and  
1277 vi. Participate in the annual review of the executive presbyter ~~as set~~  
1278 forth in II.D.7, and stated clerk as set forth in II.E.7.  
1279 e) Authority to Act - In the performance of its duties, the Planning and  
1280 Visioning Committee may appoint such ad hoc ministry groups or  
1281 individuals as it deems necessary to accomplish its mission.  
1282 f) Accountability - The Planning and Visioning Committee shall report  
1283 to presbytery through the Presbytery Council.  
1284

## 1285 IV. STANDING RULES

1286  
1287 **A. Rules Relating To The Operation of the Presbytery**  
1288

1289 1. Parliamentary Rule

1289 The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the  
1290 parliamentary rules for Washington Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church  
1291 (USA), and the committees of presbytery, except where the Constitution  
1292 of the Presbyterian Church (USA) or this manual and bylaws provide  
1293 otherwise.

1294 2. Committee Meetings

- 1295 a) Committees shall normally meet during months of February, April,  
1296 June, August, October, and December. All committees shall meet at least  
1297 quarterly.  
1298 b) The enumeration of the permanent committees in this Manual shall not  
1299 preclude appointment of special committees and task forces.  
1300 c) Special committees and task forces who do not report for a period of  
1301 one year shall automatically be dissolved.  
1302 d) All committees shall keep minutes of their meetings and provide a  
1303 copy of approved minutes to the presbytery office to assist in  
1304 communication. The privilege of review of those minutes may be granted  
1305 by that committee or board.  
1306 e) Meetings of committees may be conducted by conference call when all  
1307 parties can hear discussion.

1308 3. Records

- 1309 a) The presbytery shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings,  
1310 which shall be submitted at least once each year to the Synod of the  
1311 Trinity for its general review and control. The presbytery shall report to  
1312 the appropriate higher council the condition and progress of the churches  
1313 within its bounds and all important changes which have taken place  
1314 including ordinations, the receiving, dismissing, and deaths of teaching  
1315 elders, and the organizing, uniting, dividing, or dissolving of churches.  
1316 (See G-3.0108a, *General Administrative Review*)  
1317 b) Minutes and other official records of the presbytery are the property of  
1318 the presbytery, and the stated clerk is responsible for their preservation.  
1319 c) Annually, the presbytery shall send to the Stated Clerk of the General  
1320 Assembly lists of its teaching elders and churches and statistical and other  
1321 information according to the requirements of the General Assembly.  
1322 d) Audit and Financial Review  
1323 i. The Board of Trustees shall initiate and report the financial  
1324 review of all funds managed by the trustees, and all operational  
1325 and mission funds; and  
1326 ii. A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be  
1327 conducted every year by a committee of members versed in  
1328 accounting procedures in writing and on record. Such auditors  
1329 shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall not be  
1330 related to the Treasurer (or Financial Secretary).

1331 4. Indemnification

1332 Each person who is an officer of the presbytery shall be indemnified to the fullest  
1333 extent now or hereafter permitted by law in connection with any actual or

threatened civil, criminal, or administrative action, suit or proceeding (whether brought by or in the name of the presbytery or otherwise) arising out of their service to the presbytery or to another organization at the presbytery's request. Persons who are not directors or officers of the presbytery may be similarly indemnified in respect of such service to the extent authorized at any time by the Presbytery Council. The provisions of this section shall be applicable to actions, suits, or proceedings commenced after adoption hereof, whether arising from acts or omissions occurring before or after the adoption hereof.

5. Mailing List and Phone Directories:

The presbytery maintains mailing and telephone information for all churches, teaching elders and presbytery committee members. These lists are the property of the presbytery and shall not be distributed or used for solicitation purposes. In order to respect the privacy of all, ministry partners are expected to honor this policy; however, presbytery cannot be responsible for how others may handle telephone information and mailing lists. It shall be presbytery's policy not to cell phone numbers or unlisted numbers without permission.

The presbytery office will provide these lists only to those bodies or individuals identified above. Requests from mission organizations in relationship with Washington Presbytery may be approved on a case by case basis by the stated clerk and reported to Presbytery Council. Information will not be distributed for commercial purposes.

6. Web Page Lists

Churches, teaching elders, and other information may be listed on the presbytery's web page. Home phone numbers will not be listed. It is understood that once listed on the web page, this information is publicly accessible.

7. Digital or Virtual Meetings

The presbytery and all standing or special committees, task forces, and boards (including, without limitation, the Board of Trustees) of the presbytery may meet by any digital or virtual means currently or hereafter available, subject to any policies or procedures as may, from time to time, be adopted by the presbytery.

**B. Rules Relating to Congregations**

1. Annual Statistical Reports

a) Each session shall prepare and submit, at the time designated, an annual statistical report, an annual list of session members, and such other information as may be requested by the stated clerk; and

b) Each session shall include a summary of the statistical report in its minutes and record the fact that these reports have been prepared and

2. Review of Minutes

a) The sessions of the particular churches of presbytery shall submit their minutes and registers annually for administrative review at a time set by the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee. (G-3.0108);

b) The minutes and records shall be placed in a post binder and be on acid free paper of at least twenty-five (25%) percent rag content, with pages consecutively numbered; and

c) The annual report to General Assembly, or a copy thereof, shall be entered in the session minutes and the minutes and registers shall show adherence to the requirements of the Form of Government.

1383 3. Calls of teaching elders

- 1384 a) No call to a teaching elder will be approved for a church until all the  
1385 financial obligations to the former pastor have been met;  
1386 b) All calls to teaching elders and commissions for ruling elders, and all  
1387 changes in to same, shall be approved by presbytery in accordance with  
1388 the minimum salary guidelines established by presbytery;  
1389 c) Within a month after presbytery acts to dissolve a pastoral  
1390 relationship, the moderator of session, in consultation with the Committee  
1391 on Ministry, shall request a meeting with representatives from the  
1392 Committee on Ministry and the Congregational Vitality Committee to  
1393 confer on procedures;  
1394 d) When a pastor receives permanent disability benefits from the Board  
1395 of Pensions, calls or contracts between the pastor, the particular church,  
1396 and presbytery are automatically terminated;  
1397 e) Dissolution of a pastoral relationship by presbytery shall not become  
1398 effective until terms of the call or contract among the particular church,  
1399 the teaching elder, and presbytery have been met in full by the particular  
1400 church; and  
1401 f) Temporary Leave of Absence for family or personal needs may be  
1402 negotiated between the teaching elder, session, and the Committee on  
1403 Ministry but shall meet the minimum standards established by the  
1404 Committee on Ministry.

1405 4. Per Capita Assessment

- 1406 a) Each of the particular churches of the presbytery shall consider  
1407 funding its per capita apportionment as a first claim upon its  
1408 congregational contributions.  
1409 b) If the particular church is unable to fully fund its designated per capita  
1410 due to financial concerns within the congregation, the session shall notify  
1411 the stated clerk in writing. Representatives of the presbytery shall meet  
1412 with the session to offer stewardship support and guidance. The presbytery  
1413 shall pay the outstanding portion of per capita to the General Assembly  
1414 and synod.  
1415 c) If the particular church withholds funds of per capita due to a matter of  
1416 conscience, the session shall notify the stated clerk of the intent in writing.  
1417 Representatives of the presbytery shall meet with the session to hear those  
1418 concerns and offer guidance and interpretation of per capita funding.  
1419

1420 **C. Meetings of Presbytery**

- 1421 1. Stated meetings of the presbytery are ordinarily held on the third Saturday of  
1422 January at 9AM, the second Tuesday of March at 4:00PM, the second Tuesday of  
1423 May at 7:00PM, the second Tuesday of September at 4:00PM and the second  
1424 Tuesday of November at 7:00PM. A July fellowship gathering of the presbytery  
1425 will be held, and a meeting will be called for that date if pressing business  
1426 is before the presbytery. The Presbytery Council may adjust this schedule as  
1427 required by circumstances or business.  
1428 2. Ordinarily, the January stated meeting shall be the annual meeting of the  
1429 presbytery and the corporation. The business of the annual meeting shall include  
1430 the installation of officers and such other items of business relating to the affairs



of the presbytery as may properly come before the meeting.

3. The moderator shall call a special meeting of the presbytery at the request or with the concurrence of at least two (2) teaching elders and two (2) ruling elders representing different churches, or upon request of the president of the trustees. At least ten (10) days' notice shall be given to churches, such notice to be provided via electronic mail or regular U.S. mail.
4. A single omnibus motion shall be presented by the stated clerk early in each meeting. The omnibus motion shall contain only non-controversial items that are necessary business of the presbytery. The omnibus motion is not debated; however, any item shall be removed from the omnibus motion at the request of any teaching elder, CRE, or ruling elder registered as a commissioner. After adoption of the balance of the omnibus motion the presbytery shall either vote on the matter immediately or docket the matter for consideration later in the meeting.
5. The quorum for a meeting of presbytery shall be any six (6) teaching elder members and six (6) ruling elder members present, provided at least six (6) churches are represented by ruling elders.
6. Presbytery may adopt by majority vote rules which are binding unless set aside by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members of presbytery present and voting. Presbytery may not set aside any parliamentary rules relating to the rights of the members of presbytery except by a two-thirds (2/3) vote and due notice.
7. All matters coming to a stated meeting of presbytery for presentation or consideration shall be limited to twenty (20) minutes, unless provided otherwise in the docket.
8. Debate on any matter before presbytery shall be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker, unless otherwise determined by presbytery on a motion to limit or extend the limits of debate.
9. All motions with financial considerations originating on the floor of presbytery shall be referred to the Board of Trustees.
10. Members of standing and special committees of presbytery, Presbytery Council, whether ruling elders or laypersons, shall have the privilege of the floor on matters relating to duties, activities, or recommendations originating with their committee. Clergy who are not teaching elder members of the presbytery but are serving Washington Presbytery churches, and invited guests of the presbytery or its committees are eligible to be granted privilege of the floor. This privilege also applies only to matters related to their respective church, committee, or invitation. These persons shall not have the privilege to vote. These privileges shall be included as part of the omnibus motion presented by the stated clerk early in each meeting of presbytery.
11. A motion to rescind, in order to be approved by a simple majority vote, shall require notice that can be published with the call of the meeting at which the motion is to be introduced. The person who intends to make such a motion shall provide the stated clerk with a copy of the notice, which shall include the exact wording of the proposed motion, so that it may be distributed with the call of the meeting.
12. A defeated motion or a motion adopted by presbytery on which no action has been taken as a result of the vote, may again be considered as new business after two (2) stated meetings have passed.

- 1479 13. When any committee of presbytery desires to present a matter that is likely to  
1480 produce a considerable division of opinion, such a matter shall be presented one  
1481 (1) stated meeting prior to the time that action is to be requested, unless time is of  
1482 the essence. When considered, it shall be a special order of the day. A majority  
1483 vote of the members of presbytery, present and voting, shall be required to  
1484 determine whether time is of the essence with respect to any such matter.
- 1485 14. There shall be time in the docket of each presbytery meeting for the  
1486 announcement of the intention to introduce new business. Written copies of the  
1487 new business shall be distributed to the members of presbytery at that time. New  
1488 business which is not introduced in this manner shall not be considered. This  
1489 rule shall not apply to Presbytery Council or standing committees of presbytery  
1490 so long as new business to be considered is incorporated in their written reports.  
1491 Upon the moderator's discretion new business shall be referred to the presbytery  
1492 Council or the appropriate committee of presbytery for study and  
1493 recommendation, with instructions, and the referred matter shall be brought back  
1494 to presbytery not later than the second stated meeting following the meeting at  
1495 which such new business was introduced. A majority vote of those members of  
1496 presbytery present and voting shall be required to determine whether time is of  
1497 the essence with respect to such new business. There shall be included in the  
1498 docket of each meeting of presbytery, after unfinished business, the consideration  
1499 of new business to be taken up in the event that it is determined that time is of the  
1500 essence.
- 1501 15. Any proposal that creates or alters presbytery policy (and any resulting  
1502 recommendation or procedure) may not be acted upon at the same presbytery  
1503 meeting at which it has been introduced unless it has been considered and  
1504 approved by Council. (See item #4 above)
- 1505

#### 1506 **D. Use of Presbytery Funds**

1507 All presbytery financial resources, whether benevolence or endowment interest, are to  
1508 be used solely for the support of the ecclesiastical and administrative expenses and  
1509 the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as defined by the  
1510 Scriptures, the Confessions, or the actions of the General Assembly or its judicial  
1511 process, except as set forth in paragraph 1. below.

- 1512 1. Any use of presbytery funds for purposes lying outside of the ecclesiastical and  
1513 administrative expenses or the validated ministry and mission of the Presbyterian  
1514 Church (USA), as it is defined by the Scriptures, the Confessions, or the actions  
1515 of the General Assembly or its judicial process, shall require a vote of presbytery  
1516 prior to the conclusion of contractual agreements or the allocation of funds.
- 1517 2. Any budgeted monies not spent during the budget year shall not carry over from  
1518 one year to a subsequent year. Presbytery may, upon recommendation of the  
1519 Presbytery Council, reallocate any such unspent or surplus monies for  
1520 expenditures within the mission of the presbytery.
- 1521 3. If during any budget year there is need for Presbytery Council or a standing  
1522 committee to spend in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) outside the  
1523 descriptions, or above the budget of any of its line items, but within its total  
1524 budget, such expenditure shall be made only with the approval of the Executive  
1525 Presbyter, which approval shall be reported to the presbytery.

4. Any proposal by any member of presbytery or by the Presbytery Council or any standing committee of presbytery involving the expenditure of presbytery funds in any amount beyond the approved presbytery budget shall be referred to the Executive Presbyter, who shall report findings and recommendations, including the identification of funding sources, to presbytery for final action.
5. Those authorized by the presbytery to sign checks shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall include the treasurer, executive presbyter, stated clerk, and any others required for security and convenience. Two signatures shall be required on all checks over \$500.

#### **E. Conflict of Interest**

1. A conflict of interest may occur when a ruling elder, church member, or teaching elder of the presbytery can use their position within the presbytery to the potential benefit of themselves, a member of their family, or another organization or business with which they are affiliated (including their home church). It is the responsibility of all teaching elders, ruling elders and committee members to announce when a potential conflict of interest exists for them in the decision making process.
2. In the event one is called upon to participate in a discussion or decision in which the interests of the presbytery may conflict with his/her personal interests (or the interests of the other organization or business to which the person belongs), the individual shall declare such potential conflict in advance of the discussion and should abstain from participating in any voting. The abstention, either by absenting oneself from that portion of the meeting or by voiced announcement, shall be recorded in minutes of that committee or of the presbytery.
3. The topic of conflict of interest as it may impact presbytery employees is discussed in section 9.2 of the Personnel Policies.

#### **F. Nominations and Elections to Boards and Agencies**

1. Upon review and approval of Presbytery Council, the presbytery may elect representatives to extra-denominational boards and agencies whose purposes advance the causes of Christ.
2. The representatives shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

#### **G. Nominations and Elections to Synod and General Assembly**

1. General Provision related the General Assembly
  - a) Certain reasons for excuse from attendance at the General Assembly when approved by presbytery, shall entitle a teaching elder or church to be retained at the head of the eligibility roll. Conflicts of duty may arise through service in the synod or General Assembly appointment, or a personal crisis.
  - b) Teaching elders who have not been on the presbytery membership rolls for two years prior to the opening of the higher council shall not be eligible for nomination as a commissioner to that higher council.
  - c) No teaching elder commissioner shall be elected to General Assembly or synod who has had more than two unexcused absences from a stated meeting of presbytery, or of the meetings of any standing committee(s) of presbytery of which such teaching elder was a member during the

- 1574 previous year. Special consideration may be given to those who labor  
1575 outside the bounds of presbytery or who, because of conflicts of duty,  
1576 could not attend presbytery or meetings of presbytery committees.
- 1577 d) By virtue of office, the moderator and vice-moderator will ordinarily  
1578 be considered and may be nominated to the presbytery for vote.
- 1579 e) Nominations to the General Assembly shall be presented in November  
1580 of the year of the Assembly by the Nominating Committee.  
1581 Nominations may be made from the floor of presbytery with the prior  
1582 consent of the person being nominated.
- 1583 f) In no case will two General Assembly commissioners, whether  
1584 teaching elder or ruling elder, represent a single congregation in a  
1585 given year.
- 1586 g) In making nominations, the Nominating Committee shall be guided by  
1587 the following rules, but may exercise flexibility in this selection  
1588 process when the committee is unanimous in its report to the  
1589 presbytery.
- 1590 2. Teaching Elder commissioners to General Assembly
- 1591 a) The stated clerk will maintain lists of teaching elders sorted according  
1592 to the following four dates:
- 1593 i. date last attended G.A. (regardless of presbytery of  
1594 membership)
- 1595 ii. date of ordination
- 1596 iii. date of membership in Washington Presbytery
- 1597 iv. date declined nomination as clergy commissioner to G.A.
- 1598 b) The Committee will give priority in the nomination process to  
1599 eligible teaching elders who have never served as commissioner.  
1600 Selection conflicts that result from this criterion will be resolved by a  
1601 second criterion: the year in which the clergy were ordained. If two  
1602 or more teaching elders have the same ordination date, Committee  
1603 selection will be based on the date of entry into the presbytery. If  
1604 there are no eligible teaching elders who have never served as  
1605 commissioner to the GA, the Committee will give priority to the  
1606 names whose commission is most remote in time.
- 1607 c) First and second alternates will be selected in the same process.
- 1608 d) Teaching elders are eligible for nomination when they have:
- 1609 i. Been members of the presbytery for at least two full years prior  
1610 to the meeting of the General Assembly;
- 1611 ii. Served on presbytery committees or performed other approved  
1612 service (holding elected office in the presbytery, or similar  
1613 activity the synod or General Assembly) within the last two  
1614 years;
- 1615 iii. Attended a majority of the stated meetings of the presbytery  
1616 and of the committees of presbytery to which they have been  
1617 elected in the previous two years; and
- 1618 iv. Not twice declined nomination to be a General Assembly  
1619 commissioner. When teaching elders decline the nomination  
1620 for a second time, their names will be placed on the list as if

