

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.

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 Ministries of the church.

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 second 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 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

Background

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

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

Practice

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

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

Service of Installation of the Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas

General

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

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

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

Liturgy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Statement of Purpose and Editorial Policy of *The Banner*

(May 2002)

The purpose of The Banner is:

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

To that end:

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