

# MANUAL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**2022–2024**

**Standing Rules  
Guidelines and Policies  
Organization for Mission**

OFFICERS

*225th General Assembly (2022)*  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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MANUAL  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2022–2024

Standing Rules of the General Assembly  
Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly  
Organization for Mission

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Office of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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THE  
STANDING RULES  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## **Standing Rules of the General Assembly As amended by the 225th General Assembly (2022)**

### Special Rules Adopted for the 225th General Assembly (2022)

That for the purpose of these electronic and in-person meetings, the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve these additional special rules of order and suspend any standing rules that interfere with them:

That the meetings of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral be conducted by gathering electronically through an online platform and conducting business through PC-Biz.

In order to be enrolled as participants with voice and/or vote, commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members of the 225th General Assembly (2022) must participate in one of the live technology orientation opportunities prior to the convening of the assembly.

While every effort will be made to provide stable access to the platforms, each member is responsible for their audio and internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

The opportunity to participate in committee public hearings will be provided electronically prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

Greetings, reports, ceremonies, worship services, and other elements mentioned in the Manual of the General Assembly that are unrelated to items of business may be included, altered, or omitted at the discretion of the Stated Clerk.

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) shall, before committees meet to consider business, organize an online forum providing an opportunity for assembly committee moderators to meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.

Online meeting service availability shall begin at least 15 minutes before the start of each meeting.

The presence of a quorum shall be established by sign-in to PC-Biz at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members.

Meetings of the General Assembly and its commissions, committees, and task forces may be conducted by means of electronic communications equipment, by gathering at a central location, or both, provided that the technology enables all persons participating in the meeting, who are authorized to do so, to have simultaneous aural communication.



# Introduction

## Values Present at General Assembly

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (1 Cor. 12:4–7 and 26–27).

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness (G-3.0501).

With glad and grateful hearts, we affirm these core values in our worship, work, and witness together in gatherings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- That the common life of the whole church, as evidenced in our meetings, will reflect the mind of Christ, demonstrating consolation, spiritual sharing, compassion and sympathy, and doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regarding others as better than ourselves. We will be in full accord and strive to model the faithful, obedient, humble, and self-emptying witness of Jesus Christ.
- That our engagement with one another in the ministry of the gathered church will reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God’s will together. We will use our gifts on behalf of one another and the world, giving glory to God. We will love genuinely and hold fast to all that is good. We will rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. We will live in harmony with one another and overcome evil with good.
- These values will enable us
  - to engage with one another in love, humility, grace, and servant discipleship, as the council of the whole church;
  - to encourage and increase collaboration within and among all councils of the church;
  - to participate in discussion, deliberation, and discernment in ways that are fair and honest and open;
  - to focus each meeting of the General Assembly to encourage the full and prayerful participation of those seeking the mind of Christ for the whole church.

We acknowledge these core characteristics of gatherings of the General Assembly:

- Affirming the Presbyterian distinctives that God is sovereign and God alone is Lord of the conscience;
- Encountering and learning from Presbyterians and many others from across the United States and around the world;
- Gathering again with old friends in the family reunion that is General Assembly;
- Creating and expanding generative relationships with fellow Christians;
- Learning from individuals who are quite different from one another;
- Witnessing with joy and thanksgiving the emergence of new leaders for the church;
- Experiencing an intentional, faithful process for discernment and decision making;
- Experiencing God’s presence through worship, devotions, hallway prayers, and Christ-centered conversations;
- Hoping and yearning together that our mutual witness will point to the reign of God;

- Demonstrating the church is not focused on any one cause or individual;
- Growing in our understanding of Christ and the church;
- Meeting sisters and brothers in Christ who represent a particular perspective and who listen and share with care and respect;
- Making decisions through contemplation, prayer, and heartfelt sharing;
- Continuing a history and heritage together since 1789.

We demonstrate and sustain our core values through these central commitments.

- *Reflect the Body and Seek the Mind of Christ*

In all things, the General Assembly reflects the body of Christ and seeks the mind of Christ through worship, prayer, discernment, and action.

- *A Broad Context for Christ's Broad World*

The General Assembly provides a helpful, faithful context for understanding the beauty and diversity of the body of Christ in the world.

- *Expansive and Spiritual Deliberation*

The General Assembly embraces an easily understood and accessible process that creates opportunities for questions, prayer, and God's unexpected movement, rather than hurrying to yes/no votes.

- *Order and Flexibility*

The General Assembly deliberates with fairness, attention to process, order, and the encouragement of minority voices, while creating space for decision making grounded in discernment and dialogue and for the emergence of new leadership.

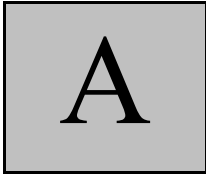
- *Reunion and Affirmation*

The General Assembly encourages the best of our Presbyterian tradition and friendships new and old.

- *Faithful Stewardship*

The General Assembly demonstrates faithful stewardship of human and financial resources.

# Standing Rules for Meetings of the General Assembly



## Sources of Business for the Meeting

- 1. Papers in General**
  - a. Papers to Be Considered
  - b. Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly
  - c. Translations
- 2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees**
  - a. Reports Deadline
  - b. Budget Consultation
  - c. Appropriate Background Information
  - d. Report Length
  - e. Form of Reports with Recommendations
- 3. Overtures**
  - a. Definition
  - b. Concurrences
  - c. Writing Overtures, Form and Word Limit
  - d. Submitting Overtures, Deadlines
  - e. Overture Advocate
- 4. Entity and Synod Minutes**
  - a. Submit for Review
  - b. Review Process
- 5. Presbytery Reports**
- 6. Commissioners' Resolutions**
  - a. Who May Propose
  - b. Word Limit
  - c. Deadline
  - d. Existing General Assembly Policy
  - e. May Not Affect *Book of Order*
  - f. Already Before Assembly
  - g. Same Issues as Previous Assembly
  - h. Referral
  - i. Referral Declined
- 7. Communications and Resource Material**
  - a. Provide Comment or Advice
  - b. Forty-five Day Deadline
  - c. Resource Materials
  - d. Advice and Counsel Memoranda
- 8. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report**
  - a. Report
  - b. Presented Directly to General Assembly

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### 1. Papers in General

#### Papers to Be Considered

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked, or electronically delivered, no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

#### Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly

b. All papers intended for consideration by the General Assembly that are forwarded to the Stated Clerk and postmarked less than sixty days, but no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk, who shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those papers not referred.

#### Translations

c. It is the responsibility of the Stated Clerk to distribute the business of the assembly, with translations as appropriate, in a manner that allows the church to carefully discern the work of the assembly. All items of business submitted for action by the assembly, including

any accompanying communications and resource material, shall be translated into the languages approved by the Stated Clerk. If materials submitted for a particular item of business exceed the word limit set for that category of business outlined below, the Stated Clerk shall determine whether to assess to the submitting body a fee for the costs of translation of the excess material.

## 2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

### Reports Deadline

a. All reports from entities, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk on or before 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall publish these reports (print or electronic) and distribute them so that they shall reach the commissioners thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly.

### Budget Consultation

b. An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).

### Appropriate Background Information

c. Committees, agencies, or corporations presenting reports shall provide the appropriate background information necessary to interpret or understand the recommendations or responses to referrals to the members of the General Assembly committees to which the business is referred. Any and all documents or publications referred to in these reports that require approval by the assembly for publication and distribution to the church, including but not limited to curriculum, study papers/guides, position papers, and program resources, shall be made available to commissioners at the time the reports are published.