- 1621 they attended General Assembly in the year in which they  
1622 declined.
- 1623 3. Ruling elder commissioner to the General Assembly
- 1624 a) The stated clerk will maintain a list of churches that is sorted by the  
1625 following criteria:
- 1626 i. year in which a ruling elder from each church last represented  
1627 the presbytery at General Assembly;
- 1628 ii. affirmation that session minutes and membership rolls have  
1629 been reviewed by the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee for the  
1630 previous two years;
- 1631 iii. confirmation that the church had a ruling elder commissioner  
1632 in attendance at stated meetings of the presbytery for the  
1633 previous two years.
- 1634 b) Based on those criteria, the Committee will inform Sessions of their  
1635 eligibility to elect ruling elders to be nominated by the Committee to  
1636 the presbytery for vote. When a church declines nomination, its name  
1637 will be placed on the list as if a ruling elder from that church attended  
1638 G.A. in the year in which the Church declined. First and Second  
1639 Alternates will be selected from other eligible churches by the same  
1640 process.
- 1641 4. Teaching Elder Commissioners to Synod
- 1642 a) Election of persons to serve three-year terms as synod commissioners  
1643 shall be made no later than the May meeting of the year in which terms  
1644 expire. (Synod commissioners may serve two (2) three-year terms.)
- 1645 b) The Nominating Committee will nominate the presbytery  
1646 commissioners to synod based upon the notification by the synod, in or  
1647 near February, as to the needs of synod, from the teaching elder members  
1648 of the presbytery.
- 1649 5. Ruling Elder Commissioners to Synod
- 1650 a) Election of persons to serve three-year terms as synod commissioners  
1651 shall be made no later than the May meeting of the year in which terms  
1652 expire. (Synod commissioners may serve two three-year terms.)
- 1653 b) The Nominating Committee will nominate the presbytery  
1654 commissioners to synod based upon the notification by the synod, in or  
1655 near February, as to the needs of synod, from the ruling elders of the  
1656 presbytery's churches.
- 1657

## 1658 V. AMENDMENTS TO THE PRESBYTERY BYLAWS AND MANUAL

1659

- 1660 A. All Proposed amendments to this Bylaws and Manual shall be submitted to Council  
1661 through the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee for review and recommendation.
- 1662 1. Presbytery Council shall present proposed amendments to presbytery at a stated  
1663 meeting for information only. Presbytery Council's recommendations shall be  
1664 presented, and the matter acted upon, at the following stated meeting.
- 1665 2. Amendments to this Manual shall be adopted by a majority of the members of  
1666 presbytery present and voting at the presbytery meeting. Presbytery, by a two-thirds  
1667 (2/3) vote, may temporarily suspend a provision or provisions of this Manual,  
1668 provided that the *Book of Order* does not require such provision(s).

1669 B. The references in this Manual to the Book of Order, or any parts of it, may be corrected  
1670 editorially should the General Assembly at any time change the numbering of the  
1671 chapters and/or sections of the *Book of Order*.  
1672  
1673  
1674

1675 **03/12/13: Manual Adopted**  
1676 **03/09/15: Revision to Section III.D.2(b) Adopted**  
1677 **05/10/16: Revision to Section III.D.2.(f), (g), (h), and (i). Adopted**  
1678 **05/10/16: Revision to Section IV.A.3. (d) (ii) Adopted**  
1679 **10/20/20: Revision to Section IV.A.7 Adopted**  
1680 **03/09/21: Revision to Section III.D.2.(b) Adopted**

# **LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

**Approved by Action of Washington Presbytery – March 12, 2002**

**As a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, I accept Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the church, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.**

## **I**

**I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Therefore, I will:**

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my life's work and church membership, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

## **II**

**I will conduct myself within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) so that nothing need be hidden from sisters and brothers in Christ. Therefore, I will:**

1. Bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise my witness and relationships within the community of faith;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence

- without express permission unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
  8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit to others where due and observe copyrights;
  9. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me; and
  10. Accept the discipline of the church.

### **III**

**I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore, I will:**

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
2. Show respect and provide encouragement for sisters and brothers in Christ;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

### **LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

**As an employee or volunteer in an entity, governing body, or congregation associated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), I commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.**

#### **I**

**I will conduct my life in a manner that will support the ministry of my workplace. Therefore, I will:**

1. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
2. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern;
3. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my position, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
4. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs; and
5. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech.

#### **II**

**I will conduct myself at my workplace in a manner that will support its ministry. Therefore, I will:**



1. Honor relationships within the workplace and observe appropriate boundaries;
2. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my position;
3. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my work;
4. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the workplace for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
5. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
6. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate; used in papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
8. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria;
9. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and, upon leaving a position, speak and act in ways that support the work of my successor;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Accept the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable;
12. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
13. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues; and
14. Cooperate with persons of other faith traditions.

**LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH:  
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR  
ORDAINED OFFICERS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

**As an ordained officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by our Confessions, I affirm the vows made at my ordination, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct.**

**I**

**I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my public ministry. Therefore, I will:**

1. Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
2. Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
3. Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
4. Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
5. Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my office of ministry, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
6. Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
7. Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
8. Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

## II

**I will conduct my ministry so that nothing need be hidden from a governing body or colleagues in ministry. Therefore, I will:**

1. Preach, teach, and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
2. Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
3. Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of my office and positions of responsibility I hold;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise the effectiveness of my ministry;
5. Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
6. Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission, unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
7. Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
8. Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit for all sources used in sermons, papers, music, and presentations, and observe copyrights;
9. Refrain from incurring indebtedness that might compromise my ministry;
10. Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me;
11. Observe limits set by the appropriate governing body for honoraria, personal business endeavors, and gifts or loans from persons other than family;
12. Accept the discipline of the church and the appropriate guidance of those to whom I am accountable for my ministry;
13. Participate in continuing education and seek the counsel of mentors and professional advisors;
14. Deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and upon leaving a ministry or office speak and act in ways that support the ministry of my successor;
- \*\*15. Participate in the life of a ministry setting I left or from which I have retired only as directed by presbytery;
- \*\*16. Provide pastoral services for a congregation I previously served only as directed by the presbytery and pastoral services to members of other congregations only with the consent of their pastors; and
- \*\*17. Consult with the committee on ministry in the presbytery of my residence regarding my involvement in ministry setting during my retirement.

## III

**I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore, I will:**

1. Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;

2. Show respect and provide encouragement for colleagues in ministry;
3. Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships, and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
4. Cooperate with those working in the world for justice, compassion, and peace, including partners in ministry of other faith traditions.

\*\*These standards apply only to pastors; they also apply to commissioned lay pastors when they are performing pastoral functions.

**Washington Presbytery**  
**Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct**  
Updated and Revised - Approved November 12, 2013

**Contents:**

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**I. Introductory Statement**

As God who called you is holy,  
be holy yourselves in all your conduct.

Tend the flock of God that is in your charge,  
not under compulsion but willingly,  
not for sordid gain but eagerly.  
Do not lord it over those in your charge  
but be examples to the flock.

You know that we who teach  
shall be judged with greater strictness.

1 Peter 1:15; 5:2-3; James 3:1 NRSV

We believe and proclaim that all people are created by God. God values all human life and intends that everyone--men, women and children--have worth and dignity in all relationships.

We further believe in justice for all persons. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of power and trust, therefore, unjust. Scripture asserts that religious leadership involves a covenant relationship that presumes the trustworthy exercise of power in behalf of those in our care. A betrayal of this trust is more than just a personal tragedy for the victim. It reflects a tragic breakdown in the character of the abuser that seriously threatens, not only those immediately affected, but the well-being of the church itself.

For too long, incidents of sexual misconduct have been glossed over, rationalized or subverted for the good of the church. The Presbytery of Washington here proclaims that, the good of the church can never be served by overlooking an abuse of power and trust, that sexual misconduct is wrong and that charges of misconduct must be dealt with swiftly, fairly and with compassion for both the accused and the accuser.

The purpose of this Policy is to make clear the presbytery's position on sexual misconduct and to establish the procedures to be followed in investigating and resolving instances where misconduct is alleged to have occurred.

## II. Basic Principles

- Sexual misconduct is a violation of the role of teaching elders, persons in position of pastoral leadership, officers, employees and volunteers of the presbytery who are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship.
- Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power which breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relation to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. Even if someone else initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is always the responsibility of the pastor, person in position of pastoral leadership, officer, employee or volunteer of the presbytery to maintain the appropriate role, and to take all reasonable steps possible to prohibit a sexual relationship.
- There is no such thing as consenting adults between pastors and their parishioners or staff. The role of a pastor in the congregation is a role in which he or she is granted such power by members of the congregation that there can never be equality. This makes it always the responsibility of the pastors to take all reasonable steps possible to set appropriate boundaries in any relationship.
- Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of children and persons who are less powerful to act for their own welfare. It is contrary to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. It violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

## III. Definitions

Accused is the term used to represent the person against whom a claim is made of sexual misconduct.

Accuser is the term used to represent the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not be the victim of alleged sexual misconduct. A person

such as a family member, friend, or colleague of the victim may be the accuser whose information initiates the convening of the Response Team.

Child is a person under eighteen years of age.

Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child.

Church when spelled with the initial capitalized refers to the Presbyterian Church (USA). Church when spelled with the initial in lowercase refers to local churches.

Confidentiality means that information is withheld from all except those who need to know.

Employee is the term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the presbytery, for salary or wages.

Inquiry is the term used in the Rules of Discipline to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations of an offense received by a council. (See Book of Order D-10.0200.)

Investigating Committee is that group of people designated by the presbytery to inquire into the allegations and if charges are filed prosecute the case brought under Rules of Discipline D-10.0200.

Investigation is the term generally used by police, secular prosecutors, and child protective services when responding to allegations of an offense.

Mandated Reporter is the term used for the person required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse that comes to his/her attention. Please refer to Chapter 63 of PA Code for full reporting requirements.

Parishioner is an individual who is a member of a particular teaching elder's congregation or someone who is relating to the teaching elder as a pastor as in a non-member counseling setting. For clergy serving in specialized ministries, a parishioner is any person receiving the benefit of the teaching elder's exercise of the office of ministry. (ex. Pastoral counselor/client; campus minister/student).

Persons Covered by this policy include teaching elder members of the presbytery, commissioned ruling elders, officers, employees and volunteers of the presbytery while acting on behalf of the presbytery. For example, this policy covers a non-member adult who sexually abuses a non-member teenager while helping out on a presbytery-sponsored activity. Response is the action taken by the presbytery when a report of sexual misconduct is received. It may include (1) inquiry into facts and circumstances, (2) possible disciplinary action, (3) pastoral care and intervention for victims and their families and others, and (4) pastoral care and professional intervention and rehabilitation for the accused and care for their families.

Response Team is a body constituted by the presbytery to facilitate the process of responding to allegations of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy.

Rules of Discipline is that section of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which outlines the procedures to follow in situations in which the church must exercise authority over its members to guide, control and nurture.

Secular Authorities are the governmental bodies, whether city, county, state, or federal, who are given the responsibility to investigate, criminally prosecute, and/or bring civil charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or offenses against adults and children.

Secular Law is the body of municipal, state, and federal laws and is often referred to collectively as civil and criminal law. Prohibited behavior addressed by this policy may result in criminal and/or civil charges filed under secular law.

Sexual Abuse is the term used to describe any contact or interaction involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years; anyone over the age of eighteen years without mental capacity to consent; or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. (Rules of Discipline D-10.0401 c.)

Sexual Harassment is the term used to describe unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct when submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or volunteer service; when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is threatened or used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or when such conduct, when repeated after a request to cease, unreasonably interferes with work or volunteer service performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for employment or volunteer service. For example sexual harassment may include, but is not strictly limited to explicit sexual propositions; subtle pressure for sexual activity; sexual innuendo; sexually oriented verbal teasing or abuse; sexually oriented jokes, obscene gestures, language, suggestive pictures, or drawings; physical contact, such as patting, pinching, touching, or constant brushing against another's body and in third party situations, an individual being offended by the sexual interaction, conduct or communications between others. It does not refer to occasional compliments.

Sexual Impropriety is the term used to describe inappropriate verbal or physical sexual conduct toward those under one's supervision or for whose spiritual and physical welfare one is responsible by reason of one's position in the church. This term includes, but is not limited to, abuse of a position of trust and exploitation or manipulation of persons who are emotionally, psychologically, physically or spiritually vulnerable.

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:

1. Sexual Malfeasance. Sexual malfeasance as defined for this policy is as follows: the broken trust resulting from genital contact (contact with the breasts, buttocks, or pubic area) within a ministerial (e.g. pastor with a member of his or her congregation) or professional relationship (e.g. officer of presbytery with a committee member). This definition is not meant to cover relationships between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having normal mutual, social, intimate, or marital relationships. Adultery and fornication are never appropriate behaviors
2. Child sexual abuse as defined above.

3. Sexual abuse as defined above.
4. Sexual harassment as defined above.
5. Sexual impropriety as defined above.

Victim is the term used to identify the person alleged to have been injured by sexual misconduct as defined above.

Volunteers are those who provide services for the presbytery and receive no remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups.

## IV. Sexual Misconduct Response Team

### A. Purpose and Functions

The Sexual Misconduct Response Team (hereinafter referred to as Response Team) has as its primary purpose the reception of, and a timely and objective response to reports of Sexual Misconduct by persons covered by this Policy. The Response Team will seek to provide support for the accuser/victim as he/she decides how to resolve the problem, as well as showing concern for the Accused. The Response Team shall be available to work with the accuser, the victim, the accused, the families involved, the congregation, and the presbytery and will seek to address their respective needs.

The Response Team does not offer legal advice as to either secular or church law and in no way is a substitute for legal counsel. The Response Team will neither initiate disciplinary proceedings nor be available to testify in disciplinary proceedings arising from an accusation of sexual misconduct.

The Response Team is responsible for providing an annual training workshop to inform new and continuing members of the presbytery of concerns and issues related to sexual misconduct issues.

### B. Membership and Training

There shall be five (5) members of the Response Team, representing both women and men, teaching elders and ruling elders ... ordained or non-ordained or lay members of the churches of the presbytery. The Response Team should include, if possible, a licensed psychological counselor and an attorney. The members of the Response Team shall be nominated by the committee on ministry and confirmed by the presbytery. Members of the Response Team must be able to attest that no civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending against them for sexual misconduct. Members of the Response Team will serve a five year term; there is no limit to the number of terms a member may serve.

The committee on ministry shall specify from the members a chairperson of the Response Team. The chairperson shall convene the Response Team when a report of possible sexual misconduct is received. When the Response Team has more than one report to consider at the same time, members will need to decide how many persons are to be involved in each response. As in all responses, balance and appropriate representation should be considered. The Response Team may choose a temporary chairperson from its number to serve in the absence or unavailability of the chairperson.

The team must be trained to respond to allegations of sexual misconduct and to identify and recognize the issues involved in sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and child sexual abuse. Team members must be familiar with the legal, administrative, and disciplinary procedures of the presbytery



and the church.

Team members should commit to serve for no less than a full term to ensure a professional level of experience, skill and continuity. After initial training, the team should meet no less than three times a year to familiarize itself with this policy, the procedures of the presbytery and to continue its professional training.

## **C. Understanding the Needs of Those Involved**

### **1. Victims and Families**

The presbytery and Response Team shall endeavor to assure that adequate treatment and care are available to the victims of sexual misconduct and their families. If the victim or family at first refuses help, the Response Team should continue to offer help. Above all, the presbytery should not act in a self-protective manner by ignoring the victims and their families.

### **2. Congregations**

The presbytery and Response Team should be aware of the problems a congregation may experience as a result of allegations of sexual misconduct by a pastor, employee, or volunteer. The allegations may polarize the congregation, damage morale, and create serious internal problems. Efforts should be taken to recognize and identify the problems and heal the damage done to the congregation.

### **3. Accused**

The presbytery and Response Team shall be mindful that an accused is presumed to be innocent and, shall offer assistance and care for the accused as well as victims and their families. If the accused is a teaching elder, or ruling elder, this responsibility is carried out in consultation with the committee on ministry.

### **4. The Non-Victim Accuser**

A person other than the victim, such as a parent, guardian or other advocate for a child who has been the victim of sexual misconduct, may be an accuser. Because of a child's minority status, an adult is required to act on behalf of the child. The Response Team shall be aware that a non-victim accuser may have some or all of the same needs as a victim.

## **V. Response Procedures**

### **A. Reporting of, and Responses to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct**

#### **1. Receiving Initial Reports**

Reports of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways. Because a governing body or entity cannot control to whom the accuser of sexual misconduct will first speak, it is important that officers, employees, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors understand how reports of

incidents are channeled to the proper person.

Reports of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and of the church. Reports should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.

The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the accuser or the accused. If the accuser is hesitant to talk to higher authorities, the person who has received the initial report has a special pastoral responsibility to build trust and to encourage a willingness on the part of the accuser to speak out, lest the church be unable to respond because no one is able to give firsthand information.

The person receiving the initial report of sexual misconduct from the accuser shall encourage the accuser to report the incident to the executive presbyter, the chairperson of the committee on ministry, or the moderator of the presbytery who will forward the report to the Response Team.

A person receiving an initial report of child sexual abuse may be considered a mandated reporter and may be required to report the incident to civil or criminal authorities when required by local or state law.

