

Policies and Procedures

NB: Additional policies related to committee procedures will be added after review and after updates are made to reflect any new structure adopted. Only policies with substantive changes are included in this draft.

Nomination and Election of Officers and Committees

Regular Elections

Most presbytery positions are filled during the annual nomination and election process.

1. At least 4 months prior to the date of election (the last stated meeting of the year), the committee will solicit input from congregations, ministries, members of the presbytery, and committees for potential nominees.
2. At least fourteen days prior to the date of election (the last stated meeting of the year), the committee should submit a slate of candidates to the presbytery.
3. The committee shall secure the assent of each nominee.
4. The committee shall make every effort to ensure that the principles of parity and representation are maintained.
5. Nominations shall be allowed from the floor prior to election by the presbytery.

Special Elections

Special nominations are necessary when a position is declared vacant due to death, incapacity, or resignation of a committee member or other elected person, or by declaration of a vacancy by a presbytery committee due to chronic absenteeism by a committee member. Prior to a declaration by the committee, every effort should be taken to contact the individual and assess the circumstances of the absences.

When a vacancy is declared, the committee shall:

1. Forward a nomination to the presbytery at its next stated meeting.
2. If the needs of the presbytery demand, forward the nomination to the next stated meeting of the Coordinating team.

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Qualifications for Election

All Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders in good standing in the presbytery are eligible for election. Other active members of congregations in the presbytery are eligible for those positions not requiring ordination to the Ordered Committee on the Church’s Ministries.

Moderators

Unless otherwise provided by policy, the Nominating Committee will normally recommend to the presbytery moderators for standing ministries and committees.

Terms

Terms of service are normally 3 years unless otherwise provided by rule or the Book of Order. Individuals who serve part of a term may be elected to serve a full term. With the exception of Investigative Committees, no person shall be elected to a third full term on the same committee or sub-committee until 12 months shall have elapsed.

Terms of service begin on January 1 of the year following election. For those elected to serve unexpired terms, service begins upon election.

With the exception of Synod and General Assembly commissioners and the members of the Permanent Judicial Commission, Investigative Committees, and the Committee on Representation, no person shall normally serve on two standing committees or sub-committees at a given time.

Presbytery Meetings

Stated Meetings

- ❖ Stated meetings are ordinarily held three times each calendar year in February, June, and October. Ordinarily there shall be two two-day meetings and one one-day meeting.
- ❖ The first meeting of the year shall normally be the second or third weekend (Friday and Saturday) in February. The second meeting shall normally be the first Saturday following Memorial Day. The third meeting shall normally be the second weekend in October.
- ❖ The first meeting shall normally alternate between Lyon College (even years) and the University of the Ozarks (odd years). The second meeting shall normally be held in central Arkansas (Conway, Faulkner, White, Lonoke, Saline, Pulaski, Jefferson, Garland, or Hot Spring counties). The third meeting shall normally alternate among the five regions of the presbytery.

Meeting Preparation for Stated Meetings

Planning Team assigned for that particular meeting plans the meeting. The Coordinating Team appoints the Planning Team at the conclusion of the preceding stated meeting (October team appointed at June meeting, etc.)

The Planning Team shall:

- ❖ Make all necessary arrangements for the logistics of the meeting (including meals, set-up, technical needs, etc.)
- ❖ Set the agenda for the meeting
- ❖ Plan worship
- ❖ Make any other necessary arrangements for the efficient running of the meeting

The members of the Planning Team are:

- ❖ The Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the presbytery
- ❖ The Moderator of the Coordinating Team
- ❖ The Assistant Stated Clerk
- ❖ A member of the presbytery (appointed for the calendar year)
- ❖ One member of the Coordinating Committee (convener)
- ❖ Two representatives of the hosting institution

Electronic Meeting Policy

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Background

120 From “CM-18- Guidelines for Electronic Assemblies...” issued August 2009: “There is
121 no substitute for the richness of conversation and debate that is possible when we
122 gather in one place to listen and watch and open ourselves to the work of the Spirit.
123 We best subject ourselves to each other and to God’s discerning power when we are
124 together.

125 There are circumstances though, when being physically present with one another is
126 impossible or impractical.” Also a principle of Presbyterian government is that
127 decisions reached in church bodies shall be “by vote, following opportunity for
128 discussion, and a majority shall govern (G-4.0301).”