### Report Length

d. All reports shall be limited to five thousand words except the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A request for an exception to the length of a report, up to ten thousand words, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated length of the report. If the Stated Clerk and the representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.

### Form of Reports with Recommendations

e. All reports that bring recommendations shall use the following form:

The [name of agency, commission, or committee] requests the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [year] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action or actions the General Assembly is being asked to take].

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the requests and/or the report of the entity, commission, or committee.

## 3. Overtures

### Definition

a. Overtures are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery (with concurrence of another presbytery) or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action, or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. (See *Book of Order*, G-3.0302d.)

### Concurrences

b. Concurrences are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery that recommend an action identical to that in an overture already received for that assembly. The first concurrence received by the Stated Clerk, fulfilling *Book of Order*, G-3.0302d, must be submitted by the deadline appropriate for the overture. Subsequent concurrences must meet the forty-five-day rule for business. The recommendation, rationale, and any resource materials submitted for a concurrence shall ordinarily not exceed fifteen hundred words.

**Writing Overtures** c. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

(1) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly regarding past and current actions on similar items of business, including:

(a) examining the most recently published *Minutes of the General Assembly* or electronic meeting records to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.

(b) determining whether the desired action has been disapproved by the previous General Assembly.

(c) determining whether a similar overture has already been proposed in order that the presbytery or synod may consider concurring with the existing overture.

Should the overture be determined to propose an action substantially the same as an action considered at the previous General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall determine whether or not to refer it to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those overtures not referred.

(2) Draft the overture in the following form:

**Overture Form and Word Limit**

“The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ overtures the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [(year)] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take].”

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the overture. The overture shall be no more than fifteen hundred words.

**Submitting, Deadlines**

d. Submitting Overtures

(1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a and G-6.02) must be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.02 and G-6.04).

(2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years’ budgets must be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

(3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered.

(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit with the overture evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the overture shall not be considered.

**Overture Advocate**

e. Overture Advocate

Each presbytery or synod that submits an overture shall notify the Stated Clerk of the name of an overture advocate who shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. Each council who submits an overture or concurrence may appoint only one overture advocate. (See Standing Rule E.2.g.)

#### 4. Entity and Synod Minutes

##### Submit for Review

a. Entities and synods required to submit minutes for review by the General Assembly shall submit such minutes on a calendar year basis so as to present minutes of all meetings for the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31) preceding the year in which is held the session of the General Assembly to which such minutes are submitted. The minutes shall contain the attestation that they have been approved by the entity or synod submitting them in the manner regularly in use within that body.

##### Review Process

b. The assembly committee to which it is assigned is authorized to approve minutes of the agencies and entities without referral to plenary unless discrepancies occur that call for reporting to the assembly. Minutes of General Assembly agencies will be reviewed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

#### 5. Presbytery Reports

##### Presbytery Votes

Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to transmit the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly responsible for the proposed amendments.

#### 6. Commissioners’ Resolutions

##### Who May Propose

a. An item of new business, in the form of a commissioners’ resolution, must be signed by commissioners representing at least one other presbytery. Such resolutions must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk’s designee. No commissioner may sign more than two such resolutions.

##### Word Limit

b. A commissioners’ resolution that exceeds seven hundred and fifty words, including the rationale, shall not be accepted for referral.

##### Deadline

c. The Stated Clerk shall determine and announce at the first meeting at which business is conducted the deadline for receipt of commissioners’ resolutions. The deadline shall not be earlier than twenty-four hours after the assembly has convened.

##### Existing GA Policies

d. In the preparation of a resolution, commissioners are urged to be aware of existing General Assembly policies relevant to their proposal and, where appropriate, to make reference to these policies.

##### May Not Affect Book of Order

e. Commissioners’ resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a).

##### Already Before Assembly

f. The Stated Clerk shall not transmit as new business any resolution that deals with matters of business already before the General Assembly, nor transmit any resolution whose purpose can be achieved by the regular process of amendment and debate.

##### Same Issues as Previous Assembly

g. Should the commissioners’ resolution deal with substantially the same issue considered by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures take one of the following actions on the

commissioners' resolution: "refer to a subsequent assembly," "decline for consideration," or "take no action."

**Referral**

h. If the proposed resolution does deal with new business, the Stated Clerk shall transmit it to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with a recommendation for its referral.

**Referral Declined**

i. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners' resolution to a subsequent assembly. Should the assembly overturn a Bills and Overtures decision not to refer an item of business, the assembly committee who would ordinarily receive this item will be reconvened for the purpose of considering the business. If a commissioners' resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.

## 7. Communications and Resource Material

**Provide Comment or Advice**

a. Communications and resource material provide comment or advice on business already under consideration by the assembly and shall neither contain nor constitute business to be considered by the assembly. Communications may be directed to the General Assembly

(1) by entities of the General Assembly that desire to comment on a single item of business coming before the General Assembly from any source other than their own entity, but which do not introduce new business,

(2) by organizations in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership, and

(3) by other denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly.

**Forty-five Day Deadline**

b. All communications intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

**Resource Materials**

c. Resource material (except for previously published books), including advice and counsel memoranda from advocacy and advisory committees, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly meeting, who shall then publish (print or electronic) and distribute the material to all commissioners prior to the assembly.

**Advice and Counsel Memoranda**

d. Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and the Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly.

## 8. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report

**Report**

a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*, including proposals for constitutional change. The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them

(*Book of Order*, G-6.02). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the *Book of Order* since its last report to the General Assembly.

**Presented  
Directly to  
General  
Assembly**

b. The report of the committee shall be presented directly to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may take action on the recommendations immediately, or it may refer them to an assembly committee for consideration by that committee and report to the General Assembly for action later during the same session of the General Assembly.





# B

## Commissioners, Delegates, and Other Participants at the Meeting

1. **Commissioners**
  - a. Election
  - b. List Delivered by 180-Day Deadline
  - c. Able to Attend
  - d. Entitlements, Expenses
  - e. Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners
  - f. Alternates
2. **Advisory Delegates**
  - a. Definition
  - b. Categories
  - c. Voting Privileges
  - d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
  - e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
  - f. Missionary Advisory Delegates
  - g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates
3. **Corresponding Members**
  - a. Definition
  - b. Entitled to Speak, Not Vote
4. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution**
5. **Other Participants**
  - a. Special Guests
  - b. Assembly Committee Moderators
  - c. Ecumenical Representatives
  - d. Resource Persons
  - e. Presbytery Staff
  - f. Ecumenical Visitors
  - g. Interfaith Representatives
6. **List of Participants**

- 
1. **Commissioners**
    - a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-3.0501. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Part II, *Statistics* of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.
    - b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.
    - c. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.
    - d. Commissioners shall be entitled to speak under the rules, and to vote and present motions in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees to which they are assigned. Commissioners shall be reimbursed for approved expenses.
    - e. In the case of a newly created presbytery, the presbytery shall be entitled to elect commissioners to the General Assembly if the qualifying enrollment of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and congregations in that presbytery shall have been completed by December 31 of the year preceding the assembly meeting (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0501).
- Election**
- List Delivered by 180-Day Deadline**
- Able to Attend**
- Entitlements, Expenses**
- Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners**