## **2. Responsibilities of the Response Team Upon Receipt of an Initial Report When Formal Accusations Have Not Been Filed With the Stated Clerk**

Upon receiving notice of sexual misconduct from the executive presbyter, the chairperson of the committee on ministry, or the moderator of the presbytery, and when formal accusations have not been filed, the chair will immediately call a meeting of the Response Team to coordinate the initial inquiry process. The Response Team should do the following:

- a. Notify the accused of the allegations and advise the accused to have no further contact of any sort with the accuser, the victim, or the victim's family.
- b. Notify the accuser/victim that the team has received the report, that the accused has been notified to have no further contact with the accuser, and what steps the Response Team will be taking to investigate the report. (At any time in the initial inquiry process, advise the accuser if the accused has admitted to the misconduct as charged.)

NOTE: If the accuser claims child sexual abuse, the Response Team is advised not to interview the child (or children) due to the possible secondary trauma caused by the interview itself. Secular authorities should be notified immediately by the Response Team, if a report has not been filed already. The Response Team should be guided in its actions by the recommendations of the secular authorities. If the Response Team needs a consultant to advise it concerning the effects and complications involving a child victim, it should contact an expert in child sexual abuse. The Response Team should make the secular authorities aware that it wishes, insofar as the law allows, to be kept informed of the developments in the case to allow appropriate church discipline to be exercised with the accused.

- c. File a report with secular authorities, if required by state or local law and none has been previously filed.
- d. A minimum of two representatives of the Response Team will meet with the accuser and/or victim to hear the accusations first-hand and to provide them with a copy of this policy.
- e. Inform the accuser of his or her right to file a written report of the allegations as outlined in the Rules of Discipline. (D-10.0101)
- f. A minimum of two representatives of the Response Team will meet with the accused to receive a response to the allegations. These should ordinarily be different representatives from those who meet with the accuser/victim (line d).
- g. In consultation with the committee on ministry, the Response Team should assess and recommend resources for the following:
  - (1) Need for pastoral care and/or counseling (psychological evaluation) of the victim or accused. If it should be determined during the initial inquiry that professional counseling is needed for the victim, the Response Team may refer the victim to a professional counselor trained to deal with issues of sexual misconduct. The Response Team should maintain a referral list of counselors and counseling centers sensitive to sexual misconduct issues and issues of faith and spiritual needs. The Response Team and thus the presbytery must be sensitive to the victim's financial ability to pay for psychological counseling. The Response Team may refer the victim to an agency, which sets fees based upon client's ability to pay. Although the church is not legally obligated to pay for the victim's counseling, it should be considered a pastoral obligation.;
  - (2) Need for parties involved to obtain legal counsel and inform insurance carriers;
  - (3) Personal and pastoral needs of the accuser/victim and the accused; since the Response Team is not expected to pass judgment on the guilt or innocence of the accused, it shall avoid such language in its findings and conclusions;
- h. Recommend educational or employment practices to be implemented to prevent further instances of sexual misconduct.
- i. Recommend actions to be taken to begin the healing process within the congregation.

The Response Team is **NOT** intended to do the following:

- Advocate for any party involved;
- Act as legal counsel for any party involved;
- Replace the functions of the committee on ministry, counsel, or investigating committee;
- Determine guilt or innocence of the accused; or
- Enforce a specific remedy or disciplinary action.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Response Team Upon Receipt of an Initial Report When Formal Accusations Have Been Filed With the Stated Clerk**

If an accusation is received by the Stated Clerk in writing, alleging an offense by a teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder, an investigating committee will be formed as outlined in the Rules of Discipline. (D-10.0200) The chair of the sexual misconduct Response Team will then be notified. The team will then be involved as outlined in section V.A.2. above with the exception of V.A.2.e, and the addition of the following responsibility:

- Together with the executive presbyter and/or the chairperson of the committee on ministry, meet with the session to inform its members that a written allegation of sexual misconduct has been made against the teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder, and that administrative leave may be recommended while the investigation is going on. No one shall either negotiate or suggest disciplinary actions to or for continuing members of presbytery; neither shall they negotiate nor suggest to or for the session concerning this matter at this time.

#### **4. Media Contact**

Any inquiries from the media regarding an incident of sexual misconduct must be directed to the executive presbyter or the stated clerk of the presbytery. Questions from the media shall not be addressed by any member of the Response Team.

#### **5. Response Team Record Keeping**

The Response Team will keep all records confidential. The Response Team should keep detailed records of its actions and minutes of its deliberations and its conversations with the accuser, accused, and other parties involved, copies of the initial report and correspondence.

When the Response Team determines that its work is completed, all of the Response Team's records, along with its final report, will be forwarded to the stated clerk and will be marked confidential and securely stored. No member of the Response Team will keep any separate records of confidential material that they have turned over to the governing body as a result of its work.

### **B. Presbytery Response**

The presbytery's response is subject to the discipline outlined in the Book of Order, D-3.0101b,c,d. The pastoral relationship of teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders serving congregations is subject to oversight by the presbytery, G-2.0105, G-2.0502, G-2.0503, G-2.0504, G-2.1004. Such teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders are subject to the Rules of Discipline.

The presbytery must cooperate with civil authorities in an investigation of child sexual abuse or other criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.

### **C. Time Limit**

The ability of the presbytery to respond promptly and justly to sexual misconduct is related in part

to the opportunity to receive allegations and gather evidence soon after the occurrence. However, this policy recognizes the special problems related to discovery and recognition of various forms of sexual misconduct. Child sexual abuse may not be recognized until the victim of abuse reaches adulthood. Recognition of abuse and willingness to come forward by an adult victim may also be delayed for many years. Therefore there is no time limit on the filing of charges. (D-10.0401b)

## **VI. Policy Implementation**

### **A. Compliance**

All teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders will be ~~asked~~ required to sign a statement of acknowledgment, indicating that they have received a copy of the Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct and understand that the presbytery will abide by it.

Sessions are expected to annually review “Washington Presbytery Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct”, or their own session/congregation policy if one exists, and to show record of such annual review in the session minutes.

### **B. Distribution**

The presbytery will distribute this policy to its officers, employees, committee members and volunteers through their chairpersons, and the congregations through their clerks of session.

### **C. Record Keeping**

Accurate record-keeping is an essential part of hiring and supervision practices. The presbytery office will maintain personnel files on all clergy. The file will contain PC(USA) Personal Information Forms, executive presbyter reference checks and responses, and other documents related to this policy.

### **D. References**

Pastor nominating committees are responsible for contacting references for prospective pastors. A written record of conversations or correspondence with references shall be kept in the pastor’s personnel file.

In dealing with teaching elders called from one position to another, the presbytery will assume responsibility for previous employer reference checks through the executive presbyter or other authorized persons who would report to the committee on ministry either that there had been no reported sexual misconduct, or that the committee should inquire into reported sexual misconduct.

The person within the presbytery authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding allegations, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct of the applicant. The response, however, must be limited to information contained within the written summary prepared as part of the Response Team and/or presbytery records.

Applicants should be informed of negative comments regarding sexual misconduct and shall be given an opportunity to submit additional references or to give other evidence to correct or respond to harmful information obtained from a reference.

**Washington Presbytery  
Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct**

**Acknowledgment**

I hereby acknowledge that I received and read a copy of the Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct of the Washington Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I understand that the Presbytery of Washington will adhere to its policy and procedures.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please type or print)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Note: A similar acknowledgment may be required if and when significant amendments to the policy are adopted by the presbytery and distributed to all persons concerned.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

Washington Presbytery  
P.O. Box 146  
Eighty Four, PA 15330

# **Washington Presbytery CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Approved: January 21, 2017**

## **General Purpose Statement**

Washington Presbytery seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the policies and procedures outlined in this document, our goal is to protect the children of Washington Presbytery from incidents or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Each church within the presbytery is required to adopt its own Child Protection Policy.

## **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the term “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

## **Selection of Workers**

A: persons who desire to work with children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

### **a) Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has been involved with Washington Presbytery for a minimum of six (6) months. The time of interaction between church leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children,

### **b) Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application form to be supplied by the church leadership. The application shall include but not be limited to:

- Basic contact information
- Previous experience with children and church affiliations
- Reference and employment information
- Voluntary disclosure of any prior accusations, participation in or convictions of sexual misconduct and
- Authorization for Washington Presbytery to secure necessary background checks.

The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the Washington Presbytery office.

**c) Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be **scheduled** with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. In such cases, volunteers will be interviewed by the designee of the Presbytery. The Personnel Committee and/or its designee will conduct employee interviews.

**d) Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant's references may be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from an organization where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at the Washington Presbytery office. The process will be conducted by the designee of the Presbytery.

**e) Background Clearances**

Background clearances are required for all employees (regardless of position) and for volunteers having routine interaction with children or providing direct care, supervision, or guidance or control of children. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Those who will be involved in the nursery and educational classes;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in the mentorship of children, and
- Those having occasional contact with children (such as vehicle drivers and chaperones for youth events).

Employees must obtain the following:

1. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check,
2. Child Abuse History Clearance from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Background.

Volunteers must obtain the following:

1. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Records Check,
2. Child Abuse History Clearance from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and
3. If a volunteer meets the following requirements, s/he is *not* required to obtain an FBI clearance:
  - a. Has been a resident of Pennsylvania for the previous consecutive ten-year period and



- b. Swears or affirms in writing that s/he has not, within the past five years:
  - i. Been named as a perpetrator in the statewide child abuse database;
  - ii. Been convicted of one or more of certain offenses (see Section 6344 © attached) under PA Title 18 (relating to crimes and offenses) or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state; or
  - iii. Been convicted of a felony offense under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act.
- 4. If a volunteer cannot meet both conditions under #3, s/he must obtain an FBI clearance.

Employees shall provide completed background clearances to the Personnel Committee and volunteers shall provide the same to the Presbytery (?? Executive Presbyter – may not have time to convene the Personnel Committee). The above-mentioned clearances must be obtained and a copy provided to the Presbytery every 36 months. All documents relating to background clearances will be maintained in confidence at the Presbytery Office. If an individual fails to provide the above background clearances, s/he will not be permitted to work with children.

**f) Disqualifying Offenses**

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an employee from working with children will be determined by the Personnel Committee and the Executive Presbyter. This will be done on a case-by-case basis in light of all surrounding circumstances and will be in compliance with relevant state guidelines or requirements. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission, will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying factor.

**g) Subsequent Arrests or Convictions**

Any worker (paid or unpaid) subject to the above requirements who is arrested for, or convicted of, an offense that would constitute grounds for denying working with children (see 3(b)ii,iii above), or is named as a perpetrator in the state child abuse database, shall provide written notice within 72 hours to the Executive Presbyter.

**Two Adult Rule**

Two non-related adults are to be present in each room where there are children. Every effort shall be made to fulfill this rule. In the event it does not prove to be possible, it is acceptable to have one adult and/or non-related youth helper who is at least 14 years of age and is at least five

years older than the majority of children who s/he is leading. However, a youth helper should never be left alone with a child or group of children. In the event that an adult is alone with a child or a group of children in an area where few other people are around, visibility shall be maintained at all times, either through a window in a door or a door left ajar, and a second adult should be within auditory contact range. If this is not possible, the group should move into an open facility where others are present, and if none is available, then the event should be canceled. An adult should never be alone with one child for any Washington Presbytery activity unless in a counseling situation or other ministry that calls for it.

## **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as a beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse**- emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse**- any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect**- depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

All workers (paid and unpaid) having direct contact with children are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children through Washington Presbytery becomes aware of suspected child abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, the individual must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine either electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or by calling 1-800-932-0313. A mandated reporter making an oral report of suspected child abuse shall also make a written report to ChildLine, which may be submitted electronically, within 48 hours. Additionally, the worker should immediately report the abuse to the Executive Presbyter. If the Executive Presbyter is not available or is allegedly involved, a report should be made to the Stated Clerk.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at the Washington Presbytery Center or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will be immediately placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.

3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Washington Presbytery will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Washington Presbytery will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The Executive Presbyter of Washington Presbytery or Stated Clerk will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless s/he is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the presbytery. All other representatives of the presbytery should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working/volunteering with children or youth.

### **Mandated Reporter Training**

Employees having direct contact with children shall complete three hours of mandated reporter training once every five years. Employees will provide proof of said completion to the Personnel Committee to be kept on file at the Presbytery Center. Volunteers working with children shall complete periodic training regarding signs of and reporting abuse. The Presbytery will work to make training available and to ensure compliance.

### **Convicted Sex Offenders**

If it becomes known that a convicted sex offender is attending/ participating in events sponsored by Washington Presbytery, the Executive Presbyter must immediately be informed. The Executive Presbyter will consult with Council and any necessary community service agencies. Information will be disclosed to the presbytery in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations. Every effort will be taken to ensure the safety of our children.

### **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

### **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14
- It is preferred that they be screened and obtain background checks as specified above; and

- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

### **Check-In/Check/Out Procedures**

A security check-in/check/out procedure will be followed. A face-to-face encounter between a worker and a parent, guardian, or adult appointed by the parent/guardian will be required at both check-in and check-out.

### **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all the children at Washington Presbytery. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up.

### **Medication Policy**

It is the policy of Washington Presbytery not to administer either prescription or nonprescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of the Sick Child Policy. Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions), Parents of such children should address their situation with the person in charge of the event and develop a plan of action.

### **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of Washington Presbytery not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents suggest or give permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the person in charge if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

### **Transportation Policy**

In cases where youth events occur at locations which will require transportation in private vehicles, the two-adult rule applies. All drivers must be licensed and insured and pick-up/drop-off will occur at either the Washington Presbytery Center or other designated area.

## **Off-site/Overnight Activities Policy**

For events sponsored by Washington Presbytery where youth participate in an off-site or overnight activity, a consent form must be completed by a parent or guardian. The consent form will include emergency contact information, insurance information, and relevant medical information (e.g. allergies or other medical condition) as well as a statement giving consent to workers to administer or arrange for medical treatment.

## **Restroom Guidelines**

Children five years of age and younger should be escorted to the bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The worker(s) should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. When possible the worker(s) should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child/children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, if possible, at least one adult male should take the boys to the restroom and at least one female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to be sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child.

## **Accidental Injuries to Children**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

## **Training**

The Council, in conjunction with the Executive Presbyter, will periodically review the Policy with Staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers will be asked to sign a statement indicating that they have read the policy and are committed to abiding by it. Additionally, opportunities for additional training classes or events will be offered on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to participate in these training events.

## Appendix

Convictions of crimes under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes or equivalent crimes in another jurisdiction will exclude persons from employment at Washington Presbytery and from working with children from Washington Presbytery as either a volunteer or employee. Convictions of the following crimes may exclude persons from other volunteer opportunities at Washington Presbytery as well, at the discretion of the supervising staff.

Chapter 25	(relating to criminal homicide)
Section 2702	(relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1	(relating to stalking)
Section 2901	(relating to kidnapping)
Section 2902	(relating to unlawful restraint)
Section 3121	(relating to rape)
Section 3122.1	(relating to statutory sexual assault)
Section 3123	(relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
Section 3124.1	(relating to sexual assault)
Section 3125	(relating to aggravated indecent assault)
Section 3126	(relating to indecent assault)
Section 3127	(relating to indecent exposure)
Section 4302	(relating to incest)
Section 4303	(relating to concealing the death of a child)
Section 4304	(relating to endangering welfare of children)
Section 4305	(relating to dealing in infant children)
Section 5902 (b)	(relating to prostitution and related offenses)
Section 5903 (c) (d)	(relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performance)
Section 6301	(relating to corruption of minors)
Section 6312	(relating to sexual abuse of children)

Or an equivalent crime under federal law or the law of another state.

## **Resources**

### **Amendments to the PA Child Protective Services Law relevant to this Policy**

1. Act 31-2014 (Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training)
2. Act 33-2014 (Mandated Reporters)
3. Act 153-2014 (Background Clearance Requirements, et al)

### **Helpful Websites**

1. KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov (information on laws, clearances, training, etc.)
2. [www.pa-fsa-ord](http://www.pa-fsa-ord) (PA Family Support Alliance-information on laws and training)
3. <http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis> (Online Child Abuse History Clearance)
4. <http://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.isp> (Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History)
5. [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_dpw.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm) (FBI clearance)

### **For Questions Regarding Clearances:**

1. Child Abuse History and FBI: (717)783-6244 or (877)371-5422
2. Pennsylvania State Police: (717)783-9973 or (888)783-7972

### **Approved Course for Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training for Mandated and Permissive Reporters:**

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center – free online 3-hour course  
[www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu) [contact person- Sharon England 717-795-9048]  
[certificate provided upon completion of the course]

# **Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania Personnel Policies**

Approved by Presbytery Council June, 20, 2000

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# **WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY OF PENNSYLVANIA PERSONNEL POLICIES**

## **PREFACE**

The Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania (Presbytery) is a legal not-for-profit corporation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Presbytery is a member of the synod of the Trinity (Synod) which is part of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

In the development of its personnel policies, Presbytery shall be guided by the policies of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Synod as well as laws of the federal, state and local governments that may apply to Presbytery as an employer.

Personnel policies shall normally be developed and amended through the Personnel Committee and approved by the Presbytery Council.

A basic principle in the structure of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is that a presbytery has an original and assigned responsibility to enable mission and ministry within its bounds. To this end, Presbytery employs staff to assist in preparing for and implementing its decisions.

The purpose of these policies is to establish guidance for the Personnel Committee, the Presbytery Council and the Presbytery. These policies provide clarification of the Presbytery's employment practices for those who are employed by the Presbytery, whether exempt or non-exempt employees.