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Practice

131 Committees, Boards and Councils of the Presbytery of Arkansas may conduct
132 occasional assembly by telephone or video conferencing or voting by electronic or
133 standard mail when:

- 134 1) The officers have determined that a particular meeting or actions within a
135 meeting should be conducted by non-traditional methods such as telephone
136 or video conferencing or electronic or standard mail. To provide this
137 opportunity, all members entitled to participate must be polled and this
138 format of meeting may be followed if a majority of members agree in advance
139 to this format.
- 140 2) Any non-traditional form of meeting must provide an opportunity for
141 simultaneous communication and deliberation, and care must be taken that
142 all qualified to participate in the meeting are included.
- 143 3) Matters addressed at a non-traditional meeting may be time-sensitive
144 matters that must be acted on prior to the next stated meeting or may be
145 “regular” pieces of business that have already been thoroughly discussed and
146 debated.
- 147 4) The system for meeting must provide access by which each member
148 participating in the meeting can communicate with each other.
- 149 5) Voting on a video or phone conferencing system will be done by roll call and
150 the clerk will record the result of the vote. If voting is done by email, the clerk
151 will post the item as a group email and all comments are to be addressed to
152 all participants. Email voting must be done within 24 hours of the time the
153 clerk sends out the item, and the clerk will tally and notify the group of the
154 results.
- 155 6) Minutes of the meeting must be recorded and added to the minutes record of
156 the committee, council or board. At the following meeting of the group, the
157 tally of conference or electronic votes is reported for verification.

158 **Service of Installation of**
159 **the Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas**
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161 **General**

162 The installation of the Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas shall normally occur
163 during the opening worship service of the February presbytery meeting and will
164 normally include the celebration of the Eucharist.

165 The outgoing Moderator will normally preach. If he/she is unable or does not desire
166 to preach, the Moderator will name someone to preach in his/her place. The
167 General Presbyter along with another Teaching Elder will normally preside at the
168 table.

169 The installation is a function of the presbytery sitting in plenary and shall occur
170 after the meeting has been gavelled to order.

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172 **Liturgy**

173 The liturgy of the installation is a Pastoral Rite of the Church (BCW p. 39) and
174 follows the proclamation of the Word and precedes the Eucharist.

175 The Order of Installation will normally follow the Installation of *Governing Body*
176 *Officers and Staff* liturgy in the **Book of Occasional Services** of the PC(USA).

177 Following the blessing of the newly installed, the outgoing Moderator shall present
178 the symbols of leadership with these or similar words:

179 *I present to you this gavel as the symbol of the leadership we hereby grant to*
180 *you. Use it with authority, yet with discernment and fairness.*

181 *I place around your neck this cross as the symbol of God's grace and love, which*
182 *undergirds all that we do together in this presbytery. It bears the symbol of the*
183 *Presbyterian Church (USA) with the map of our presbytery imposed upon it.*

184 *Wear it with pride, humility, and hope.*

185 Following the presentation of the symbols of leadership, it is appropriate for the
186 newly installed moderator to make a short statement.

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Presbytery Records

General

Minutes of meetings of the presbytery and its committees shall be maintained in the presbytery office. The Stated Clerk shall act as custodian of the records of the presbytery.

All records as required by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) shall be maintained in the presbytery office.

Records of Judicial Proceedings and Investigations

(May 2002)

The written decision on any case brought before the Permanent Judicial Commission will be entered into the minutes of presbytery. All records, minutes, transcripts, or other documents of the PJC will be on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. After the final report on each case is made to the presbytery, these records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years. After five years the Stated Clerk will destroy the records.

All records, transcripts, or other documents of an Investigating Committee, whether or not the investigation resulted in charges filed, will be kept on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. These will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years after the final report of the Investigating Committee is made to presbytery. After five years, the Stated Clerk shall destroy all these records.

Records shall be stored in accordance with provisions of confidentiality of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Records of Non-Judicial Commissions

1. An Administrative Commission constituted to ordain or install Ministers of the Word, to organize churches, to merge churches, or to receive candidates under the care of presbytery, shall file a final report with the Stated Clerk. This report shall be entered into the minutes of presbytery. A copy of this report will be filed with the records in the office of the Stated Clerk under the name of the churches and ministers involved.

2. An Administrative Commission constituted to visit particular churches, governing bodies, or other organizations of the church with the purpose of inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, shall file a final report with the Stated Clerk, who shall then report to presbytery. This report shall be entered into the minutes of presbytery. All documents, files, transcripts or other records shall be kept on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. These records shall be kept for five years after the final report of the Administrative Commission to presbytery. After five years, the Stated Clerk will destroy these records.

237 **Statement of Purpose and**
238 **Editorial Policy of *The Banner***

239 (May 2002)

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241 The purpose of The Banner is:

- 242 1. To inform the leaders (clergy and lay) of the Presbytery of Arkansas by
243 sharing news about the educators, clergy, church leaders, and churches,
244 2. To foster collegiality among the leaders of the Presbytery of Arkansas by
245 sharing news about the educators, clergy, church leaders, and churches,
246 3. To increase awareness of the resources available through the Resource
247 Center of Presbytery, and
248 4. To serve as a tool for the staff of Presbytery to communicate with the leaders
249 of the Presbytery of Arkansas.