<b>Alternates</b>	<p>f. Presbyteries may elect alternates in number up to, but not exceeding, the number of commissioners to which the presbytery may be entitled. Such alternates shall be seated with other visitors to the assembly.</p>
	<b>2. Advisory Delegates</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>a. Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or councils of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints.</p>
<b>Categories</b>	<p>b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student, missionary, and ecumenical. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).</p>
<b>Voting Privileges</b>	<p>c. Advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees as voting members and shall have voice but not vote in plenary meetings. Only voting members shall have the privilege of proposing or seconding a motion. In plenary meetings of the General Assembly, the advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners to determine their advice.</p> <p>d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates</p>
<b>Young Adult Advisory Delegates</b>	<p>(1) Each presbytery may elect an active member of one of its congregations, or a participant of a New Worshipping Community or an immigrant fellowship which has a relationship with the presbytery, who shall be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.</p> <p>(2) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the name of the advisory delegate to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, and may also submit the name of an alternate. Any presbytery failing to meet the deadline is not eligible to send a young adult advisory delegate to that assembly.</p>
<b>Theological Student Advisory Delegates</b>	<p>e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates</p> <p>(1) The number of theological student advisory delegates, who must be in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, shall be no more than: two from each of the schools that are institutional members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Committee on Theological Education; one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each school represented by an invited participant on the Committee on Theological Education; and one from an additional seminary identified by the Office of the General Assembly as having a high number of students who are PC(USA) inquirers/candidates as reported by the presbyteries.</p> <p>(2) Each eligible theological institution may nominate one alternate in addition to the principal(s). All nominated students shall have at least one more year of study remaining in their degree program following the assembly.</p> <p>(3) These nominations shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected. Any theological institution failing to meet the deadline shall not be entitled to a theological student advisory delegate to that assembly.</p> <p>(4) The Stated Clerk shall forward the names of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election. When the election is completed, the presbytery shall certify that fact to the Stated Clerk.</p>

**Missionary  
Advisory  
Delegates**

f. Missionary Advisory Delegates

(1) There shall be eight missionary advisory delegates who shall be chosen by the Worldwide Ministries Division from persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mission personnel assigned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another country in which this church is engaged in mission. To the degree possible, the selection shall provide a global geographical representation with no two delegates representing the same country or geographical area and rotating the geographical representation. The Worldwide Ministries Division shall notify the Stated Clerk at the time these persons are named.

(2) The expenses to the General Assembly of each missionary advisory delegate shall include transportation only from the point of entry or domicile of the delegate in the United States and return.

**Ecumenical  
Advisory  
Delegates**

g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

There shall be up to fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates. Ten of these delegates shall be from churches outside of the United States. No more than five shall be from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Ecumenical advisory delegates shall be selected by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of their churches, in response to the invitation of a previous General Assembly. The assembly shall extend such invitations at the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency upon nomination by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

### **3. Corresponding Members**

**Definition**

a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency designated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board; the chair (or co-chairs) of the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other persons designated by the A Corporation Board; the members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; one person designated by each synod, ordinarily the executive or stated clerk; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. or her designee; the executives of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, Board of Pensions, Investment and Loan Program, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.; and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.

**Entitled to  
Speak, Not Vote**

b. Corresponding members shall be entitled to speak, under the rules, in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees on matters related to the work of the body represented, but they may neither vote nor present motions.

### **4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

**Advisory  
Committee on  
the Constitution**

During the General Assembly, three or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters.

### **5. Other Participants**

**Special Guests**

a. The assembly, out of honor, courtesy, recognition, and the need for information and resource material, may recognize other persons as guests or observers. As such, they may be invited by the General Assembly to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying

greetings or messages, or bringing enlightenment or information germane to the decision-making process. An assembly committee may extend a similar invitation at its own meeting.

**Assembly  
Committee  
Moderators**

b. When the moderator of an assembly committee is not a commissioner to the current assembly (Standing Rules C.1.c), they shall have voice in committee and voice in plenary on business from their committee.

**Ecumenical  
Representatives**

c. Ecumenical representatives are individuals sent at the initiative of another church to be the official representative of that church. The Stated Clerk may announce to member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the date and place of the next meeting of the General Assembly. When officially certified through appropriate ecclesiastical channels at least forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, these persons shall be welcomed as guests of the General Assembly and introduced to the council through the report of the assembly committee addressing ecumenism. The assembly may assume the expense and housing of such guests on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

**Resource  
Persons**

d. The assembly may welcome persons invited by the Presbyterian Mission Agency or another entity of the General Assembly for the purpose of establishing or affirming particular ecumenical, mission, or program relationships, or assisting the entity in the presentation of particular items of business. Any expense reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the inviting entity.

**Presbytery Staff**

e. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be supplied with all reports and materials related to the General Assembly, but shall not be entitled to speak in plenary meetings or in meetings of assembly committees unless called upon by a moderator to provide information.

**Ecumenical  
Visitors**

f. Ecumenical visitors are individuals attending a session of the General Assembly at their own initiative. These persons are welcomed to the assembly as unofficial visitors. The assembly shall assume no expenses for these ecumenical visitors.

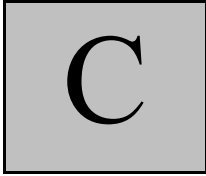
**Interfaith  
Representatives**

g. Interfaith Representatives—Three observers of other faiths or religious traditions, who shall be representatives chosen by recognized religious bodies of non-Christian religious traditions and/or faith communities, shall be present at the assembly at the invitation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. The interfaith representatives shall be present with the church in its deliberations, and to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing information germane to the decision-making process. The assembly may assume the expense of housing and on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

**6. List of Participants**

**Communicating  
with  
Commissioners  
and Advisory  
Delegates**

Upon request by entities of the General Assembly, councils, or educational institutions of the denomination, members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or independent organizations composed primarily of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk shall make available access to communicate with the commissioners and advisory delegates registered for a session of the General Assembly through the online platform chosen to host the General Assembly meeting. A fee will be assessed to cover the processing costs incurred.



## Formation of Committees and Referral of Business

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1. Assembly Committee Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number and Designation of Assembly</li> <li>b. Committee Assistants</li> <li>c. Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator</li> <li>d. Assembly Committee on Business Referral</li> <li>e. Orientation</li> </ul> | <p><b>3. Referring Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Recommendation for Referral of Business</li> <li>b. General Assembly Action on Referrals</li> <li>c. How Business Is Referred</li> <li>d. Referral Considered by One Committee</li> <li>e. Referring Overtures to Committees</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Committee Assignments</li> <li>b. Notification of Assignment</li> <li>c. Assignment List Provided</li> <li>d. Random Selection Process</li> </ul>  | <p><b>4. Tentative Docket</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. COGA, Assembly Committee on Business Referral</li> <li>b. Referral of Synod Minutes Review, GAPJC Compliance</li> </ul>   |

**Number and Designation of Assembly Committees**

### 1. Assembly Committee Structure

a. The Stated Clerk shall propose the number and designation of assembly committees to the General Assembly, which shall include a Committee on Mid Councils. The Stated Clerk shall present the proposed committee structure to the General Assembly for consideration and ratification at the first assembly meeting at which business is transacted. In making these proposals, the Stated Clerk shall consult with the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities, and may consult with other persons.

**Committee Assistants**

b. The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly for appointment the names of persons to serve as committee assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before recommending persons to serve as committee assistants. Persons proposed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly or any person who is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or any person who is a member of any other entity of the General Assembly. A committee assistant shall be appointed to provide staff services to each assembly committee. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0401.

**Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator**

c. The (Co-)Moderator(s) of the General Assembly shall appoint a moderator and a vice moderator to each committee. The moderator positions are filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly or may be from an assembly within the last six years. All vice moderator positions shall be filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly. Final appointment shall be made only after consultation with a representative of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and then also with a representative of the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the inclusivity mandated in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and G-3.0103. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees, including any committees dealing with finance and budgets, shall be ruling elders. In appointing moderators, consideration should be given to all gender identities, and the moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees should be

women. The moderators of at least two-thirds of the assembly committees shall be current commissioners. No more than one person from any one presbytery may be appointed to serve as a moderator. All synods shall be represented across the full spectrum of moderator and vice moderator appointments.