These policies reflect the current personnel practices of the Presbytery, however, they are not a contract of employment and the Presbytery reserves the right to amend, modify or change these personnel policies at any time. Any oral or written statements contrary to these policies are hereby expressly disavowed and should not be relied upon by any prospective or existing employee.

The personnel policies contained in this document are designed for broad directional application. They include local practices and procedures for Washington Presbytery. Questions regarding interpretation of these policies shall be resolved by the Executive Presbyter, in consultation with the Personnel Committee as necessary.

The Presbytery shall determine which committees or persons may function as representatives of the employer and when, to what extent, and with whom such representation is appropriate. Each person, committee, or entity serving as the employer's representative is in turn responsible to the employer or supervisor, from whom authority is derived or delegated.

The staff personnel system is based on a commitment: a) to recognize and to affirm the full potential of each employee; and b) to develop, support and use the full range of human resource potential by securing and maintaining cooperation between employer and employee.

The Personnel Committee shall serve as the representative of the Presbytery, including but not limited to: the development of personnel policies, staff oversight, staff evaluation, staff compensation, and any and all other staffing concerns which might legitimately be brought to the Committee.

The Executive Presbyter shall serve as head of staff and is responsible for implementation of this Policy Manual.

## **1.0 GENERAL**

### **1.1. Commitments Underlying These Policies**

These personnel policies are based on commitments by the employer and employees:

- ◆ The employer will endeavor to recognize and affirm the full potential of each employee and develop, support, and use the full range of human resource potential.
- ◆ Employees will devote their interests and energy to their work and the goals of the organization.

These commitments reflect an open partnership in which objectives are shared and in which both the employer and employees acknowledge their responsibilities to each other.

### **1.2. Employer Rights and Responsibilities**

Employer rights are:

- ◆ To establish basic work goals consonant with the purpose of the Presbytery;
- ◆ To establish an overall structure designed to best accomplish the basic goals;
- ◆ To establish and administer a personnel system which can meet the personnel needs of the structure;
- ◆ To establish position descriptions and qualifications for particular functions and determine who are qualified and/or qualifiable to perform such functions;
- ◆ To establish and administer processes for compensation, career development, benefits, working conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, and other phases of employment;
- ◆ To expect employees to be productive in their assigned functions;
- ◆ And provide necessary discipline.

Employer responsibilities are:

- ◆ To be faithful to the purpose of the organization;
- ◆ To assure employees that policies and administration of the personnel system are consonant with the rights of employees;
- ◆ To establish staff structure, position descriptions and personnel policies that fulfill the goals of the Presbytery;
- ◆ To provide equal opportunity for all employees in all aspects of every phase of the personnel system;
- ◆ To assist employees in meeting their career goals and objectives in a manner consistent with the interests of the Presbytery;

- ◆ To conduct regular performance evaluations for all employees at least annually that relate their work objectives to the goals of the Presbytery and that give employees an opportunity to participate in evaluating their own performance in relation to these objectives;
- ◆ To call or employ persons who are qualified and/or qualifiable to fill approved positions;
- ◆ To establish and maintain open communication with employees on matters concerning their and welfare and the Presbytery's interests;
- ◆ To establish and administer a process that provides for the hearing and resolution of complaints, including those related to termination;
- ◆ To make every reasonable and prudent effort to provide a work place that is safe and secure.

### 1.3. Employee Rights and Responsibilities

Employee rights are:

- ◆ To receive adequate information from which to develop an understanding of their role and function in the total structure of the Presbytery;
- ◆ To receive regular information on the quality of their performance;
- ◆ To have as much control as possible over their own career development;
- ◆ To have working conditions that promote the general welfare and encourage productivity;

Employee responsibilities are:

- ◆ To give their best possible performance to their assigned functions in accordance with the Presbytery's program goals and personnel policies;
- ◆ To consider the requirements of the paid position as the primary responsibility;
- ◆ To understand their role and function in the context of the goals of the Presbytery;
- ◆ To act in support of colleagues in fulfilling their respective responsibilities;
- ◆ To participate in committees or groups as requested in furtherance of the goals of the Presbytery;
- ◆ To promptly notify the Executive Presbyter of any and all complaints or problems related to the Presbytery reported by pastors, churches or from any other source;
- ◆ To take initiative so that employee opinion is presented in any appropriate forum dealing with the personnel system;
- ◆ To treat all persons without discrimination;
- ◆ To make suggestions on the improvement of operations;
- ◆ To demonstrate stewardship through efficient and careful use of resources;
- ◆ To act in accordance with the employer's rules and regulations.

### 1.4. Communication

Each new staff member, at the time of employment, shall be issued a full copy of the Personnel Policies and a copy of their job description in effect. It is expected that staff members shall read and seek full understanding of this information. Changes to these policies will be communicated to the staff. Each employee shall sign a written acknowledgment of receipt of a copy of this Personnel Policy Manual and/or any changes subsequently made to the manual, with said acknowledgment to be retained in the employee's personnel file.

## **2.0 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

### **2.1. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**

Presbytery will endeavor to give equal employment opportunity to qualified applicants regardless of race, sex, age, marital status or disability (handicap) in accordance with the Book of Order (G-13.0201(b)) and in compliance with Commonwealth and Federal laws applicable to the Presbytery as employer.

All employment policies and practices including recruitment, selection, benefits, compensation, performance appraisal, promotion, transfers, discipline, training, and separation will be administered without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, creed, disability, or religious affiliation (except where a category is determined to be a bona fide occupational qualification).

As long as a person's creed or religion is not contrary to the specific nature of the work of the Presbytery, that person may be eligible for employment. Positions that require ordination or a thorough knowledge of and commitment to the beliefs and governance of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will be clearly identified.

### **2.2 Inclusiveness in Employment Practice**

The Presbytery will endeavor to enhance inclusiveness in its practices related to recruitment, compensation, benefits, promotions, transfers, training, career development, dismissal and other forms of discipline, and all other areas of employment treatment.

## **3.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **3.1. Definitions Related To Employment Status**

#### **Act 34/Act 33 Clearance**

Any Presbytery employee or volunteer working with children on behalf of a Presbytery sponsored function will be required to provide evidence of clearance by appropriate legal authorities such as Pennsylvania Acts 34 (criminal record clearance) and 33 (child abuse clearance). The costs of obtaining these clearances shall be borne by the employee/volunteer.

#### **Clergy**

The Book of Order governs the nature of the relationship between persons ordained to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament (clergy) and their presbyteries. Clergy employees of Presbytery are covered by all of these personnel policies except where specifically excluded by federal, state, or local laws.

In accordance with federal and state statutes and Church policy, all clergy are considered self-employed persons (exempt) engaged in the exercise of their ministry and are not subject to withholding for certain taxes. They are, however, included in all other policies which apply to "employees" except where excluded by federal or state law.

All clergy employees shall be provided with written Terms of Call consistent with Book of Order G-11.0410. Such calls would of necessity involve action of the Presbytery to validate a ministry and Terms of Call. All written calls will contain wording that will indicate the intent of the Presbytery to honor the Terms of Call except in the case of failure of the employee to perform satisfactorily, or in the case of a change in organizational structure or function (in which case adequate notice and assistance in relocation will be given).

The initial Terms of Call and any subsequent amendments shall be approved through Presbytery. The Terms of Call must at least meet the Presbytery minimums for salary; Board of Pensions participation and study leave.

#### Employer

The employer of all Presbytery staff is The Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania (Presbytery), a legal not-for-profit corporation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Presbytery is a member of the synod of the Trinity (Synod) which is part of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

#### Employment at Will

Unless an employee is elected for a specific period or has an employment agreement, all employment is of indefinite period. Employment is at will and may be terminated at any time with or without notice by either the employee or the employer for any reason except those that violate public policy.

#### Full-Time Staff

Employees of the Presbytery who are regularly scheduled to work thirty-five (35) or more hours per week and who are employed for a period of twelve (12) months each year, are considered to be full-time staff.

#### Honoraria

Honoraria received by an employee for services that are part of the employee's position description shall be remitted to the Presbytery. The employee may retain other service-related honoraria as personal income if the preparation and performance of such services is done on the employee's own time.

#### Independent Contractor

The Presbytery may contract with a person with specific skills for a time-defined task. If certain tests established by the Internal Revenue Service are met, this person may perform work as an independent contractor. Independent contractors are not employees, cannot be paid through the payroll system, and are not eligible for any benefits available to employees. Independent contractors are required to disclose any conflict of interest before work begins. Current Presbytery employees or former employees who were employed within the calendar year will not be eligible to work for the Presbytery as independent contractors.

#### Nepotism

To affirm and facilitate equal opportunity for all employees and employment candidates, care will be exercised in the employment and assignment of persons who are immediate family (spouse, child, parents, parents-in-law, siblings, foster parents/children and stepchildren) of

people in the Presbytery's employ. However, individuals shall not be employed by or through the involvement of direct relatives or members of the same household, and they shall not be assigned to a position where a direct relative or member of the same household is in a position to influence the employee's salary, promotion, or other aspects of personnel practice.

#### Non-Exempt and Exempt Staff

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act there are non-exempt and exempt positions with respect to overtime.

Non-Exempt Staff include those positions of a clerical, technical, or service nature. Persons employed in non-exempt positions shall be compensated for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week at an overtime rate of one-and-a-half times the regular hourly rate. If the normal workweek for a non-exempt position is less than 40 hours per week, all hours worked up to 40 hours per week will be paid at the regular hourly rate. However, compensatory time off, i.e., one hour for each hour worked, may be given in lieu of payment for hours worked in excess of the normal work schedule but less than 40 hours a week in a pay period.

Non-exempt staff may be asked to take special assignments such as taking minutes at meetings, assisting with Presbytery meetings, etc. in which case arrangements for assignment and compensation shall be made by the Executive Presbyter.

Exempt positions include those of a managerial, administrative, pastoral or professional nature. Persons employed in exempt positions are not paid overtime wages for hours worked either in excess of the normal work schedule or 40 hours per week. Such employees are expected to manage their schedules so that they can have a minimum of one day off each week, but the Executive Presbyter must approve absences from regularly scheduled work.

#### Part-Time Staff

Employees of Presbytery who are employed for at least fourteen (14) hours, but less than thirty-five (35) hours, per week or for a period of less than twelve (12) months of the year are considered part-time staff.

#### Probationary Period

Non-exempt staff persons are employed at will. Any such employee must complete a three-month probationary period prior to the beginning of "regular" employment. During the probationary period, the employee and the Executive Presbyter have an opportunity to evaluate the employee's interest and qualifications for the position under actual working conditions.

Prior to regular employment, a performance appraisal is prepared and discussed with the employee by her/his supervisors. When it is determined that the employee is performing in an acceptable manner, regular employment will begin with the next pay period. Once a person becomes a regular employee of the Presbytery, that person shall be afforded the benefits of that status.



Attainment of regular employee status does not, however, negate the employee at will status of a non-exempt staff person.

If the Executive Presbyter and the Personnel Committee deem the performance appraisal unsatisfactory or if the employee decides not to remain, then the relationship is terminated without prejudice to either party.

#### Regular Employee

Employees who have successfully completed their probationary period will be considered as regular employees.

#### Temporary Agency Workers

If workers are needed for short-term (usually less than three months) projects, the Presbytery may contract with temporary agencies for help. Temporary agency workers are not employees, cannot be paid through the payroll system, and are not eligible for any benefits available to employees. It is expected that temporary agencies will meet all obligations required by federal, state and local laws.

#### Volunteers

It is the policy of Presbytery to provide opportunities for persons to serve on a non-compensated basis. Persons who volunteer to help out on an occasional basis with no expectation of payment are considered volunteers. These persons are not filling staff roles and are not eligible for any of the benefits of regular employees or adjunct staff.

Volunteers must provide basic identification data before they begin work. Volunteers working with children are required to provide additional information as required by the Presbytery's policies or by law.

### 3.2. Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

As provided in section 3.4 the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee shall prepare position descriptions for each staff position. Persons with education, experience and ability relevant to the position will be eligible for employment consideration. When a clergy position is to be filled, the open process of call within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will normally be used. All other positions will be filled in keeping with the Equal Employment Opportunity policy of the Presbytery.

### 3.3. Employment Agreements

All exempt employees shall receive a written agreement specifying the terms and conditions of their employment. The employment agreement for clergy employees shall incorporate the Terms of Call as approved by the Presbytery. The written employment agreement for all employees shall specifically indicate that, notwithstanding the terms of the agreement, the employee is an at will employee who may be dismissed at any time with or without cause if said dismissal is not in violation of public policy.

### 3.4. Position Descriptions

The Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee shall prepare a position description for each approved position. A position description is a systematic outline which describes the work to be

performed by the employee; the responsibilities entailed in the job; the authority which has been delegated to the position; the skill or training required to perform the work effectively; the conditions under which the job is to be carried out; and the relationships to be maintained with other staff in other jobs.

The job description is also the base from which: employee performance is to be evaluated; personnel are to be recruited, selected, transferred or promoted; and all organizational relationships and staffing patterns determined. Therefore, it is imperative that there be a mutual understanding between the Executive Presbyter and the employee regarding the content and meaning of the job description. It must accurately reflect the actual work that is to be performed and be simple and concise. Lastly, the job description is to be considered a “working” document to be revised regularly as changes in programs, procedures and working conditions occur.

The Personnel Committee shall approve the position descriptions as well as any major revisions. Position descriptions will be kept current. Opportunity shall be given for the employee to suggest changes in the position description during the annual performance review. Position descriptions will include those duties regularly assigned to employees and are not intended to limit the assignment of additional task as needed to accomplish the work of the Presbytery. Each employee shall be expected to perform all duties and tasks that are assigned.

### **3.5. Confidentiality of Employee Records**

Presbytery recognizes the employee's right to privacy. In seeking to maintain and protect that privacy the following principles shall apply:

- ◆ The collection of employee information will be limited to that needed by the Presbytery for business or legal purposes.
- ◆ The confidentiality of all personal information in Presbytery records will be protected.
- ◆ Employees are permitted to see the personal information maintained about them in Presbytery records. They may submit written comments in disagreement with any material contained in their record. They may submit in writing any changes needed to correct any factual information.
- ◆ All files and records of a confidential nature are to be kept in locked file cabinets or secured areas under control of the Executive Presbyter. Internal access to employee records will be limited to the Executive Presbyter and the Chair of the Personnel Committee. Access may also be given to third parties, including the Personnel Committee for its action and government agencies, pursuant to court order or subpoena.

In the latter two cases, the employee will be informed prior to the disclosure when reasonably possible.

## **4.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 Annual Performance Review**

The purpose of the Presbytery's employee performance review is to formalize a process to help the employee work closer to potential. On an annual basis the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee will jointly conduct a review and evaluation of employees based upon their

position description. All staff members are expected to cooperate in the annual evaluations and reviews.

Evaluations should be done honestly and fairly, and in relation to the work of similarly situated employees. They should be documented in writing using forms approved by the Personnel Committee. Evaluations should include discussion of areas for employee improvement (if any) as well as areas for professional growth and development appropriate to organization goals set for the coming year.

The review will be conducted annually as an exchange of information with the evaluation form as the tool. The form is used to help make the review more objective and more consistent from employee to employee. The form is a means (a basis for discussion) to an end (helping the employee work closer to potential). The review itself happens between the evaluator and the employee – honest discussion.

#### 4.2 Performance Improvement Action

It is the policy of the Presbytery to maintain standards of employee performance, attendance and conduct that allow the Presbytery to fulfill its mission. The goal of performance improvement action is to assist an employee to achieve an acceptable level of performance, attendance or conduct.

The determination of appropriate performance improvement action is within the discretion of the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee. However, to assure consistent and fair treatment of all employees and to protect the Presbytery and the Executive Presbyter from liability, the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee may consult (as necessary) with legal counsel, or other appropriate resources to determine the performance improvement actions that are most appropriate for individual circumstances.

The following elements should be part of any performance improvement action:

- ◆ The employee should be informed of the unacceptable performance or conduct and advised of the consequences of continued unacceptable actions/performance;
- ◆ If appropriate, an action plan should be developed with the employee to resolve the problem;
- ◆ The Executive Presbyter should prepare a written report of any corrective action. This report will be retained in the employee's personnel file;
- ◆ The employee may respond in writing and have the response placed in the employee's personnel file.

Failure by the employee to respond to a plan to improve performance may result in further actions up to and including dismissal.

#### **4.3     Professional Growth and Development**

It is the philosophy of the Presbytery to encourage and support staff development through training, continuing education, and professional development programs. The Presbytery will establish and administer a process of professional growth and development that will afford employees the opportunity to acquire new skills/knowledge, and/or refresh old skills/knowledge consonant with the needs of the Presbytery.

The process of staff development is an integral part of the annual performance appraisal process. A review of staff development needs and progress should occur at least annually at the performance review. Objectives should be reviewed annually through the performance appraisal process. Development objectives should be prepared based on the interests of the employee and the objectives of the organization.

The staff development plans to meet these needs must have advanced approval by the Executive Presbyter and are subject to budget availability. The types and amounts of funds available for staff development will be established each year by the Presbytery during the budgeting process.

The Presbytery office will maintain career development records.

### **5.0     PART TIME EMPLOYEES**

Part time employees are those who are employed to work at least fourteen (14) hours, but less than 35 hours, per week or for a period of less than 12 months per year. Part time employees are eligible for the following benefits:

- a. Holiday pay in proportion to hours worked
- b. Jury duty pay (up to two weeks leave annually)
- c. Salary increases
- d. Regular pay up to 40 hours; time-and-a-half pay over 40 hours in any work week for non-exempt employees
- e. Vacation and sick pay in proportion to hours worked
- f. Workers' Compensation
- g. Social Security participation
- h. Retirement benefit plans
- i. Severance allowance in proportion to hours worked
- j. Compensatory time off
- k. Participation in the Presbyterian Church (USA) pension plans to the extent permitted for part-time employees by the plan.