250 To that end:

- 251 1. The Banner will carry only information on programs of the Presbytery of
252 Arkansas, its member churches, the Synod of the Sun, or the General
253 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is possible to carry
254 information on a program outside of the Presbyterian Church (USA) only if
255 approved by the General Committee of the Presbytery or its designated
256 committee.
257 2. The Banner will carry no letters to the editor or unsolicited opinion pieces by
258 authors in or outside of the Presbytery except for the editorials by the staff of
259 Presbytery.
260 3. The editor of The Banner shall be the General Presbyter or his/her designee,
261 and the editor shall make the final decisions related to these editorial policies
262 and in cases that are not covered by these policies.

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Policy for Presbytery Inquiry into a Particular Church

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General

279 The Presbytery is the corporate expression of the church in a particular geographic
280 area. Gathering the Teaching Elders and congregations under its authority, the
281 Presbytery acts to support the larger mission and ministry of the church of Jesus
282 Christ. Among its duties, the Presbytery is responsible for “assisting and supporting
283 the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world...” (G-
284 3.0301)

285 From time to time difficulties arising in a particular church may interfere with the
286 congregation’s ministry and mission. In such times, the Presbytery has a
287 responsibility to inquire into the life of that congregation, provide support to its
288 members and leaders, and assist the church in finding a way through the difficulties
289 and back to the work of witness in the world. In such times, the Presbytery acts as
290 pastoral leadership for the congregation seeking not to punish or lay blame but to
291 restore the peace, unity, and purity of the church through reconciliation and
292 partnership.

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Initiating the Inquiry Process

295 An inquiry into a particular congregation may be initiated by the congregation
296 through a written request to the Committee on the Church’s Ministries Team or the
297 Presbytery Coordinating Team. An inquiry may also be initiated by the Committee
298 on the Committee on the Church’s Ministries, Future of the Church Team, or
299 Presbytery Coordinating Team.

300 However initiated, the process of inquiry shall include both the Committee on the
301 Church’s Ministries Team and the Future of the Church Team as described below.

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The Inquiry Process

304 Each congregation is different and every inquiry into congregational life presents
305 unique challenges and opportunities. This policy seeks to give some vision for the
306 overall structure of the process, however it will be up to the ministry teams involved
307 to tailor the process and the membership of an inquiry team to meet the presenting
308 needs in a particular case.

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310 In all cases, the Inquiry Process shall:

- 311 1. Be coordinated between both the Committee on the Church’s Ministries and
312 Future of the Church ministry teams.
- 313 2. Include on any inquiry team or Administrative Commission designees each
314 from the Committee on the Church’s Ministries and the Future of the Church
315 team. (NB: These do not have to be currently seated members, however it is

- 316 advisable that at least one from each team be in current service to ensure
317 good communication and input from both ministry areas)
318 3. Seek to further the peace, unity, and purity of the Church through
319 reconciliation and restoration.
320 4. Advise the Stated Clerk immediately of any issues which may have an
321 implication on future disciplinary or remedial action against an individual
322 under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or against the session as a whole.

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324 In all cases the Inquiry Process should:

- 325 1. Be mindful of the need for members to understand the particular needs of
326 the community and context of ministry. Also, be mindful of the need to be
327 able to respond to issues in a timely manner. An inquiry team made up of
328 regional representation would be a way to achieve this objective.
329 2. Report regularly on their progress to both the Committee on the Church's
330 Ministries and the Future of the Church teams.
331 3. Take care to ensure continuity of leadership through the Inquiry/Resolution
332 process. In the event the resolution involves a change of leadership, the
333 Committee on the Church's Ministries liaison may serve as a liaison for a
334 pastoral search. This or some other mechanism to ensure continuity is
335 essential.

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Completing the Inquiry Process

338 When the difficulties in the congregation are resolved:

- 339 1. It is appropriate for the Inquiry Team to appoint a liaison to continue in
340 contact with the congregation as they live into the season of resolution and
341 restoration.
342 2. When appropriate, a thanksgiving to God during worship may be held
343 involving the church and the Inquiry Team.
344 3. The Inquiry Team shall notify the Committee on the Church's Ministries
345 Team, Future of the Church Team, and Session of the resolution and any
346 conditions or procedures for moving forward.

347 When the difficulties in the congregation are not resolved:

- 348 1. When the Inquiry Team completes their work and the difficulties in the
349 congregation are not resolved, the congregation an Administrative
350 Commission may be appointed.
351 a. In cases when the difficulties in the congregation are between the
352 congregation and the PC(USA), the church may be determined to be in
353 schism and the process of inquiry shifts to more formalized Policy for
354 Schismatic Churches.
355 b. If the difficulties are confined to the particular church yet are deemed
356 unresolved by the Inquiry Team, an Administrative Commission may
357 be appointed.

358 2. When either of the above determinations are made, the Moderators of the
359 Committee on the Church's Ministries and Future of the Church shall notify
360 the Stated Clerk that an Administrative Commission should be appointed in
361 accordance with the Book of Order.