**Assembly  
Committee on  
Business Referral**

d. The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

**Orientation**

e. The Stated Clerk shall conduct an orientation for moderators, vice moderators, and committee assistants of assembly committees no less than three weeks prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The orientation shall include information regarding business likely to be referred to each committee; suggested procedures for dealing with business referred to committees, especially the use of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*; utilization of available resources, both persons and materials; and preparation and presentation of assembly committee reports. The Stated Clerk, following consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may invite persons designated by the council as General Assembly resource coordinators to participate in the orientation. During this orientation, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall meet and carry out the duties given it by these rules. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall also meet, if necessary, just prior to the convening of the assembly and its function shall end at the convening of the assembly.

**2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees**

**Committee  
Assignments**

a. Forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.

**Notification of  
Assignment**

b. No later than thirty days before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.

**Assignment List  
Provided**

c. The Stated Clerk shall provide a list of the assignments to those who need it to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

**Random Selection  
Process**

d. Commissioners and advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees by random selection as follows:

(1) The Stated Clerk shall divide the presbyteries into six regional districts. Each district shall be composed of one or more presbyteries so arranged that, insofar as possible, the presbyteries in the district have contiguous boundaries and the numbers of commissioners in the several districts are approximately equal. Within each district the presbyteries shall be arranged alphabetically. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be listed alphabetically in two parallel lists: the first containing the names of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament; the second, the ruling elders. In those cases where the presbytery has not designated commissioners, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified. The names of moderators and vice moderators of assembly committees shall be removed from the list and the names below them shall be moved up to fill the vacated positions. The ministers of the Word and Sacrament commissioners and vacant positions for minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioners shall be numbered in sequence. The list of ruling elder commissioners in each district shall be rotated downward so that no ruling elder commissioner is opposite a minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioner from the same presbytery. Separate lists of groups identified in *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, shall be prepared, insofar as it may be practical, to assure the

most equitable distribution of such commissioners to the various committees in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

(2) The Stated Clerk shall list the young adult advisory delegates in one list arranged in the alphabetical order of the presbyteries that designated the delegates. In any case where the presbytery has not designated a young adult advisory delegate, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified.

(3) The Moderator shall pick by lot a number from one to ten. This number shall identify the number of the name in the first column of names in each district in which the assignment will begin. It will also identify the number of the young adult advisory delegates in which assignment will begin.

(4) The Moderator shall then pick by lot a second number equal from one to the number equaling the total number of committees. This number shall identify the assembly committee in the order in which the committees are arranged in the standing rules to which the first assignment of members shall be made.

(5) The assignment of members of the assembly committees shall then proceed in sequence. When initial assignments have been made to all committees in sequence so that the committees with the fewest number of commissioners are full, additional assignment shall be made to the other committees in the same manner, until all commissioners and young adult advisory delegates have been assigned to committees.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall assign missionary advisory delegates and ecumenical advisory delegates to assembly committees in consultation with those delegates. Ordinarily not more than two persons in each of these categories shall be assigned to any one assembly committee.

(7) Theological student advisory delegates will be assigned to committees at the same time and in the same way as are commissioners to ensure their full participation and attendance.

(8) Names of commissioners and advisory delegates received after these assignments have been made shall be inserted in the appropriate position in the original list and assigned to the committee to which that position was assigned.

### **3. Referring Business**

#### **Recommendation for Referral of Business**

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a recommendation for the referral of all items of business coming before the General Assembly.

#### **General Assembly Action on Referrals**

b. After making any necessary changes, this committee shall present the prepared referrals to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend referrals to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business. Ordinarily, this committee shall recommend referrals to the General Assembly for its action. When the General Assembly is not scheduled to meet in time to act on its recommendation, the committee may refer business. Such referrals shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next business meeting.

#### **How Business Is Referred**

c. Items of business to be considered by the General Assembly shall be referred in one of the following ways:

(1) for consideration by an assembly committee and recommendation for action by the General Assembly;

(2) for consideration and action by an assembly committee with a report of the action to the General Assembly;



- (3) for consideration by the General Assembly through its inclusion in a consent agenda when the committee has approved a motion by 75 percent or more;
- (4) for consideration by the General Assembly in a plenary business session;
- (5) declined for referral.

**Referral  
Considered by  
One Committee**

d. Each item of business referred to a committee shall ordinarily be considered by only one assembly committee, but in no case should there be more than one committee making a recommendation on an item of business. Business of a related nature shall be assigned to a single committee insofar as possible.

**Referring  
Overtures to  
Committees**

e. The Stated Clerk shall present such items of business to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with a recommendation for their referral. In the event that the presbytery or synod disagrees with the referral recommendation, this procedure shall be followed: The presbytery or synod shall be entitled to submit a written statement regarding the background and intent of the overture at the time the overture is initially being considered for referral by the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. If, after that committee makes its recommendation, the presbytery or synod still disagrees with the referral recommendation, the presbytery or synod shall notify the Stated Clerk, in writing, of its disagreement. The overture advocate will then be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture at a special meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral that shall be held no more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the convening of the assembly.

#### **4. Tentative Docket**

**COGA,  
Committee on  
Business Referral**

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

**Referral of Synod  
Minutes Review,  
GAPJC  
Compliance**

b. The reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly regarding the initial docket of the General Assembly and referrals of business shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with any items of business not included in them (see Standing Rules I.4.b.(3) and I.4.b.(4)). Review of the minutes of the synods pursuant to G-3.0502c and of statement(s) of compliance with decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission by councils, reported by the Stated Clerk pursuant to IV.B.2.e. of the *Organization for Mission*, shall be assigned to the same assembly committee. Following the convening of the assembly, such matters shall be directed to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.



## Beginning of the General Assembly Meeting

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|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Registration and Seating</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Registration of Commissioners and Delegates</li> <li>b. Commissioners with Disabilities</li> <li>c. Assigned Seats</li> <li>d. Alternates</li> <li>e. Ecumenical Representatives</li> <li>f. Presbytery Staff Seating</li> <li>g. Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>Quorum</b></li> <li>3. <b>Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting</b></li> <li>4. <b>Land Acknowledgment</b></li> </ol> |
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### 1. Registration and Seating

#### Registration of Commissioners and Delegates

a. The Stated Clerk shall enroll commissioners and delegates on the opening day of the General Assembly and at such other times as may be necessary. The Stated Clerk shall determine any question that may arise regarding registration of commissioners and delegates. Any complaints regarding such decision shall be received by the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

#### Commissioners with Disabilities

b. A commissioner certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.

#### Assigned Seats

c. The Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner, advisory delegate, and corresponding member to a seat in advance of the meeting. They shall occupy the assigned seats during each meeting of the General Assembly at which business may be transacted. An assistant to a commissioner who has been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be assigned a seat adjacent to the commissioner.

#### Alternates

d. When a principal commissioner is replaced by an alternate prior to or during the course of an assembly session, whether for the remainder of the session or for a period of time during the session, the alternate shall assume that assembly committee position and seat assignment.

#### Ecumenical Representatives

e. Ecumenical representatives shall be seated on the floor of the assembly in a section clearly designated for such guests.

#### Presbytery Staff Seating

f. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be provided assigned seating in proximity to the area that corresponding members are seated.