If a part-time employee is later placed on a full-time basis, prorated credited service will be given from the first day of his/her part-time employment for purpose of sick leave, vacation and other benefits.

## **6.0 HOURS OF WORK AND COMPENSATION**

### **6.1 Normal Business Hours**

Regular office hours shall be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on recognized holidays. A one-half hour paid lunch period shall be permitted.

### **6.2 Absence and Tardiness**

Under ordinary circumstances, unavoidable or unexpected absence from duty for emergencies (or tardiness not in excess of one hour) may be permitted sparingly; but not, in any event to be used to shorten the regular workday of an employee

An employee expecting to be absent or late for work as scheduled is required to call the Executive Presbyter and report accordingly. Failure to report may place the employee in a non-pay status unless the employee can provide a good and sufficiently acceptable reason for the absence and, more specifically, the lack of a phone call.

### **6.3 Salary Administration Program**

The Presbytery will establish and administer a process of compensation wherein the individual employee's compensation is determined on the basis of equitable salary ranges and increments determined in light of economic factors, and an annual performance review and evaluation. This process includes interpretation of the salary program to employees in describing their jobs.

### **6.4 Salary Review**

All individual salaries and benefits will be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee, which shall recommend any changes through the budget process. Individual salary adjustments will be based on (not in order of priority):

- ◆ Performance
- ◆ The employee's position
- ◆ Changes in duties or responsibilities
- ◆ Funds available
- ◆ Cost-of-living increases

### **6.5 Reimbursement of Expenses**

The Presbytery will establish and administer a process whereby authorized expenses incurred by employees in the performance of their work assignments are reimbursed through a uniform, voucher-based system. Expenses in excess of \$10.00 must be supported by proof of expenditures and have appropriate approval before they are incurred.

### **6.6 Withholding**

Employees will have the applicable Social Security and other required federal/state/local taxes withheld from their wages.

## **7.0 BENEFITS**

### **7.1 Benefit Plans and Eligibility**

Regular full-time and part-time employees that work at least fourteen (14) hours per week are eligible for benefits. Benefits for part-time employees will be pro rated based on the percentage of time worked. Temporary agency workers, volunteers and independent contractors are not eligible for benefits.

### **7.2 Vacations**

A vacation with pay is provided for all regular employees. After satisfactory completion of their probationary period, regular employees shall begin to earn vacation leave, with said leave to be prorated on the basis of the number of months worked in the calendar year. After a regular employee has successfully a year of service with the presbytery, he/she shall be credited with a full year's vacation leave as of January 1 of each year.

A regular employee must have been employed for at least one full year before he/she can use vacation leave. Vacation leave may not be accumulated; after the employee's first year of employment, vacation leave must be used within the calendar year in which it is earned except when special provisions have been made with the executive presbyter. No payment in lieu of vacation will be permitted.

Although vacation leave shall be available only to regular employees and only after those employees have completed their probationary periods, calculation of vacation leave to be credited to an employee in the first year of employment shall include the probationary period.

In the case of employees who terminate, if vacation has been taken but not earned before the end of employment, the Presbytery will be reimbursed. If vacation has been earned but not taken, it will be paid to the employee only if appropriate notice is given and the termination is voluntary as per Section 13.3 of this Policy.

Ordinarily, vacation requests must be submitted to the Executive Presbyter at least one month in advance. The Executive Presbyter shall approve specific dates based on the staffing requirements of the organization and scheduling equity.

Exempt employees shall receive annual vacation in accordance with their Employment Agreement and/or Terms of Call.

Non-exempt employees shall earn annual vacation for a calendar year as follows:

- ◆ Two weeks per year for the first five years of employment. (The first year shall be prorated for the portion of the calendar year employed.)
- ◆ Three weeks per year after five years of employment.
- ◆ Four weeks per year after ten years of employment.

Employees may arrange with the Executive Presbyter to receive, before leaving on vacation, an advance payment of any salary which will become payable during the absence on vacation.

### 7.3 Holidays

Twelve (12) paid holidays will be given to all full-time employees as follows:

- New Year's Day
- M. L. King, Jr. Birthday
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- Day before New Year's Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it will be observed as a holiday on the nearest Friday or Monday, respectively. When a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation or sick leave, the employee will be granted an offsetting day. All holidays must be taken on the day designated except under extreme workloads in which case the Executive Presbyter can arrange for alternative days.

### 7.4 Personal Days

After three years of service full-time non-exempt employees shall receive two (2) personal days per year to be taken during the year and not accumulated beyond the year. Scheduling of personal days shall be made in advance as may be mutually agreeable with the employee and the Executive Presbyter.

In the case of employees who terminate, if personal days have been taken but not earned before the end of employment, the Presbytery will be reimbursed. If personal days have been earned but not taken, they will be paid to the employee only if appropriate notice is given and the termination is voluntary as per Section 13.3 of this Policy.

### 7.5 Pension Plan

Upon successful completion of the probationary period of employment all full-time non-exempt staff shall be enrolled in the Pension/Major Medical program of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the Presbytery paying the full Pension/ Major Medical premium applicable at that time.

All exempt staff will be enrolled in the Pension/Major Medical program as of the effective date of their Employment Agreement with the Presbytery paying the full applicable premiums.

### 7.6 Social Security

All personnel are covered by the Federal Old Age and Survivors Benefits Act (Social Security) and payments shall be made in accordance with Federal direction. Unless requested otherwise, clergy are considered self-employed and taxes are not withheld or paid for them.

### 7.7 Health Insurance

Upon successful completion of the probationary period of employment (see Section 3.1) all full-time non-exempt staff shall be enrolled in the Pension/Major Medical program of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the Presbytery paying the full Pension/ Major Medical premium applicable at that time.

All full-time exempt staff will be enrolled in the Pension/Major Medical program as of the effective date of their Employment Agreement or Terms of Call with the Presbytery paying the full applicable premiums.

The Board of Pensions provides major medical coverage for its members under provisions of the plan. The Presbytery has an additional wrap-around medical coverage for 50% of the medical expenses allowed but not reimbursed by the Board of Pensions. The cost of such wrap-around medical insurance coverage is borne by the Presbytery. In no instance should medical insurance duplicate what is already provided by the Pension Plan (see also Section 7.11).

Upon enrollment in the Pension/Major Medical program, the Presbytery will self-insure the applicable deductible for full-time employees. The deductible is reimbursed upon submission of a voucher and appropriate documentation of the expense.

#### 7.8 Long Term Disability Benefits

An employee may be eligible for long term disability benefits as a participating member of the Board of Pensions Benefits plan. Eligibility and benefits shall be those determined by the Plan.

#### 7.9 Workers' Compensation Insurance

All employees shall be covered by Worker's Compensation insurance, in accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to provide for benefits in case of an on-the-job accident. It shall be the responsibility of the injured employee to report an injury to the Executive Presbyter within 24 hours of its occurrence, and to obtain medical examination by a qualified physician or hospital designated by the Presbytery. This medical report must be submitted to the insurance carrier within 24 hour – 7 days at the latest. It is the responsibility of the Executive Presbyter to complete any reports required of the employer within the prescribed time limits.

#### 7.10 Unemployment Compensation

The Presbytery does not provide for Unemployment Compensation.

#### 7.11 Flexible Benefits (Cafeteria Plan)

Exempt and non-exempt, full and part time, employees may elect to receive certain benefits in lieu of an equivalent amount of salary. If such benefits are elected, salary would be reduced to pay for these benefits. Such benefits may include but are not limited to the following: \$50,000 group term life insurance; medical insurance (if not qualified for or already covered under the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions [see section 7.7]); dental insurance, Tax Sheltered Annuity, Individual Retirement Accounts, 403(b) contributions, etc.

#### 7.12 Death in Service

In the event of death of an employee, the salary of that person will be continued to the spouse or dependent(s) for four (4) weeks from the date on which the death occurs.

#### 7.13. Employee Assistance Program

Presbytery has a concern for individual employees and recognizes that employee health can adversely affect an employee's job performance. Employee assistance may be needed as a result



of physical, mental and/or emotional illness, marital or family distress, alcoholism or other drug dependencies. The Presbytery will refer the employee for appropriate treatment of conditions as described above which may affect job performance. Ordinarily, referrals will be made at the employee's expense, however, an employee may request that the Presbytery consider providing some financial support. Any referrals offered by the Presbytery will be held in confidence.

The employee assistance program offered by the Presbytery will include:

- ◆ A referral service for appropriate treatment of health conditions affecting job performance.
- ◆ An assurance that employment will not be jeopardized while the employee is receiving appropriate treatment in order to maintain satisfactory job performance.
- ◆ Confidential records
- ◆ Respect for employees who have been referred to such assistance.
- ◆ An atmosphere that encourages but is not limited to, self-referrals.

## **8.0 LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **8.1. Sick Leave**

Regular (full-time) employees will earn one day of paid sick leave per month of service cumulative up to sixty days to be used in case of illness. Sick leave for part-time employees accumulates in proportion to hours worked. Sick leave entitlement during the first year of employment will be prorated according to the length of employment. Once an employee has successfully completed his/her probationary period, the computation of sick leave entitlement will be based upon the original date of hire. Sick leave is not accumulated while an employee is on a leave of absence.

Although sick leave shall be available only to regular employees and only after those employees have completed their probationary periods, calculation of sick leave to be credited to an employee in the first year of employment shall include the probationary period.

Sick leave days are to be used only when an employee is unable to work due to accident or personal illness. Sick leave is not to be construed as time off for personal business or vacation. Medical doctor certification may be required for the payment of sick leave benefits. The Presbytery shall maintain sick leave records for all employees.

Employees are required to notify the Executive Presbyter in case of sickness or accident as soon as possible and/or by 9:00 a.m. of the day they are off. If there is an extended sick time required, the employee is to phone the Executive Presbyter twice a week by 9:00 a.m. The Executive Presbyter will resolve extenuating circumstances.

Routine medical or dental appointments shall not be charged to sick leave, but employees are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of regular working hours where possible. If time off is required, arrangements shall be made in advance with the Executive Presbyter.

At the time of termination of employment, an employee shall have no claim for pay in lieu of

unused sick leave.

#### 8.2. Temporary Disability Leave

All full time regular employees are eligible for temporary leave due to a physical or mental disability, as certified by a licensed physician. At the conclusion of the disability the employee shall furnish certification from a licensed physician that the employee is able to return to work and fulfill the duties of the position. The Personnel Committee in consultation with the Executive Presbyter shall make the decision to grant temporary disability leave based on the recommendation of a physician or physicians.

In case of a foreseeable disability the employee shall furnish certification at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the leave, stating a date beyond which it is not advisable for the employee to work.

The employee shall receive full salary and benefits for the period of temporary disability up to a maximum of 90 days. Employees are expected to take any accumulated sick leave, personal days and vacation leave before going on temporary disability leave. The aggregate of sick, vacation, personal days and temporary disability leave shall not exceed 90 days. An employee enrolled in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (USA) may apply for extended disability benefits under the Benefits Plan.

Employment may be terminated at any time after the employee is absent from employment for a continuous period of more than ninety (90) days, and all obligations of the Presbytery shall thereupon terminate.

#### 8.3. Care of Family Leave

All full time regular employees are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid care of family leave during any 12 month period, for one more of the following reasons as certified by a licensed physician:

- ◆ The birth or adoption of and care for a child of the employee;
- ◆ The need to care for a spouse, child or parent in case of a serious health condition.

In case of a foreseeable care of family leave need, the employee shall furnish certification at least 30 days prior to the beginning of a leave.

Upon completion of the care of family leave, the employee is expected to return to his/her position, and the position or a comparable one will be available.

#### 8.4. Leave of Absence, With Pay

Leaves of absence with pay are provided to full-time and part-time employees under the following circumstances, with prior approval of the Executive Presbyter or her/his designee.

Jury Duty, or other special court appearances up to ten working days per year (with possible extensions in exceptional cases with the approval of the Executive Presbyter. Any compensation received from the court shall be deducted from regular pay.

In the event of a death in the immediate family (spouse, child, parents, parents-in-law, siblings

foster parents/children and stepchildren) the employee will receive full pay for absence from the day of the death up to and including the day after burial. This leave should not exceed five (5) working days. Additional time may be taken as personal days, vacation leave or under the unpaid leave of absence policy.

#### 8.5. Leave of Absence, Without Pay

Unpaid leaves of absence, including leave for regular training periods or extended military duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, may be granted for periods of 10 or more working days. Employees shall submit requests for leave in writing to the Executive Presbyter at least two weeks before the requested leave, giving reasons for the request. Each request shall be considered on its own merit. The Executive Presbyter shall determine the response. Ordinarily, the Presbytery will not pay pension dues for leaves of absence without pay.

#### 8.6. Study Leave

Study leave is an educational program in professional and personal development for spiritual and intellectual stimulation and enrichment. Study leave is a benefit available to full time and part time exempt staff and should:

- ◆ Provide long range skill development related to the position;
- ◆ Include opportunities for exploring the insights in Biblical interpretation, theology and ethics and other areas to expand one's understanding of the church and its current or historic life;
- ◆ Provide spiritual and intellectual stimulation and enrichment in order that the staff member may become more effective and creative in function in the position;
- ◆ Include opportunities for personal development, both career and full development of human potential.

Full time regular exempt employees may receive study leave in accordance with their approved Employment Agreement or Terms of Call. Study leave is prorated from the date of employment. Study leave is not to be used for severance time or pay.

#### 8.7. In-service Education Time

Full-time and part-time regular non-exempt employees may receive up to one week of paid in-service education each year in order to improve their job skills for the benefit of both the employee and the Presbytery. Ordinarily, such training should be consistent with the organization's goals and the employee's growth and development objectives. In-service education opportunities including finances must be approved by the Executive Presbyter.

#### 8.8. Sabbatical Leave

In order to enable full-time and part-time exempt employees with specific needs or opportunities to give extended study to subject areas which contribute to the work of the Presbytery as well as their own technical or professional development, a sabbatical at half pay may be granted by the Presbytery within the following guidelines:

- ◆ The employee must have completed 5 years continuous service with the Presbytery.
- ◆ At least five years must have elapsed from the time of any previous sabbatical leave, and at least one year from any extended study leave.

- ◆ A detailed written plan of study and clearly identified goals, with end-products clearly set forth, must be approved by the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee with sufficient prior notice so as to allow the sabbatical to be covered by the Presbytery's budget and staffing plans
- ◆ The maximum length of a sabbatical will be three months. This may be taken in conjunction with earned vacation within a particular year, but may not be combined with study leave.
- ◆ If an employee separates from employment for any reason within six (6) months following a sabbatical leave, the employee shall reimburse the Presbytery for the amount salary and benefits paid.
- ◆ The on-going work of the particular position and the total Presbytery's function will be the primary factors in considering and granting of a sabbatical.

The awarding of a Sabbatical Leave must be consistent with the employee's Employment Agreement or Terms of Call.

## **9.0 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **9.1. Sexual Harassment**

Presbytery will not allow any form of sexual harassment of an employee or a prospective employee within the work environment. Because sexual harassment interferes with work performance; or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or influences or tends to affect the career, salary, working conditions, responsibilities, duties, or other aspects of career development or an employee or prospective employee; or creates an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment, it will not be tolerated.

The Presbytery's "Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct" should be followed to the extent it is applicable.

As defined in this policy sexual harassment is the term used to describe unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct when:

- (a) Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or volunteer service;
- (b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is threatened or used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- (c) Such conduct, when repeated after a request to cease, unreasonably interferes with work or volunteer service by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for employment or volunteer service.

For example, sexual harassment may include, but is not strictly limited to:

- (a) explicit sexual propositions;
- (b) subtle pressure for sexual activity;

- (c) sexual innuendo;
- (d) sexually oriented verbal teasing or abuse;
- (e) sexually oriented jokes, obscene gestures, language, suggestive pictures, or drawings;
- (f) physical contact, such as patting, pinching, touching, or constant brushing against another's body, and;
- (g) in third party situations, an individual being offended by the sexual interaction, conduct or communication between others.

It does not refer to occasional compliments.

Employees or prospective employees are strongly encouraged to report perceived violations promptly to the Executive Presbyter, or, if preferred, to the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The confidentiality of the complaint shall be assured and the complaint shall be reviewed promptly in accordance with the Employee Complaint Policies of these Personnel Policies.

Where it is determined that sexual harassment has occurred, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal shall be taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Action Policies of these Personnel Policies.

The Presbytery shall take no adverse action against any employee who in good faith complains of sexual harassment, and shall make every effort to protect the complainant against any reprisal from another employee(s).

## 9.2. Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest may occur when an employee of Presbytery can use their position to the potential benefit of themselves, a member of their immediate family (spouse, child, parents, parents-in-law, siblings), or another organization with which they are affiliated.

If an employee is called upon to participate in a discussion or decision in which the interests of the Presbytery conflict with his/her personal interests, the employee should declare such potential conflict in advance of the discussion and should abstain from participating in the decision.

All employees should avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, or any other inappropriate conduct. If an employee discovers that he/she may be in a potential position of conflict of interest, she/he should immediately review this matter with the Executive Presbyter and/or Personnel Committee.