**Access to  
Commissioner  
and Advisory  
Delegate Seating**

g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.

**Quorum**

**2. Quorum**

The presence of a quorum may be established by sign-in to the electronic voting platform at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum may be determined by the online list of participating members.

**Meeting with  
Overture  
Advocates**

**3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting**

The Office of the General Assembly shall, on the first business day of the assembly, before committees meet to consider business, organize a forum where assembly committee moderators shall meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.

**Land  
Acknowledgment**

**4. Land Acknowledgment**

Opening worship or the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business shall include an acknowledgment of the Indigenous peoples on whose land the assembly is meeting. The Stated Clerk shall seek to include a welcome from those Indigenous peoples from that land.

# E

## Committee Meetings

- 1. Committee Leadership and Support**
  - a. Moderator and Vice Moderator
  - b. Recorder
  - c. Committee Assistant
- 2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings**
  - a. Open Meetings
  - b. Time of Worship and Prayer
  - c. Parliamentary Procedures
  - d. Use and Preparation of Resources
  - e. Reports of Special Committees
  - f. Privilege to Speak
  - g. Overture Advocates/ Signer of Commissioners' Resolution
  - h. Responsibilities of Overture Advocate
  - i-j. Financial Implications
- 3. New Business**
  - a. Consider Only Matters Referred
  - b. Proposing Amendment to Constitution
  - c. Constitutional Matters
  - d. Approval Requirement
  - e. Presentation of New Business
  - f. Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution
- 4. Organizational Meeting**
  - a. Private Session
  - b. No Business
- 5. Public Hearings**
  - a. Schedule
  - b. Registration
  - c. Time Limits for Presentations
- 6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**
  - a. Responsible for Referral of Business
  - b. Coordination Between Committees
  - c. Distribution of Materials
  - d. Requests to Schedule Event
- 7. Reports of Assembly Committees**
  - a. Writing the Report
  - b. Content
  - c. Fiscal Implications
  - d. Identify Entity
  - e. PMA to Determine Entity
  - f. Votes Recorded
  - g. Confer with Entity Affected by Action
  - h. Minority Report

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### 1. Committee Leadership and Support

#### **Moderator and Vice Moderator**

a. The moderator presides over the committee's deliberations. The moderator may request the vice moderator or others to preside and to assist in the work of the committee.

#### **Recorder**

b. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a recorder appointed by the Stated Clerk. The recorder shall be appointed from a pool of individuals who will already be attending the General Assembly, including staff members, local volunteers, and others. The recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actions of the committee with the votes on each indicating the number of committee members voting in the affirmative, or negative, or those abstaining; and shall assist in drafting the committee report.

#### **Committee Assistant**

c. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a committee assistant. The committee assistant may address the committee offering suggestions regarding procedure, but shall not participate in its deliberations on any issue before the committee as an advocate

of one position or view regarding its action. The committee assistant shall assist the committee in securing desired resources.

## 2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings

### Open Meetings

a. Meetings of assembly committees shall be open to the public (as space permits) provided, however, that the committee may go into executive session at any time in accordance with the Open Meeting Policy printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Ordinarily, the committee assistant will be expected to remain with the committee in executive session.

### Time of Worship and Prayer

b. Each meeting of the committee shall include a time of worship and opportunity for prayer.

### Parliamentary Procedure

c. Committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* except when in contradiction to the Constitution of the PC(USA). Prior to a vote, methods of deliberation shall be consistent with the principles of Presbyterian government. (F-3.02 and G-3.0305)

### Use and Preparation of Resources

d. Use and Preparation of Resource Material:

(1) Each committee determines the use to be made of the resource material or resource persons available to assembly committees. Each assembly committee determines whether or not to permit the distribution of particular materials to the committee members.

(2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners' resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall be as succinct as possible. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives, shall distribute this resource material to the full assembly.

Resource material provided for the committee by the appropriate General Assembly entity shall include well-written presentations from the variety of different perspectives on any issue under consideration. These presentations on other perspectives should come from the most articulate and informed proponents of that particular point of view. A report including a summary of the actions taken on this issue by our ecumenical partners and previous General Assemblies shall also be prepared by an appropriate General Assembly entity.

### Reports of Special Committees

e. When business has been referred by a previous assembly to a special task force, committee, or commission created for that purpose, the assembly committee receiving that report shall set aside no less than ½ hour (30 minutes) to hear a presentation by the special task force (or committee or commission) giving background on their report. Each committee shall determine if additional time is required for presentation.

### Privilege to Speak

f. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, having been recognized by the moderator, may speak:

(1) Members of the committee;

(2) Committee assistant;

(3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities; when such experts advocating a particular point of view have spoken to the committee, the committee moderator shall offer to the committee the opportunity to hear from experts advocating a different point of view;

(4) Members of special committees, task forces, commissions created by previous assemblies (see E.2.d and K.1.f), overture advocates, and signers of commissioners' resolutions;

(5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and

(6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that

propose amendments to the Constitution, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.

(7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.

(8) The committee moderator provides that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible except as outlined in E.2.e.

**Overture  
Advocates/  
Signer of  
Commissioners'  
Resolution**

g. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners' resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners' resolution shall be entitled to speak, as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation), to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee.

**Responsibilities of  
Overture  
Advocate**

h. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture.

**Financial  
Implications**

i. A representative of any agency affected by an overture or commissioners' resolution, either with respect to the use of its financial resources or its mission priorities, shall be entitled to speak to the item of business immediately after the presenter of the overture or the commissioners' resolution, and shall be allocated reasonable time to speak.

j. The financial effect of each recommendation on any agency or entity of the denomination that would be affected by the action shall be clearly presented at the time that an overture or commissioners' resolution is considered by the committee.

### **3. New Business**

**Consider Only  
Matters Referred**

a. Each assembly committee shall consider only matters referred to it by the General Assembly. No assembly committee may initiate new business except as it relates to the business of the particular assembly committee.

**Proposing  
Amendment to  
Constitution**

b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.04b and G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

**Constitutional  
Matters**

c. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

**Approval  
Requirement**

d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter.

**Presentation of  
New Business**

e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8.

**Referral to  
Advisory  
Committee on the  
Constitution**

f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (*Book of Order*, G-6.04) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new

business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations (which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

#### **4. Organizational Meeting**

##### **Private Session**

a. Ordinarily, the initial meeting of each assembly committee is an organizational meeting in private session for up to one hour for the purpose of developing intragroup dynamics and determining procedural matters, such as approval of the committee’s agenda and consideration of the style in which the committee plans to operate.

##### **No Business**

b. During this executive session, business items before the committee shall not be discussed or acted upon.

#### **5. Public Hearings**

##### **Schedule**

a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall provide for public hearings on matters before it, including on any commissioners’ resolutions submitted to it. Public hearings are the opportunity for the committee to hear from those who do not have other avenues for addressing the committee—including those who are not Presbyterian. For this reason, those who are given privilege to speak to the committee in E.2.f.(1–7) are not entitled to address the committee during public hearings.

##### **Registration**

b. The Stated Clerk shall announce, no later than the first meeting of the assembly, the method by which a person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall register to speak, and the deadline for registering. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.

##### **Time Limits for Presentations**

c. The committee may limit the time for the presentation by any person during a public hearing. If the time allotted for the public hearing is not sufficient to accommodate all the persons wishing to speak, a method shall be approved by the assembly committee that ensures that an equal number of persons on each side of an issue have an opportunity to speak. Any person denied the right to speak at the hearing may appeal to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on the basis that the method employed in selecting speakers was not fair.

#### **6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**

##### **Responsible for Referral of Business**

a. This committee shall neither retain any items of business for its own consideration, nor suppress any matter that comes before it. However, business that substantially duplicates matters already before the assembly may be declined by this committee and reported to the assembly with a statement of the committee’s action.

##### **Coordination Between Committees**

b. This committee shall keep itself informed of the subjects being considered by the other assembly committees, and, when any subject is taken up by more than one committee, this committee shall advise the moderators of those committees regarding ways to avoid redundant or inconsistent recommendations.

##### **Distribution of Materials**

c. This committee shall determine whether or not particular materials may be distributed to the commissioners and delegates to the General Assembly, and specify the time and manner of distribution of any authorized by it. Particular materials distributed in assembly committees shall not be distributed to the full assembly without the approval of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, including the time and manner of distribution.

**Requests to Schedule Event** d. The committee shall review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate, to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

## 7. Reports of Assembly Committees

**Writing the Report** a. The moderator, vice moderator, committee assistant, and recorder, together with such other persons as the moderator may designate, shall draft the report of the committee following the sample form provided by the Stated Clerk.

**Content** b. The reports of assembly committees shall contain only (1) the recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, and, where necessary, a brief statement of the committee's reasons for such recommendations, and (2) the actions taken by the committee on items referred to the committee for action. Material necessary to identify the item of business and brief explanations may be included in the report. Extensive background information and detail contained in other documents in the hands of the commissioners shall not be included.

**Fiscal Implications** c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or final action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly. General Assembly entities have the authority to set a budget and/or scale the work mandated by the assembly to fit the budget approved by the assembly in consultation with their elected boards/committees.

**Identify Entity** d. Recommendation for assembly action, or action taken by the committee, shall identify the entity that is directed to carry out and report back to the General Assembly regarding the matter dealt with by the recommendation or action.

**PMA to Determine Entity** e. When the entity to which an assembly action is directed is a part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as a division or related entity, the Stated Clerk shall automatically amend the language so that the action is directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine which entity shall carry out the responsibility and report to the assembly on the matter.

**Votes Recorded** f. The votes recorded in the assembly committee on each recommendation or action shall be included in the report for the information of the commissioners, but shall be omitted from the *Journal* of the General Assembly.

**Confer with Entity Affected by Action** g. If the report of an assembly committee proposes or records an action affecting the interests of an entity of the General Assembly or of a council other than the General Assembly, it shall be the responsibility of that assembly committee to confer with the representative(s) designated by the entity or council concerned before proposing such action to the General Assembly or taking such an action.

**Minority Report** h. Minority Report

(1) A minority of the members of an assembly committee, or an individual member of an assembly committee, may submit in writing views that differ from those in the committee report. If the moderator of the committee shall affirm in writing that the positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly in a written minority report were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter, the Stated Clerk shall reproduce the minority report and distribute it with the report of the committee.



(2) A minority report must be appropriate for consideration as a substitute motion (see *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 2011, p. 527).

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## General Assembly Plenary Meeting

- 1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**
  - a. Report at Beginning of Each Meeting
  - b. Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket
  - c. Review Minutes
  - d. Requests for Communicating with Assembly
  - e. Referral of Protests
- 2. Reports of Assembly Committees**
  - a. Distribution
  - b. Adequate Docket Time
  - c. Committee Moderators
  - d. Financial Implication
- 3. Minority Reports**
  - a. Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute
  - b. Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation
- 4. Committee Reports on the Budget**
  - a. Per Capita Budget
  - b. Amended Per Capita Budget
- 5. Plenary Meeting Procedures**
  - a. Debate, Previous Question
  - b. Voting Methods
  - c. Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations
  - d. Constitutional Questions
  - e. Electronic Devices
  - f. Emergency Messages
  - g. Confidentiality
- 6. General Assembly Nominating Committee**
  - a. Presentation of Nominations
  - b. May Decline to Submit Nomination
  - c. Nominating from the Floor
- 7. Docket Time for Special Greetings**
  - a. Head of Communion
  - b. Assignment of Docket Time
- 8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials**
  - a. Approval for Announcements
  - b. Nonofficial Printed Material
- 9. Distributing Study Documents**
  - a. Distribution
  - b. Responsible Entity Identified
- 10. Forming Social Policy**
- 11. Peaceful Demonstrations**
  - a. Where Allowed
  - b. Prohibited in Building

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### 1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports

#### Report at Beginning of Each Meeting

- a. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report at the beginning of each meeting, recommending any necessary changes in order of business and any referrals it may have considered since its last report.

**Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket**

b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may, at any time, recommend limits on debates or changes in the docket to facilitate the handling of business. The reports of the committee shall take precedence over any other business, including orders of the day.

**Review Minutes**

c. This committee shall review the minutes of the General Assembly daily, report to the General Assembly any suggested corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes. The minutes shall be posted on the church's website and two printed copies of the minutes shall be posted in different places during the following day for examination by commissioners. The minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly during the last two days of its session shall be submitted for review and approval within ten days after the adjournment of the General Assembly to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

**Requests for Communicating with Assembly**

d. During the assembly, requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. This includes requests from assembly committees who wish to include reports or presentations that don't relate directly to an item of business that is before the assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly at the beginning of the plenary where the presentation will occur.

**Referral of Protests**

e. Protests expressing disagreement with an action or failure to act on the part of the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall decide whether or not the protest is decorous and respectful. Should the committee decide the protest is decorous and respectful, the protest shall be entered in the Minutes. The committee may prepare an answer to be printed with any protest so entered (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0105b).

**2. Reports of Assembly Committees**

**Distribution**

a. Electronic copies of the written reports of assembly committees shall ordinarily be distributed to commissioners no later than the close of the meeting prior to the one at which they are to be considered. When necessary the Stated Clerk shall arrange for the reproduction and distribution of reports.

**Adequate Docket Time**

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, shall docket adequate time for the reports of committees, including ample time for debate and action. If a report requires more time than docketed, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consult with the committee for additional time to complete consideration of the report.

**Committee Moderators**

c. Committee moderators should move the approval of recommendations with minimum comment, and material in the commissioners' provided resources shall not be read.

**Financial Implication**

d. The financial effect of each recommendation on budgets previously approved or under consideration shall be clearly presented at the time that the recommendation is considered by the assembly.

**3. Minority Reports**

**Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute**

a. In order to be considered by the assembly, a minority report shall not only set aside the majority report but also be able to stand as a full and complete substitution for the majority report recommendations. A minority report shall be moved as a substitute only after the majority report has first been moved. When this happens, the assembly shall first consider (and may amend) the majority report. When consideration of the majority report is completed, the assembly may then consider (and may amend) the minority report. Further efforts to perfect each report shall be held to a minimum in order that the assembly can concentrate instead on the issue of whether to make the proposed substitution.

**Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation**

b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee's recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. The presenters of the committee's recommendation and the minority report are to coordinate their presentations so that the assembly can best understand the particular issues at hand and keep them as equal in length as possible. (See also Standing Rule E.7.h.)

**4. Committee Reports on the Budget**

**Per Capita Budget**

a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall hear a report on the per capita budget from the committee that has reviewed that budget.

**Amended Per Capita Budget**

b. On the final day of the assembly, an updated per capita budget incorporating the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for action. If the assembly approves a budget that does not adequately fund the estimated financial implications of new actions, all new items will be scaled in proportion to the amended per capita budget.