### a. Within the Ecclesiastical Structure

Presbytery employees who hold paid or volunteer positions with other organizations including their own church should ensure that such outside employment or voluntary service does not interfere with the performance of their duties for the Presbytery or produce a Conflict of Interest in pursuit of their duties for the Presbytery. In order to avoid the appearance of a Conflict of Interest, it is the policy of the Presbytery that whenever a matter involving an employee's church becomes a topic at a Presbytery (or Presbytery committee) meeting, the employee shall declare such potential conflict in advance of the discussion and shall not participate in the voting.

b. Business Relationships

No employee shall accept any gift, gratuity, service or any special favor from any person or persons or businesses that provide or receive goods and services from the Presbytery. No employee shall provide any gift, gratuity, service or any special favor to any person or persons or businesses that provide or receive goods and services from the Presbytery. However, minor courtesies such as luncheons, dinners or similar arrangements in connection with business discussions may be received.

9.3. Personal Public Witness

It is the policy of the Presbytery to value the creativity and integrity of its staff and reaffirm the right of employees to exercise freedom of conscience. In the context of this Section the term “employee” is deemed to include volunteers.

All persons employed by the Presbytery, when they are working or holding themselves out as Presbytery employees, are expected to give a full and fair representation of the position of the Presbytery in matters of policy, social witness statements, or theological or doctrinal positions. However, the possibility of personal dissent from a policy of the Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly or the possibility of making a personal public witness is not precluded by employment with the Presbytery and is a reasonable expression of freedom of conscience.

Because public actions or expressions of personal belief may affect not only the work environment but also the Presbytery or Presbyterian Church (USA) at large, employee personal public witness is subject to the following guidelines:

- a. When making a personal public statement, an employee shall make it clear that he/she is speaking for himself/herself and not speaking for the Presbytery, the Synod, or the Presbyterian Church (USA) or any of its entities.
- b. When making a personal public witness, an employee shall not make any reference to his/her employee status. If questioned, the employee may acknowledge employed status without using that status to make a claim of authority. Accordingly, it is not permissible for an employee making a personal statement to use professional stationery, claim expertise by virtue of employment in the Presbytery or hold press conferences on Presbytery property.
- c. It is permissible, however, for persons employed by the Presbytery to identify their personal church affiliation while making a personal public witness. Thus, it is permissible for a Presbytery staff member to claim membership in a particular congregation or governing body.
- d. Employees must inform the Executive Presbyter and the relevant governing body, when appropriate, of their personal public witness or dissent.
- e. In the event an employee feels he/she cannot carry out necessary job functions for reason of conscience, the employee may request a change of assignment or may exercise his/her right to resign the position.

In certain circumstances, employees may be required, as part of their work responsibilities, to accomplish work on issues currently in opposition to Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly policies or around which there is controversy. This may involve research, production of

resources, or planning of or participation in programs or events. When acting within the scope of their employment responsibilities, employees are protected from disciplinary action related to the provisions of this policy.

#### **9.4. Confidentiality of Information Regarding Presbytery Operations**

Confidential information is a term used to classify that information specifically related to the operation of the Presbytery or to any of its member churches or pastors that is based on the examination, observation or conversation with a pastor or church leader or on any information generated by the Presbytery's computers and maintained in the Presbytery's computers. The term "confidential information" also applies to that class of information contained in reports, records, notes, memoranda or other data of the Presbytery and its committees. The term does not apply to documents or other information prepared for outside reporting. When in doubt, employees should verify with the Executive Presbyter the appropriateness of releasing particular information.

The exchange of any confidential information as described above between employees is restricted solely to those "who need to know" in order to safely and effectively carry out their duties. Information concerning pastors or church and Presbytery business shall be held in strict confidence and shall never be discussed or conveyed to any person, including other employees except in the normal and authorized course of the Presbytery's business.

Disclosure of confidential information may give rise to irreparable injury to the Presbytery or to one of its member churches or pastors. A breach of this responsibility may result in employee disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **10.0 EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS**

### **10.1. Complaint Process**

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is an alleged violation of an approved personnel policy or practice or of an applicable State or Federal law not adequately dealt with in these policies or practices.

The Presbytery seeks to foster within its staff working relationships that affirm the importance of each individual and her/his contribution to the work being done; encourage mutual respect of employee and supervisor(s); provide prompt answers to questions; minimize misunderstandings; and seek resolutions of differences as quickly as possible.

It is the Presbytery's policy to facilitate the development of open, orderly channels of communication between all levels of management. Employees are encouraged to take initiative in seeking answers to their questions or solutions to their work-related problems through immediate discussion with the Executive Presbyter and/or Personnel Committee. The Executive Presbyter and/or Personnel Committee is expected to maintain an open door to employees responsible to her/him; to encourage communication by giving prompt attention to their suggestions; and to provide active assistance in dealing with their concerns or complaints.

### 10.2. Preliminary Complaint Procedure

Prior to filing a formal written complaint, preliminary steps are to be taken:

- (1) The complaining party must first discuss her/his problem with the Executive Presbyter.
- (2) In the event that the Executive Presbyter is perceived to be part of the problem, the matter is to be taken to the Chair of the Personnel Committee, who will seek to resolve the issue in consultation with all parties.

### 10.3 Formal Complaint Procedure

If informal efforts to resolve a problem have failed, a formal complaint may be filed by submitting a written statement to the Chair of the Personnel Committee, with a copy to the Executive Presbyter. Formal complaints must be filed within forty-five (45) days of the alleged concern.

The Chair of the Personnel Committee shall call a meeting of the Committee, which shall review the complaint with all parties concerned. Ordinarily, within 15 working days the Committee will:

- ◆ Review the complaint with the principal parties
- ◆ Make a determination of the complaint
- ◆ Provide the principal parties with a written record of this determination.

The determination shall include a place for the complaining party to indicate his/her acceptance or rejection of the decision.

Any decision of the Committee relating to resolution of the complaint shall be final and in no event appealable in any court of law.

### 10.4. Written Records

A written record of all complaints and decisions arrived at in all meetings shall be kept. Letters of decision shall contain provision for the complaining party to indicate his/her acceptance or rejection of the decision.

## 11.0 **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

### 11.1 Philosophy

It is the philosophy of the Presbytery that all employees should be treated with respect and afforded every opportunity to perform their jobs to the fullest extent of their abilities. However, a situation may arise when an employee violates Presbytery work rules or fails to perform the duties of his/her position and must be confronted with this fact. Any such variances must be resolved properly to constructively correct the total situation. True “disciplinary action” is designed to teach while at the same time correct. Good disciplinary action is intended to be primarily preventive, not punitive, and treat all employees a like.

Whenever a variation from Presbytery work rules or acceptable job performance occurs, disciplinary action appropriate to the circumstances shall be taken. Ordinarily, Presbytery



endorses a practice of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve. However, Presbytery does retain the right to administer discipline in the manner it deems most appropriate.

### 11.2 Procedures

The normal application of discipline should be:

1. If an employee is not meeting Presbytery's standards of behavior or performance such as indicated in paragraph 7 below, the Executive Presbyter should take the following action:
  - a. Meet with the employee to discuss the matter.
  - b. Inform the employee of the nature of the problem and the action necessary to correct it.
  - c. Prepare a memorandum for the Executive Presbyter's own records indicating that the meeting has taken place.
2. If there is a second occurrence, the Executive Presbyter should hold another meeting with the employee and take the following action:
  - a. Issue a written reprimand to the employee.
  - b. Warn the employee that a third incident will result in more severe disciplinary action.
  - c. Prepare a written report describing the first and second incidents and summarizing the action taken during the meeting with the employee. Both the Executive Presbyter and the employee should sign the report.
3. If there are additional occurrences, the Executive Presbyter should take the following action:
  - a. Hold a progress review with the employee and at least one member of the Personnel Committee for the purpose of hearing the principal parties and seeking agreements to improve the employee's performance.
  - b. As appropriate, the committee may decide to:
    - ◆ Issue a written reprimand or warning;
    - ◆ Suspend the employee without pay for up to five working days.
    - ◆ Suspend the employee indefinitely and recommend termination.
  - c. Prepare a written report describing the occurrences, indicating the timing between occurrences and summarizing the action taken or recommended and its justification. Both the Executive Presbyter and the employee should sign the report.
4. In cases involving serious misconduct as described in paragraph 8 below, the above procedures may be disregarded. The Executive Presbyter should suspend the employee immediately pending a review and evaluation of the circumstances by the Personnel Committee within five working days. Notice of the reason for the suspension shall be given to the employee in writing at the time of suspension. Employees suspended from work will not receive pay or accrue any employee benefits during the suspension, unless the Personnel Committee grants an exception. Following its review the Personnel Committee shall make a determination of appropriate action. Outcomes may include but are not limited to:
  - a. dismissal of a non-exempt employee
  - b. a recommendation for dismissal of an exempt employee

- c. termination of the suspension and restoration of the employee to regular employment status.
- d. filing of an accusation against the employee under provisions of the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

An employee shall have the right to defend his/her position with or without an advocate; use of an advocate shall be at the expenses of the employee. However, the employer does not condone the unauthorized practices of law.

5. The progressive disciplinary procedure described above may also be applied to an employee who is experiencing a series of unrelated problems involving job performance and/or behavior.
6. An employee's record will normally be cleared of any disciplinary incidents if the employee works a full year without further action being instituted under this policy.
7. The following types of unsatisfactory behavior may result in some form of progressive disciplinary action and are by example and not all inclusive:
  - a. unsatisfactory work performance
  - b. insubordination in the area of assigned duties
  - c. harassment of other employees
  - d. repeated unexcused absence or tardiness
  - e. abuse of sick leave benefit
  - f. repeated refusal to observe Presbytery policies
  - g. use of impolite/unprofessional language
  - h. sleeping on the job during working hours
  - i. wasting time, loitering or leaving the place of work without permission
  - j. failure to report immediately (within the workshift) any accident on the premise which has resulted in personal injury or property damage
  - k. use of tobacco products on the Presbytery premises (Section 12.7)
8. The following types of unsatisfactory behavior are of such serious nature that violation could result in immediate termination of employment and are by example and not all inclusive:
  - a. neglect in the care and use of Presbytery property and/or funds
  - b. sexual harassment or misconduct
  - c. illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct
  - d. any false statement made on the application for employment
  - e. use of illegal drugs or intoxicants on Presbytery premises
  - f. theft or unauthorized removal of Presbytery property
  - g. reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
  - h. mishandling or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
  - i. use of threatening or abusive language

## **12.0 SAFETY AND HEALTH**

### **12.1. Objective**

It is the objective of the Presbytery to establish and administer a process that will insure all employees:

- ◆ necessary equipment to perform tasks
- ◆ humane treatment
- ◆ clean, pleasant and safe working conditions

to the extent these are feasible and within the goals and financial capacity of the Presbytery.

### **12.2. Reasonable Accommodation**

The Presbytery will make reasonable accommodation for the known physical or mental limitations of qualified individuals with disabilities unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

### **12.3. Solicitation or Distribution**

It is the policy of the Presbytery to ensure productive work environments where employees and program operations may function without disruption. Employees may not advertise services, solicit another employee, or collect from another employee while either employee is on work time. “Work time” is defined as all time on the premises other than before or after work hour, at meals periods and break times.

### **12.4. Disabling or Life Threatening Illnesses or Injuries**

It is the policy of the Presbytery to make every reasonable effort to maintain a healthy and safe work environment for all employees as well as providing support for individual employees who may be facing the trauma of disabling, life threatening, or catastrophic illness or injury. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to ensure that the physical and emotional health and well-being of all employees are protected and reasonable accommodation is provided for a medically impaired employee as long as the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job, with or without accommodation, and meet acceptable performance standards.

As a general principle, the Presbytery recognizes that an employee facing a disabling, life threatening, or catastrophic illness or injury may wish to continue to engage in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition allows, including work. As long as these employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards and medical evidence indicates their conditions are not a direct threat to themselves or others, managers should be sensitive to their conditions and ensure that they are treated consistently with other employees. If an employee is able to work, then the employee is expected to be productive; if the employee cannot work or is not able to be productive, then he/she may be eligible for health and disability benefits as specified in Section 7 of these policies.

As with any disabling condition, the Presbytery will make reasonable accommodation for an employee with a known disability unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the Presbytery.

#### 12.5. Alcohol and Drug Use in the Workplace

The use, possession, manufacture, dispensation or distribution of alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs or controlled substances as defined under the Controlled Substances, Drugs, Devices and Cosmetics Act is not permitted on Presbytery premises, which include the building, walkways, sidewalks and parking lot.

No employee or volunteer may report for work impaired by any substance, drug or alcohol. "Impaired" means under the influence of a substance such that employee's motor senses (i.e. sight, hearing, balance, reaction, or reflex) or judgment either are or may be reasonably presumed to be affected. Any violation of this policy may subject the employee/volunteer to appropriate separation practices as outlined in Section 13 of these policies.

Furthermore, the prohibitions referenced in this section also relate to any off site event in which an employee/volunteer is participating as a representative or on behalf of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery as an employer recognizes alcohol and drug abuse as illness or disorders requiring medical treatment. Therefore, the Presbytery:

- ◆ Encourages affected individuals to seek help voluntarily.
- ◆ Assists supervisors in dealing with associated behavior related to work performance.

#### 12.6. Tobacco-Free Environment

The Presbytery is a tobacco-free environment. Use of any tobacco products (smoking or smokeless) is not permitted on Presbytery premises, which include the building, walkways, sidewalks and parking lot.

Furthermore, the prohibitions referenced in this section also relate to any off site event in which an employee/volunteer is participating as a representative or on behalf of the Presbytery.

#### 12.7. Weapons in the Workplace

It is the policy of the Presbytery to prohibit the possession, use, or display of any type of weapon, including concealed weapons on the employer's premises, which include the building, walkways, sidewalks and parking lot.

### **13.0 SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT**

#### 13.1. Definition

The term "separation" shall refer to any and all terminations of the relationship between an employee (whether full-time, part-time, exempt or non-exempt) and the Presbytery.

#### 13.2. Probationary Employees (see Section 3.1)

During the probationary period the Presbytery may terminate an employee at any time for any reason.

#### 13.3. Voluntary Resignation

A voluntary choice of separation freely made by the employee should be preceded by two week's

written notice for non-exempt employees and one-month notice for exempt employees. All such employees will receive pay for accrued vacation and personal days, which shall be forfeited if notice is not given. No compensation shall be given for unused study leave or sick leave.

#### 13.4. Retirement

The Presbyterian Church (USA) Board of Pensions provides retirement benefits. Employees should contact the Board for assistance with their retirement benefits planning.

Employees should give a minimum of six months notice before retirement. Exception to this notice requirement is made for individuals retiring due to disability. All such employees will receive pay for accrued vacation and personal days, which shall be forfeited if notice is not given. No compensation shall be given for unused study leave or sick leave.

#### 13.5. Reduction in Force

Separation because of a reduction in force for business reasons, or for other circumstances through no fault of the employee is at the discretion of the Presbytery.

When it becomes necessary to make a reduction in the work force, the Executive Presbyter and Personnel Committee will issue a written notice to all regular staff announcing the reduction and the reasons for it.

Reduction in force will be accomplished in a manner that best preserves overall organizational effectiveness. It will be based on objective criteria such as job performance, individual experience and qualifications, need for specific skills and experience, and the number of people with similar skills.

When implementing the reduction process the Personnel Committee and Executive Presbyter will:

- ◆ Implement a moratorium on the hiring of new staff
- ◆ Determine which staff will be affected by the reduction based on optimizing overall organization effectiveness
- ◆ Issue a formal notice from the Executive Presbyter
- ◆ Complete appropriate termination procedures.

Presbytery shall make reasonable efforts to assist employees in finding other comparable work. If a position or similar position calling for similar qualifications is reinstated within a period of two years, the individual who was previously employed in the position will be contacted and considered.

Employees terminated without cause will be entitled to two weeks notice (or pay in lieu of notice) as well as pay for accrued vacation, and personal days.

A severance allowance will be given in relation to the length of continuous service to the Presbytery. The severance allowance will be based upon the rate of wage or salary at the time of severance.

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Working Days of Severance Allowance</u>
1 year to 3 years	5
3 years to 5 years	10
5 years to 10 years	15
10 years to 20 years	20
20 years to 25 years	25
25 years and up	30

### 13.6. Termination For Cause

Termination for cause is considered to be an action of the last resort, normally taken only after remedial measures have proven ineffective or when employee conduct is such as to preclude further employment.

Termination or dismissal for cause of a non-clergy employee may occur upon written notice from the Executive Presbyter and the Chair of the Personnel Committee, stating specific reasons for termination. Termination or dismissal for cause of a clergy employee shall occur by action of the Presbytery.

Notice of termination shall be given to the employee in a meeting with the Executive Presbyter and at least one member of the Personnel Committee. At this meeting the employee shall be given a written notice of the termination including the specific reason(s) for the termination.

Employees terminated for cause will not be eligible for severance benefits but will be paid unused, accrued vacation.

On the final day of employment, payment shall be made of all salary and benefits to which the employee is entitled, upon receipt of all Presbytery property including keys, papers and electronic files in the employee's possession.

### 13.7. Exit Interview

Ordinarily, when an employee terminates employment, the employee is requested to schedule an exit interview with the Executive Presbyter and the Chair of the Personnel Committee. The purpose of this interview is to make certain the reason for termination is not based on some misunderstanding or condition that could be resolved. The Presbytery is also interested in obtaining any information that the employee feels might help improve the working conditions and/or ministries of the Presbytery.

# **Washington Presbytery**

## **Commissioned Ruling Elder Policy**

Approved at January 17, 2015

### **PURPOSE**

To define the role of the Commissioned Ruling Elders in Washington Presbytery as an option to provide pastoral leadership to local churches for certain periods of time; to describe the process of training and the process of discerning a call along with COM input; to explain the boundaries of the CRE's relationships with the Presbytery and the local church; to clarify guidelines that must be followed to ensure healthy ministry within the bounds of Washington Presbytery.