**5. Plenary Meeting Procedures**

**Debate**

a. (1) In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard. These or any other limitations to debate in the Standing Rules or approved by the assembly apply to all persons recognized by the Moderator for any purpose, including resource persons and corresponding members. However, resource persons shall not be limited in the number of times they may respond to questions from commissioners or delegates.

**Previous Question**

(2) Motions for the previous question on more than one pending item are not in order at any time.

**Voting Methods**

b. (1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The (Co-)Moderator(s) may also call for unanimous consent. All decisions made by assembly committees by a three-quarters vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change or interpretation must be considered in plenary, unless the assembly committee recommends disapproval by a three-quarters vote, in which case the recommendation for disapproval may be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda.

(2) In addition to all consent items from assembly committees, the following items shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda:

(a) All unchallenged nominations from the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) Unanimous recommendations from assembly agencies and entities for confirmations of those offices that, according to the Manual of the General Assembly, require General Assembly confirmation.

(3) In all cases, the right of any commissioner to remove any item from the plenary consent agenda or to call for one of the other forms of voting shall be preserved.

**Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations**

c. In view of the relative ease in which studies and programs may be approved, commissioners and other assembly committee members are cautioned to be mindful of the effort required of staff and elected members to carry out the General Assembly's instructions.

**Constitutional Questions**

d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session considering an item of business, questions arising in debate concerning constitutional matters shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) present at the plenary (see Standing Rule B.4.). In cases where the ACC cannot give an immediate response, the Moderator may entertain a motion to postpone the pending motion until the ACC is prepared to advise the assembly concerning the question that has been asked.

**Electronic Devices**

e. Commissioners are expected to be present when meetings are in session both physically and mentally. The use of electronic devices for purposes other than those directly related to the current topic is therefore discouraged when meetings are in session. Commissioners are also expected to adhere to the General Assembly Social Media Policy.

**Emergency Messages**

f. Emergency messages will be relayed to a commissioner or advisory delegate during plenary meetings by way of a written message delivered by one of the Stated Clerk's designated staff or assembly assistants.

**Confidentiality**

g. Any person permitted to remain during any executive session is expected to agree to be bound by the confidentiality required of commissioners.

**6. General Assembly Nominating Committee**

**Presentation of Nominations**

a. Unless the General Assembly shall have made some other provision, the nominating committee shall present to each session of the General Assembly a nominee for election to each vacancy on the entities of the General Assembly that shall exist because of a scheduled end of term, resignation, death, incapacity to act, change of residence, or any other reason.

**May Decline to Submit Nomination**

b. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may decline to submit a nomination(s) to a particular vacancy(s) when requested to do so by the affected entity because of an expected merger of entity or a transfer of duties between entities in order to reduce the number of persons serving on a particular entity(s).

**Nominating from the Floor**

c. Nominating from the Floor

(1) Nominations by commissioners shall be in order unless the vacancy is required to be filled upon nomination from some other source.

(2) When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the "Nomination by Commissioner Form" provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee's nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

(3) In the event that there are nominations from the floor, the election shall proceed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly will deal with one challenged position at a time.

(b) The name of the General Assembly Nominating Committee's nominee shall be placed in nomination by its moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall call upon the commissioner who is placing a nomination from the floor to put that name in nomination.

(c) Once the names are placed in nomination, the order of speaking shall be first, the commissioner or a designee speaking on behalf of the floor nominee and second, the General Assembly Nominating Committee member or a designee speaking to its nominee. Both the commissioner (or designee) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee member (or designee) shall speak from the platform. Such speech shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be no other speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee.

(d) Without further discussion or debate, the General Assembly will move to vote.

## **7. Docket Time for Special Greetings**

### **Head of Communion**

a. When the Head of Communion of a member church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches is in attendance at a session of the General Assembly as an ecumenical advisory delegate or as an ecumenical representative, and proper notice is provided, the assembly shall provide up to three minutes of docket time to each such Head of Communion to present a greeting to the assembly.

### **Assignment of Docket Time**

b. The placing of this greeting on the docket will be assigned by the Stated Clerk.

## **8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials**

### **Approval for Announcements**

a. Only announcements connected directly with the business of the General Assembly shall be read from the platform and all notices shall be submitted either to the Moderator or the Stated Clerk for approval. Telegrams and special letters shall be reported to the General Assembly only at times to be designated by the Moderator.

### **Nonofficial Printed Material**

b. Ordinarily, printed materials that are not official business before the General Assembly may only be distributed at authorized booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. Other distribution is permitted to be handed out twenty-five feet or more from entrances to the building in which the General Assembly meets.

## **9. Distributing Study Documents**

### **Distribution**

a. Whenever the General Assembly itself shall require the distribution of a document for study (whether the proposal originates through the recommendation of an entity, the presentation of an overture or resolution, or arises during the conduct of the assembly's business) with a request for a response (whether the response is sought from individuals, congregations, councils, organizations of any kind, or any combination of these), the study document shall be accompanied by resource materials, bibliography, and aids as set forth in the document "Forming Social Policy," Section 5, printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Along with a response instrument and the resource materials, bibliography, and aids, the document shall be distributed on a schedule that provides for the study guide and all accompanying material to be in the possession of the proposed respondents for a minimum of twelve months before the due date of the response.

### **Responsible Entity Identified**

b. The entity to be responsible for receiving the responses and reporting to the General Assembly the summary of the responses shall be identified in the material. The report on the responses to the study may be presented no earlier than to the General Assembly that convenes in the second year after the session of the General Assembly that approves the study.

## **10. Forming Social Policy**

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**Social Witness  
Policy**

The entities of the General Assembly, including its committees, commissions, and special committees, shall be governed by the document, “Forming Social Policy” printed in the Manual of the General Assembly, when that entity is considering making a social witness policy.

**11. Peaceful Demonstrations****Where Allowed**

a. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed twenty-five or more feet outside of the entrances to the building in which General Assembly meets.

**Prohibited in  
Building**

b. Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall declare all demonstrations that occur in plenary session out of order and, if demonstrators fail to immediately disband and desist, may recess the General Assembly to a fixed time and place. This rule does not prohibit the spontaneous or planned celebration of an action of the General Assembly or of any event in the life of the church.



## General Assembly Meeting Worship

### Services of Worship

- a. Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning
- b. Ecumenical Worship
- c. Directory for Worship and Accessibility

### Services of Worship

#### Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning

a. The (Co-)Moderator(s) of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord’s Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the (Co-)Moderator(s) shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The (Co-)Moderator(s) shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The (Co-)Moderator(s) shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

#### Ecumenical Worship

b. The Stated Clerk shall plan an ecumenical period of worship and provide, in advance, suitable leadership for this period of worship.

#### Directory for Worship and Accessibility

c. The various acts of worship planned for the session of the General Assembly shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Directory for Worship, and shall be developed and led according to the guidance of the document, “Presbyterians at Worship in Mass Assemblies.” In the preparation and conduct of all worship services, care shall be taken that all language, sight, hearing, accessibility, and other barriers be eliminated so that there can be full participation of all attendees. [Example: That printed orders of service also be printed in braille and that signing be available.]







## Persons in Ordered Ministry and Elections

### 1. Moderator of the General Assembly

- a. Title/Functions
- b. Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice Moderator Candidate
- c. Election
- d. Vice Moderator
- e. Vacancy

### 2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

- a. Title/Functions
- b. Election
- c. Acting Stated Clerk
- d. Associate Stated Clerks

## 1. Moderator of the General Assembly

### Title/Functions

#### a. Title and Functions of the Moderator at the General Assembly

(1) The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical person in ordered ministry, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

(2) The office of Moderator may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.