### **COMMISSIONING**

When the COM determines in conjunction with a particular congregation that there is need of a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE), the prospective CRE shall then be chosen from those persons designated by the Committee on Ministry (COM). A trained ruling elder cannot be commissioned to a church where their spouse is on the search committee. This person will be commissioned by the presbytery, according to the agreed upon terms of the commission. Once commissioned, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Terms of the commission: Will be determined by the COM according to the needs of the congregation and the gifts/experience of the CRE. Any agreement will have a provision informing all parties that the presbytery may terminate the commission at any time.
  - a. Length of service: The term of service will be for one year, renewable by presbytery.
  - b. Work hours: A CRE will serve for a maximum of half-time (24 hrs/weekly) in the first year. Any increase of hours must be approved by the COM after the first full year of service.
  - c. Salary and benefits: Minimum salary guidelines are as follows: CREs should not receive less than 50% of Washington Presbytery's recommended minimum effective salary of an ordained pastor for the same time period. Also to be required are auto/travel reimbursement, continuing education and other agreed upon allowances. Eligibility for pension plan participation may also be considered. This does not preclude paying a higher salary or medical benefits through the PCUSA Board of Pensions.
  - d. The annual commissioning service of Washington Presbytery shall be held during the worship service at its first Stated Meeting of the calendar year, which meeting is normally held on a Saturday in January. All Ruling Elders to be commissioned or re-commissioned to service in a particular congregation are expected to be present. If extenuating circumstances should prohibit attendance, her or his presence is expected at the next Stated Meeting for a commissioning service. If after three successive Stated Meetings of the Presbytery a Ruling Elder has failed to attend and submit her or himself to the authority of the Presbytery and the responsibilities encumbered herein cited by this policy, she or he will have forfeited her or his privilege of serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.
2. Mentoring/Supervision: The CRE shall be assigned a mentor/supervisor by COM. Ordinarily the mentor/supervisor is serving as moderator for the church to which the CRE is commissioned.
3. Annual review: The work of the CRE shall be reviewed by the COM annually in consultation with the Session and, in some instances, with the mentor/supervisor assigned. (G-2.1001)

4. Ministerial privileges: The CRE may be authorized by the COM to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; to preside in services of Christian marriage for members of their commissioned church; preside at the ordination and installation of elders and deacons; moderate Session and congregational meetings. CREs may perform these functions *only for members of congregation to which they are commissioned*. COM shall report these privileges to the Presbytery.
  - a. If authorized to perform weddings by COM, all weddings must be approved by the Session. The Session should have a wedding policy in place which provides for premarital counseling. At least one of those entering into the marriage covenant must be a member of the congregation to whom the CRE is commissioned. Any marriage that takes place outside the church building needs COM approval, and it is the responsibility of the Session or CRE to notify COM in a timely manner of such out-of-the-ordinary services so that COM can give guidance.
  - b. If authorized to perform baptisms and/or serve the Lord's Supper, CREs will have received prior training by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and be mentored by an experienced pastor, which would include an understanding of the reformed theology involved and practical application.
  - c. CREs may moderate the session and meetings of the congregation with the approval of the COM, which shall report such action to the Presbytery.
5. Trust and confidentiality: In the exercise of pastoral care, the CRE shall maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, and shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing care and all information relating to the exercise of such care. (G-4.0301)
6. A CRE can serve as an interim pastor provided he/she has had presbytery approval and Interim Ministry Training. If a CRE is designated as an interim, he/she will not ordinarily be commissioned to that church in a more permanent role. The COM must unanimously recommend approval of that CRE/church relationship.
7. Presbytery authority: The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. (G-2.1004)

#### **CRE RELATIONSHIPS WITH:**

1. CPM
  - a. CPM will select and oversee the training of persons seeking to become a CRE. Persons interested in exploring the possibility of training should contact the CPM chairperson.
  - b. The candidate will cooperate fully with the CPM to fulfill the requirements for continuing education and any mentoring/supervisory relationship with an experienced pastor.
  - c. At the end of the presbytery's prescribed training, potential CREs will receive training on the preparation of a CRE Personal Information Form (CRE PIF) and will be asked to write a statement of faith, which will be reviewed by CPM and COM.
2. COM:
  - a. Will have oversight of commissioning, decommissioning or changes of commission. The CRE will communicate directly with the chair of the COM regarding any of these and provide their updated CRE PIF and statement of faith.
  - b. After one half of CRE training is completed, COM will consult with CPM and the Ruling Elder in training to establish a relationship; assess their readiness to be placed on the Presbytery's pulpit supply list; and to provide ongoing guidance.
  - c. No person shall provide pulpit supply without the prior approval of COM



- d. Completion of CRE training does not indicate that one will be commissioned or placed on the pulpit supply list.
  - e. COM shall examine persons seeking their first commission by Washington Presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and areas of required instruction.
  - f. The COM may delegate a liaison to meet with a previously commissioned Ruling Elder in regard to a new commission. The liaison will consult with the Ruling Elder, Moderator of Session/PNC as they contemplate an agreement for commissioning.
  - g. Conversations and negotiations between a CRE and church about potential commissioned service should take place in the presence of the liaison or with the approval of the COM.
  - h. It shall be the responsibility of the CRE and/or the Clerk of Session to inform COM when a commission is within one (1) month of termination. COM will conduct a review prior to the end of the term of the commission and make any recommendation to Presbytery for renewal or termination of the commission.
3. His/her church of membership:
- a. The CRE may be a member of the church he/she is serving only with the approval of the COM.
  - b. If the CRE maintains membership in the church of service, he/she shall give up his/her right to vote as a member for as long as he/she is commissioned there.
4. Congregation being served:
- a. Will fulfill those responsibilities, which are jointly determined by the Session, COM and the CRE.
  - b. Will meet with the Session at least annually for a review.
  - c. May benefit from funding for seminary training if the church can provide for this. The church is strongly encouraged to do this and COM recommends that a fund be established for this purpose.
  - d. Neither the CRE nor his/her spouse will serve on session during the time of the commission.
  - e. The CRE shall support and encourage the congregation in filing all statistical reports according to the deadlines set by the presbytery and the PCUSA.
  - f. The CRE shall encourage the Clerk of Session to have the roll books and the minutes of session prepared and updated for the annual examination by presbytery.
  - g. The CRE is strongly encouraged to attend the presbytery's annual Leaderfest
5. Moderator of Session:
- a. Ordinarily the moderator of session will also serve as the CRE mentor/supervisor.
  - b. And the CRE shall work closely for the benefit of the church, through the leadership of Session. The two should establish regular meeting times for prayerful review of ministry responsibilities, with the goal of the CRE's growth in service.
  - c. For those who have previously moderated session, the COM will appoint a moderator to attend the first session meeting and to make a recommendation on when the CRE should moderate on his/her own.
6. Presbytery:
- a. COM will maintain a file of all available trained Ruling Elders with their PIF and Statement of Faith, available to eligible vacant churches.
  - b. Shall examine a potential CRE in regards their statement of faith.

- c. Shall have a service of commissioning with representation from the church where the CRE is to be commissioned. The Presbytery should send representatives to participate in a commissioning service at the church.
- d. Will offer pastoral care to the CRE through their mentoring pastor, Presbytery staff and the COM.
- e. Presbytery privileges: CREs shall have voice and vote at Presbytery meetings, during the time of their commission. CREs are strongly encouraged to join in the work of the Presbytery; attending meetings; participating on committees; encouraging the same for members of their commissioned church; and communicating the work and mission of the Presbytery to their commissioned church.

## **SAMPLE OF PROCESS**

1. Applicant meets with CPM for an interview, providing approval of their Session and pastor to begin CRE training.
2. If approved, training begins. Ordinarily one Friday evening and Saturday each month.
3. When one half of the Presbytery's prescribed training is completed, CPM will do an assessment and make a recommendation on whether to continue the training in consultation with instructors. Included in this assessment and recommendation shall be the question of service as a pulpit supply preacher.
4. When training is successfully completed, CPM will receive final assessments from training instructors. Guidance will be offered in the completion of a Personal Information Form and a Statement of Faith.
5. If approved for possible commissioning, CPM will make a recommendation to COM for further consultation.
6. Students meet with COM for initial interview/assessment.
7. COM will work to arrange interviews between churches and CRE candidates for possible commissioned service.
8. Once an agreement between church and CRE is completed, COM will make a recommendation to the Presbytery for commissioning.
9. Presbytery will conduct an examination of the CRE's Statement of Faith.
10. With Presbytery approval, the CRE will be commissioned by the Presbytery.

**Washington Presbytery**  
**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**  
**PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY POLICIES**

First Reading: November 14, 2017

**Approved: January 20, 2018**

**INTRODUCTION**

The following revised policies have been adopted by the Committee on Preparation for the Ministry [hereinafter referred to as the CPM] to guide its work with inquirers, candidates and churches as they cooperate to develop leaders to serve the church, to the glory of God. These policies were first accepted by Washington Presbytery on May 8, 2007.

These policies supplement those outlined in the prevailing editions of the *Book of Order* and the *Advisory Handbook for Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. These documents exert primary authority over the preparation for the ministry process.

**COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The CPM is concerned with the discernment of an inquirer's call to ministry and with a candidate's preparation to respond to that call. Guidance and support for inquirers and candidates are fostered through responsibilities shared by the committee with seminaries, sessions, and Washington Presbytery.

**LIAISON WITH THE SESSION**

In accordance with *Book of Order*, the session of the inquirer's or candidate's home church will designate an elder to serve as liaison with the inquirer or candidate. Inquirers or candidates should make contact with their session liaison at least annually, and more often if the situation warrants. It is expected that the session liaison will be supportive of the inquirer or candidate as requested.

**BACKGROUND CHECK**

The inquirer must pass *PA Act 153 Clearance*. There are three background checks that must be performed in order to receive a PA Act 153 Clearance:

1. Criminal History Record from the PA State Police (PATCH) system.
  2. Child Abuse Clearance obtained through the Department of Public Welfare.
  3. FBI Fingerprint screening (this does not include volunteers with ten year consistent PA residence).
- Inquirers are not considered volunteers.

PA Act 153 Clearance must be renewed every 3 years. CPM resources are available if financial aid proves to be necessary.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

All inquirers must complete a program of psychological assessment in the first year as inquirers, generally during their first year of seminary. Inquirers are responsible for giving the necessary releases to have the results of their consultation sent to the chair of the CPM. Copies of the reports will be shared with the

committee. Confidentiality is assured. Inquirers will not be advanced to the candidacy phase until this process has been completed.

In general practice, Washington Presbytery pays for one-third of the assessment; the inquirers home church pays for a minimum of one-third; and, the inquirer pays the balance.

Assessments may be conducted by the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute or other such professional centers and individuals approved by the CPM. Assessment center appointments are generally booked months in advance; inquirers are encouraged, therefore, to call an assessment center for an appointment as early as possible.

## **CHOICE OF SEMINARY**

Inquirers and candidates are expected to seek the approval of the CPM concerning their choice of seminary. In order that those preparing for ministry will have the deepest possible acquaintance with the life, mission and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Presbytery expects inquirers and candidates to attend a Presbyterian Church (USA) accredited seminary. The following seminaries are accredited by the PC (USA):

- Austin Theological Seminary
- Columbia Theological Seminary
- Dubuque Theological Seminary
- Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- McCormick Theological Seminary
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
- Princeton Theological Seminary
- San Francisco Theological Seminary
- Union Presbyterian Seminary

Two additional seminaries are related to the PC (USA) by covenant agreements. They are: Auburn Theological Seminary and Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

Those desiring to complete their education at non-Presbyterian, accredited seminaries must receive special approval from the CPM based on the guidelines and requirements specified in this document. The Association of Theological Schools' Commission on Accrediting provides a list of accredited seminaries at the following website: [www.ats.edu/member-schools/member-school-list](http://www.ats.edu/member-schools/member-school-list). **[See Addendum.]**

Approval of a non-Presbyterian seminary will be considered an exception rather than a general rule by CPM. Exceptions will be made on the basis of the inquirer or candidate, not on the basis of the seminary. That is, approval of attendance at a particular seminary for one inquirer or candidate will not serve precedent or assurance of similar approval for another inquirer or candidate. Each inquirer or candidate will be evaluated by the CPM.

## **GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the area of study required by the *Book of Order*, the CPM will determine that the following subject areas are represented on the seminary transcripts of candidates under their care; that is, church history, reformed theology, preaching, pastoral care and counseling, Christian education, mission, ethics, and spiritual formation.

Inquirers and candidates are generally expected to maintain a “C” average or better in their course work.

## **FIELD EDUCATION**

The CPM recognizes that every seminary structures its academic year in different ways. Therefore, candidates are expected to complete the equivalent of 10 hours a week of supervised field education for one academic year. Service in the inquirer's or candidate's home church is generally not acceptable to the committee.

Students must arrange to have copies of all evaluations for their field experiences sent to the chair of the CPM.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

At the conclusion of each year of seminary study, students are required to send a copy of their seminary transcripts to the chair of the CPM. An unofficial transcript (“student copy” or photocopy) is acceptable for this purpose, with the exception of the final transcript—which must be an official transcript, indicating receipt of the M. Div. Degree.

## **ORDINATION EXAMINATIONS**

### **Bible Content Examination**

Inquirers and candidates are strongly encouraged to take the Bible Content Examination in their second year of seminary. CPM will pay the examination fee for the first effort. It is the inquirer's or candidate's responsibility to apply to take this examination; request payment from the CPM; and, see that the results are sent to the chair of the CPM. A possible resource to prepare for this exam is *Bible Basics: Mastering the Contents of the Bible* by Duncan Ferguson, published by Westminster/John Knox, 1995.

### **Final Year Examinations**

The committee expects candidates to take the examinations in Bible Exegesis, Theology, Worship and Sacraments, and Polity during their senior year of seminary or shortly thereafter. CPM will pay the examination fees for the first efforts.

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM CIRCULATION**

Candidates are encouraged to begin writing their Personal Information Form (PIF) no later than the beginning of their final semester of their senior year. The candidate should confer with his/her CPM liaison for feedback about the PIF.

The committee chair will not ordinarily permit candidates to circulate dossiers until the candidate has passed all five standard examinations; exceptions may be granted only by vote of the full committee.

## **FINAL CONSULTATION/READINESS TO RECEIVE A CALL**

Candidates under care of Washington Presbytery will have a final interview with the CPM, during which time the candidates will be assessed for their readiness of ministry.

### **Statement of Faith**

The statement of faith submitted at the end of the candidacy phase must be typed with a font no smaller than 12-point, and no longer than one side of an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper. It should be single-spaced, and double-spaced between paragraphs. The candidate is responsible for getting a copy of the final version to the chair of the CPM.

The statement of faith should be an authentic expression of the candidate's beliefs concerning the essential doctrines of the faith, including God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit; humanity; sin and forgiveness; sacraments; salvation; the authority of scripture; the nature, mission and polity of the church; discipleship; and, eschatology.

### **Candidate's Sermon**

A CPM representative needs to hear a sermon by the candidate. The candidate needs to make arrangements for this activity to occur.

### **Waivers and Exceptions**

The CPM will consider exceptions to the above policies only in the the most exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Candidates who need to have accommodations or exceptions are urged to direct these inquiries to their session liaison or the chair of the CPM.

## **ADDENDUM**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE SEEKING APPROVAL TO ATTEND A NON-PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY**

**I.** Inquirers and candidates desiring to pursue their ministerial training at a seminary not affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) must present a statement (not to exceed ten double-spaced pages) to the CPM specifying the seminary training desired and presenting evidence and rationale for that selection. After a review of the case, the CPM will allow or disallow such study. In the case of disallowance, the inquirer or candidate will have the right of appeal to the Washington Presbytery.

**II.** The CPM's evaluation will include (but not be limited) to consideration of the following factors:

- A. The inquirer's or candidate's personal background, faith journey, previous preparation, past church affiliations, personal strengths and weaknesses, and experience of call.
- B. The validity of the reasons and rationale presented.
- C. Membership of the seminary in the Association of Theological Schools.
- D. Whether the theological position and orientation of the seminary is within the Reformed tradition.
- E. How the seminary offers adequate education in PC (USA) policy and program.
- F. How the seminary encourages the student's loyalty and support of the PC (USA).
- G. The extent to which the seminary provides for the building of relationships and experience that promote the student's identity with the PC (USA) denomination.

**III.** In the case of inquirers or candidates who are not in seminary, approval of an exception must be secured from the CPM *before* matriculation in a non-PC (USA) seminary.

**IV.** Inquirers and candidates currently enrolled in non-PC (USA) seminaries at the time they come under care of Washington Presbytery, and who desire to complete their ministerial training in such locations must make application for approval immediately after they are accepted as an inquirer or candidate by the presbytery.

**V.** All inquirers and candidates in non-PC (USA) seminaries must submit to the CPM prior to the beginning of the second seminary year, a written statement interpreting their experience in the seminary and field assignments and discussing how these experiences equip them for ministry within the denominational framework of the PC (USA).

**VI.** Any applicant who has already finished work in a non-PC (USA) seminary prior to being received as an inquirer or candidate must submit to the CPM both of the papers described above in paragraphs I and V. These papers will form the basis of dialogue between the applicant and the CPM in evaluating the adequacy of the education, training, and fieldwork undertaken and in taking subsequent action on the application.

# WASHINGTON PRESBYTERY, A CORPORATION

## REAL ESTATE POLICY

*Note: This policy is understood to include appropriate language from The Presbyterian Church (USA) Real Estate Policy, The Book of Order (Chapter VIII) and Washington Presbytery.*

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#### Appendix A

### **Introduction**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is one ecclesiastical body with its General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and sessions as parts thereof. Its mission is one which includes but is not limited to:

- the communication of the Gospel to all people
- the establishment and nurture of communities of faith
- mutuality in witness and ministry with other Christian churches
- cooperation, to the extent possible, with secular organizations having common goals with the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ
- the self-fulfillment of all people in the nation and the world.

This Real Estate Policy affirms that, with regard to real property the basic responsibility of the Presbytery is one of stewardship. An attitude of stewardship is prompted by thankfulness to God for physical resources which help to make mission possible, and yields a commitment to manage these resources in ways that permit their most effective, appropriate use for mission.



## **Article I - All Real Estate Held In Trust**

“All property held by or for a particular church, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a particular church or of a more inclusive governing body or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

*(BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHAPTER VIII. THE CHURCH AND ITS PROPERTY G-8.0201)*

Title - Washington Presbytery of the Synod of the Trinity of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is incorporated under the provisions of the Non-Profit corporation Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under the title, “Washington Presbytery of Pennsylvania.” *(CHAPTER SEVEN - THE CORPORATION, I)*

## **Article II - Types of Real Estate**

All real estate held by the Washington Presbytery, however titled, is a resource of the one Church to be utilized for the enabling, facilitating, and enhancing of the mission of the Church through all its parts. Synods, presbyteries and sessions, may own and manage properties outside this policy.

### **A. Purposes and Exclusions**

1. This Real Estate Policy intends the maximum use of resources for active mission.
2. This Real Estate Policy applies only to property acquired, held, and deployed by the Washington Presbytery in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Requirements governing real property held by particular churches, synods, or presbyteries are stated in Chapter VIII of the “Book of Order.” In this regard sections are intended to apply to property owned by churches.

### **B. Property Used Contrary to Constitution**

Whenever property of, or held for, a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ceases to be used by that church as a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with this Constitution, such property shall be held, used, applied, transferred, or sold as provided by the presbytery. *BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) G-8.0300*

### **C. Domestic Property**

Domestic properties may be described as:

1. Session-related: currently utilized for programs directed by sessions;
2. Presbytery-related: currently utilized for programs directed by presbyteries;
3. Other:
  - a. undeveloped lands not currently utilized for programs;
  - b. donations and bequests of real property not needed or not adapted for current mission use;
  - c. cemeteries;
  - d. properties whose previous use has changed as a result of a change in mission rationale;
  - e. property held by the Presbytery for income pending appropriate disposition (such as oil, gas, or mineral rights).

### **D. Responsibility for Domestic Property**

1. The Presbytery as title holder has corporate responsibility for insuring that all matters pertaining to property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and improvements are administered according to appropriate policy and procedures.
2. When title is exchanged or transferred in accordance with this approved Real Estate Policy, the Presbytery assumes no further obligation for the responsibility of ownership as of the date of exchange or transfer.

3. The Presbytery Trustees have the responsibility to make recommendations to Presbytery concerning architectural and financial plans for the erection of, or addition to church and Presbytery buildings. Any substantial changes to previously approved architectural or financial plans must be resubmitted for additional approval.

*CHAPTER SEVEN - THE CORPORATION, III – D*

**Article III - Acquisition, Leasing, or Disposition**

**A. Selling, Encumbering, or Leasing Church Property**

A particular church shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber or lease any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the Presbytery transmitted through the session of the particular church.

*BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) G-8.0500*

The following procedure must be followed for the sale, purchase, mortgage, or other encumbrance of any real estate by a church, the lease by a church of any real estate used for purposes of worship; or the lease for more than five years of any real estate owned by a church:

1. As required by both Pennsylvania law (16 Pa. C.S.A. Section 5546) and by the Book of Order (Section G-7.0402) both the trustees and the corporation at duly constituted meetings must approve the transaction, including approval of all the details and terms of the transaction. Often, this presents the logistical problem of entering into an agreement prior to securing such approval. In such case, the agreement can only be entered into with the express provision that it is subject to and contingent upon securing all approvals required by law and the Book of Order from the trustees of the church, the congregation of the church and Washington Presbytery.
2. The transaction must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery.
3. The transaction must be reviewed and approved by Washington Presbytery at a duly constituted meeting.

**B. Acquisition, Leasing, or Disposition**

**1. Acquisition/Capital Improvements:**

Requests for property acquisition or capital improvements to church property must be through the session to the Board of Trustees of Washington Presbytery.

**2. Site Acquisition General Provisions**

- a. The location of the site shall meet presbytery/synod mission program strategy requirements based on appropriate demographic studies of the community to be served. Up to \$1,000 of the cost of such study may be included in the cost of the site.
- b. Location of the site shall respond to energy conservation needs in regard to transportation to and from the site, and to orientation of future building construction.
- c. The stewardship of land and financial resources recommends sites of not more than ten (10) usable acres.
- d. A professional real estate appraisal is required to determine the fair market value of the site. The appraisal fee may be included as part of the total site purchase cost.
- e. The following tests shall be obtained with satisfactory results prior to the closing of the purchase contract:
  1. Soil test for compaction to determine the load bearing capacity of the soil structure;
  2. Soil test for percolation to determine the ability of the soil structure to absorb water. This test is waived in the event the site is connected to a city sewage system;
  3. A disclosure statement from the seller, duly notarized, and under penalties of

- perjury, that includes a description of the property and the uses of the site by the seller and all known prior uses, ascertaining that the seller knows of no past, present, or future environmental conditions that contaminate the real estate.
  - f. If the seller's disclosure statement indicates a potential environmental liability, an environmental audit to provide a general assessment of the site, identifying actual or potential environmental risks is recommended. If the risks are discovered, and the presbytery or church continues to pursue the purchase of the property, environmental testing will be required which will confirm or refute the presence of contamination or environmental hazard with an estimate of clean-up costs.
  - g. If hazards exist, and the presbytery or church continues to pursue the purchase, an action plan for clean up must be submitted by the seller, at the seller's expense, prior to the site purchase. A contract should not be signed until such issue is clarified. If the seller refuses to pay for the clean up, the Washington Presbytery recommends that the contract for purchase be declared null and void.
  - h. Sites may be purchased by a presbytery five years in advance of site development. If site development does not occur within the specified period, the development plans are subject to further review by the Board of Trustees, Washington Presbytery.
  - i. The use of the future church facility and the type of construction shall comply with all applicable building codes and zone regulations.
  - j. Disclosure report(s) must be obtained from appropriate governmental regulatory agent(ies) or others, and evaluated before a purchase is begun for such hazards as mine subsidence, abandoned oil, gas or water wells, underground storage tanks, etc.
3. To facilitate the accomplishment of authorized mission program through the use of property, the Presbytery may through the Board of Trustees:
- a. acquire, lease or otherwise secure the use of real property for mission program
  - b. exchange property for property of at least equal market value (See Appendix A);
  - c. exchange property for property of less than equal market value when such exchange serves the mission program of the Church and is justified by the Presbytery on the basis of established priorities;
  - d. sell or lease, at no less than market value, property not needed for mission program use as determined by the Presbytery,
  - e. sell or lease, at less than market value, property not needed for mission program use when such sale or lease produces resources which enhance the mission of the Presbytery and is justified by its established priorities.
  - f. propose to Washington Presbytery the sale or lease of properties not in active mission program use for which exchange or transfer is neither required nor feasible;
  - g. hold, pending appropriate disposition, property not in active use.

#### 4. Leasing of Non-Owned Property For Presbytery Use

A particular church shall not lease its real property used for purposes of worship, or lease for more than five years any of its other real property, without the written permission of the Presbytery transmitted through the session of the particular church.

*BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A) G-8.0502*

- a. permission to rent or lease office or other space shall require prior approval of the Presbytery through its Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the requesting entity.
- b. all rental agreements and leases must be negotiated with the full involvement of and concurrence by the Trustees of Washington Presbytery.
- c. the session will be solely responsible for any rent or lease charges incurred.

5. Negotiator(s):

When any deployment of property involving monetary considerations is to be negotiated, the Presbytery Trustees shall select the negotiator(s) in consultation with the session.

6. Non-Monetary Uses: Other mission program property usage's not involving monetary considerations shall be negotiated by the session.

7. Exchange:

Any exchange of property for property of equal value or less than equal value (as determined by current market appraisal) shall require the concurrence of the Presbytery acting upon the recommendation of the Presbytery Trustees.

8. Sale At Or Above Market Values:

- a. property classified as "Not Required For Mission Program Use" shall be sold for a sum at least equal to the market value
- b. should such sale be untimely or otherwise delayed, the property may be leased at market value for a period not to exceed three (3) years, at which time the salability shall be reviewed;

9. Sale At Less Than Market Value:

Property classified as "Not Required For Mission Program Use" may be sold or leased at less than market value if its proposed or projected use will enhance the mission program of the Church as determined by the Washington Trustees and must receive concurrence from Washington Presbytery Council.

10. Property shall not be sold at less than market value to private entities unless approved by Washington Presbytery.

11. In no case shall property be sold at any price to current employees or to former employees terminated or retired within three (3) years.

12. Oil and gas leases, lease or sale of mineral rights, and similar transactions shall be processed seeking competent advice on a volunteer basis when available or, if necessary, a professional management service.

C. Day-To-Day Management

The congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are responsible for their day-to-day management in a manner which is consistent with good stewardship. The Presbytery may periodically monitor these activities.

D. Environmental Concerns

Every acquisition of property, whether by gift or purchase, shall be preceded by the following specified actions pertaining to environmental responsibility. Presbytery Board of Trustees or its designee(s) will:

1. Visually inspect all structures on the property as well as the land itself and adjacent properties and compile a preliminary report which covers such environmental concerns as trash accumulation, ground surface seepage's, bubbling or other water accumulation, oily ground surfaces, exposed or known asbestos insulation, and known underground storage tanks.
2. Report any information obtained as to whether hazardous conditions existed in the past, and whether the property had or has commercial/industrial zoning.
3. Obtain a disclosure letter signed by the owner or potential donor that includes a description of past and current uses of the property.
4. Evaluate potential costs of environmental cleanup and determine whether the property should be accepted. If a decision is made to accept the property, inform the owner in writing that the costs of environmental study, testing, and required cleanup will be reimbursed to the Presbytery from sale proceeds, if and when the property is sold.

5. If necessary, arrange for an independent consultant to perform Phase I Environmental Audit Testing and any further testing.
6. Submit the results of these procedures to the Presbytery or its assignee(s) for review before any action is taken regarding acceptance or purchase.
7. Arrange and report any further tests, cleanup, or other actions deemed necessary by the Presbytery or its assignee(s).

E. Property of Church Dissolved or Extinct

Whenever a particular church is formally dissolved by the presbytery, or has become extinct by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment of its work or other cause, such property as it may have shall be held, used, and applied for such uses, purposes, and trusts as the presbytery may direct, limit, and appoint, or such property may be sold or disposed of as the Presbytery may direct, in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

*BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) G-8.0400*

**Article IV - Transfer Conditions**

Transfer of Presbytery real estate shall be effected as follows:

A. Domestic Property

1. Property in Mission Use

- a. upon Session request and with the concurrence of the Presbytery property currently in use for mission program and intended for continued mission program use directed by a session shall be transferred to a governing body corporate entity within the bounds of said Presbytery without monetary consideration. Domestic non-institutional properties normally shall be transferred to presbytery and sessions without lien, unless otherwise determined by Washington Presbytery.
- b. institutional property titled in the name of Washington Presbytery and currently in use may be transferred with the approval of Washington Presbytery to a corporate entity of the institution using said property.

2. Transfer of Title

- a. transfer of title may be effected by conditional deed, including revisionary clauses, as appropriate.
- b. all transfers of property belonging to the Washington Presbytery and transferred to a church shall include a trust provision which binds the use of that property to those purposes provided for in the Constitution of the Church.

3. Properties outside the application of this Real Estate Policy yet titled in the name of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or corporations for which it has power to act, may be transferred to less inclusive bodies (presbytery, session) by authority of a Presbytery officer subject to the following:

- a. the transfer is in accordance with all Book of Order Provisions.
- b. the transfer is from one Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity to another Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity.
- c. the transfer is approved by the appropriate session and Presbytery. Written evidence of these approvals is provided.
- d. all such transfers shall be reported to the next Presbytery meeting.
- e. institutional property transferred to institutions or governing bodies shall, if appropriate, contain a revisionary clause.

4. Other properties declared as not needed for mission use by Washington Presbytery may be sold by the Presbytery.

5. Insurance coverage, custodial care, maintenance and operating expenses shall be assumed by the recipients.

6. Additional Conditions

- a. the receiving body shall agree to accept the property in “as is” condition and, with the title, any specific obligations in connection with such property which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or its predecessors may have assumed or which presently may exist;
- b. insurance coverage, taxes, maintenance costs, or like expenses will normally be provided by the receiving body unless otherwise negotiated and agreed.
- c. undeveloped land parcels or property received by the Presbytery from bequests or donations may be sold or transferred as described above if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also determines a specific program use consistent with any donor restrictions and this determination is certified by Washington Presbytery Legal Counsel.

B. Legal Review

All leases and property transfers shall be reviewed with legal counsel.

**Article V - Disposition of Proceeds**

Disposition of Presbytery real estate sale proceeds shall be as follows:

Sale proceeds, after all transactional expenses are paid, shall be considered unrestricted expendable resources, subject to any residual limitations including donor designations, legal requirements, and consideration to use the proceeds therefrom, on a case by case basis for:

- Endowment
- Capital needs of the Presbytery
- Church development/redevelopment
- Future Trustee obligations to fund a short fall of sale proceeds in relationship to transactional expenses
- 

**Article VI - Review of Policy**

Review of this Property Policy shall be upon the following basis:

A. The Trustees shall review annually the adequacy of this Real Estate Policy and report to Washington Presbytery.

B. Revisions, adjustments, or amendments to the Policy shall be presented to the Presbytery by the Trustees for action.

C. Property of Church in Schism

The relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a particular church can be severed only by constitutional action on the part of the presbytery. If there is a schism within the membership of a particular church and the presbytery is unable to effect a reconciliation or a division into separate churches within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the presbytery shall determine if one of the factions is entitled to the property because it is identified by the presbytery as the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This determination does not depend upon which faction received the majority vote within the particular church at the time of the schism.

*BOOK OF ORDER, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) G-8.0601*

D. Events or situations not covered by this Policy shall be reviewed by the Presbytery with necessary actions handled accordingly:

1. If a one-time action is required, it shall be taken by the Presbytery upon recommendation of Trustees.
2. If a policy change is required, it shall be proposed as provided in Article VII. B.

## APPENDIX A

### Definitions:

For the purpose of this Real Estate Policy the following definitions are used:

**“Analysis of Mission Impact”:**

A detailed document describing the purposes, goals, objectives, and history of a specific mission program or project, taking into account the interests of all participating Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entities and partner churches or church-related bodies. Such a statement is required to describe anticipated effects, including financial implications, upon all parties involved if the program or project is continued or discontinued. The document should be produced with the involvement of all parties participating in or expected to be affected by a proposed course of action.

**“Real Property”:**

Land and buildings owned or leased; tracts to which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has acquired oil, gas, mineral or other surface or underground rights.

**“Market Value”:**

The most probable price which a property should bring in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, the buyer and seller each acting prudently, knowledgeably, and assuming the price is not affected by undue stimulus. Implicit in this definition is the consummation of a sale as of a specified date and the passing of title from seller to buyer under condition whereby:

- a. Buyer and seller are typically motivated;
- b. Both parties are well informed or well advised and each acting in what is considered his or her own best interest;
- c. A reasonable time is allowed for exposure in the open market;
- d. Payment is made in terms of cash in U.S. dollars or in terms of financial arrangements comparable thereto; and
- e. The price represents the normal consideration for the property sold unaffected by special or creative financing or sales concessions granted by anyone associated with the sale.

**“Value in Use”:**

The most probable price, estimated in terms of money, which a (specific or special purpose) property should bring if exposed for sale in the open market, allowing a reasonable time to find a purchaser who buys with a need for the special purpose uses to which it is adapted and for which it is capable of being used.

# Washington Presbytery's Board of Trustees

## Gas Lease Policy

Approved January 18, 2014

### **WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO SIGN A GAS/OIL LEASE?**

Many congregations have signed gas and oil leases over the last few years. The leases can be a helpful source of income, but they also carry significant risks. While not all of the leases have been properly examined by presbytery, congregations should be aware of the following requirement of the Book of Order:

*"A congregation shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation." (G-4.0206a)*

The Presbytery has an interest in making sure congregations are adequately protected from loss. Consequently, we ask congregations considering oil and gas leases to complete three steps BEFORE signing the lease, or signing off on any significant change in a lease:

1. Get a lawyer. The land agent may tell you that you do not need legal counsel. **YOU DO.** Have your attorney examine the terms of the lease to ensure that it is fair and complete.

2. Make sure that the session – not just a committee – sees the lease. A lease **CANNOT** be signed on the authority of one elder, or the president of the trustees, or the pastor. It must first be approved by a vote of session and at a called congregational meeting of the congregation/corporation. A lease that is not approved by the session and the congregation/corporation **IS NOT** a legal lease agreement.

3. Provide the Presbytery Trustees with a copy of the lease terms, the name of your attorney, and the minutes of the session meeting and congregational meeting at which the lease was approved. The Trustees will forward the lease to the full Presbytery for approval. A lease that has not been approved by Presbytery **IS NOT** a legal lease agreement.

Gas company land agents are paid to get leases signed quickly. **DO NOT** let them pressure you. Also, keep in mind that there is more to consider in such leases than money. A congregation may decide that certain kinds of drilling activity could adversely affect neighboring property, in which case love of one's neighbor outweighs financial benefit. Also, a congregation may decide that the environmental risks of drilling are greater than the financial reward.

If you have questions, please contact the Presbytery Center, and they will put you in touch with the Board of Trustees. Thank you.