(3) The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the [number] General Assembly [(year)] of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly.

(5) When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.

(6) The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the council (*Book of Order*, G-3.0104).

(7) The Moderator(s) and the Vice Moderator (when filled) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

### Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice Moderator Candidate

b. At the discretion of the candidate, he or she may choose to stand for election with a Co-Moderator or with a Vice Moderator candidate. When choosing to stand with another Moderator candidate, both candidates:

- (1) must fulfill all the requirements specified in these Standing Rules,
- (2) notify the Stated Clerk of their intention to stand for election together, and
- (3) will together determine how to fulfill the duties of the office.

### Election

#### c. Election of the Moderator

(1) Each person nominated to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly must be a commissioner to the General Assembly. Action by presbyteries to endorse candidates

for Moderator of the General Assembly shall not take place until after the adjournment of the immediately preceding assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall provide resourcing and orientation for Moderatorial candidates.

(2) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the assembly, the Moderatorial candidates will announce the name of a commissioner each has selected to offer to the assembly to elect as Vice Moderator, as appropriate.

(3) The following guidelines are intended to create an equal and open opportunity for Moderatorial candidates. To this end, the following procedures shall be observed:

(a) Candidates shall covenant not to spend in excess of \$2,000 in making their candidacy known to the church. This \$2,000 includes out of pocket expenses as well as the estimated value of in-kind contributions, but does not include travel and meeting expenses.

(b) Each candidate shall submit to the Stated Clerk an itemized statement of expenses, including travel and meeting expenses related to his/her candidacy and in-kind contributions. This statement shall be submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly prior to the convening of the General Assembly. This information shall be distributed to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the election of the Moderator. The statement of expenses of all candidates shall be kept on file in the Office of the General Assembly following the meeting of the General Assembly.

(c) The Office of the General Assembly shall not reimburse a candidate for campaign expenses, but shall assume expenses involved in printing and distributing material submitted for information packets as outlined in Standing Rule H.1.c.(3)(g).

(d) In order to encourage reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the Moderator, neither candidates or their advocates are allowed to communicate with commissioners and/or advisory delegates.

(e) Distribution of written campaign materials at General Assembly shall be limited to the public distribution area.

(f) Candidates are encouraged to meet and make themselves available for conversation with commissioners and advisory delegates within the scope of these procedures.

(g) Not less than fifteen days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish for commissioners and advisory delegates an electronic information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Moderator who is known to the Stated Clerk and who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate that includes a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) A written presentation by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the candidate, if that council has endorsed the candidate,

(iii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the Stated Clerk.

The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but all material including photographs submitted for each presentation shall be provided in electronic format as well as print. The material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no less than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution, and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Moderator, if elected.

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected in the following manner:

(a) When the General Assembly is ready to elect its Moderator, each candidate shall be nominated by a commissioner to the assembly in the following manner: the

commissioners making nominations shall be recognized at microphones on the assembly floor. Upon recognition by the assembly Moderator, the nominator shall say one of the following statements:

(i) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the \_\_\_ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament \_\_\_\_\_ from the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ and Ruling Elder/ Minister of the Word and Sacrament \_\_\_\_\_ from the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_.”

(ii) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the \_\_\_ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament \_\_\_\_\_ from the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_. And for Vice Moderator of the \_\_\_ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament \_\_\_\_\_ from the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_.”

The nominator shall then return to his/her seat on the plenary floor. No seconds to nominations are required.

(b) After nominations are closed, each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the concerns that nominee feels to be the most important for the church. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot, the drawing conducted by the most recent Moderator attending the General Assembly.

(c) At the conclusion of all the presentations by the nominees, they shall respond to questions from the floor. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who spoke first in the original presentation, and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they spoke earlier. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly.

(d) Where there is only one nomination for Moderator, the election may be by acclamation. Where there is more than one, the election may be by secret ballot in a format which is determined by the Stated Clerk and announced to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the convening of the assembly.

(5) The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Moderator and Vice Moderator, as appropriate, as the last item of business at the session in which the Moderator is elected. The families of the newly elected officers and all present previous Moderators shall be invited to the platform. The service shall use the order of service for “Installation of Governing Body Officers and Staff” from the *Book of Occasional Services*. The processional banner of the Moderator shall precede the newly elected Moderator into the assembly. The Moderator’s cross and stole shall be presented by the most recent serving Moderator. The newly elected Moderator invites a person to lead the prayer of installation. The most recent serving Moderator gives the charge, a hymn is sung by the assembly, and the newly elected Moderator gives the benediction.

#### **Vice Moderator**

##### **d. Vice Moderator**

(1) The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

(2) Each proposed Vice Moderator candidate shall include biographical information and a photograph in electronic format to be included with the Moderator candidate information.

(3) The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

#### **Vacancy**

##### **e. Vacancy in the Office of the Moderator or Vice Moderator**

(1) Should the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly become vacant, the Vice Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator. In such circumstance, all constitutional obligations and functions as prescribed by the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Book of Order* shall be incumbent upon the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

(2) Should the office of the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly also become vacant, the most recent living Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator as specified in the Constitution of the church.

## 2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

### Title/Functions

#### a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church.

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of Moderator, and for supervision of the election of each Moderator.

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.3.e.).

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.2.).

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of *Robert's Rules of Order*, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation.

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly, or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian.

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the councils and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly's actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action.

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly's proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk.

## **Election**

### **b. Election of the Stated Clerk**

(1) The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires the election of a Stated Clerk and the standing rules describe the procedures for the election. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected for a term of four years and is eligible for reelection to additional four-year terms. The Stated Clerk is accountable to the General Assembly for the performance of the assigned functions.

(2) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected in the manner described in this standing rule. No member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or other persons involved in this procedure as a member of the search committee or as a person providing staff services to the committee may be considered for nomination as Stated Clerk. The incumbent Stated Clerk may not participate in any way in the election process described in this standing rule. In the year there is an election of a Stated Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk during the period of the election at the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly that meets prior to the end of the term of a Stated Clerk shall elect a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(a) The slate of nominees for the nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, in the following categories: one mid council stated clerk and four persons (two ruling elders and two ministers of the Word and Sacrament) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness.

(b) Nominations from the floor for the nomination committee shall be in order following the distribution of the printed list of proposed nominees by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and a declaration by the Moderator that the names are in nomination. Names placed in nomination from the floor shall be in opposition to a particular name of an at-large member placed in nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and must be in the same category (H.2.b.(3)(a)). More than one person may be placed in nomination from the floor in opposition to an at-large nominee.

(c) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for providing the nomination committee with an up-to-date position description.

(d) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will ensure that an adequate budget for the nomination process is provided in the Office of the General Assembly and shall designate staff services for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(e) The nomination committee shall begin its work no later than 300 days before the start of the assembly that will elect the Stated Clerk.

(f) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for conducting the end-of-term evaluation of the Stated Clerk.

(g) The nominating committee shall announce that persons seeking the position of Stated Clerk shall file a completed application form and a resume or personal information form (PIF) with the committee 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly.

If the incumbent wants to be considered, he or she will notify the committee in writing and submit a current resume or PIF 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall provide a copy of the end-of-term evaluation to the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.

(h) Additional written material may be requested by the committee. No one may be nominated to serve as Stated Clerk who has not provided an application to the committee.

(i) The committee shall review and evaluate all applications to determine the constitutional eligibility of the candidates. Any candidate who is determined to not be eligible will be notified in writing within forty-five days of receipt of their resume or PIF.

(j) The committee shall interview all eligible candidates using the same methodology and select one as the committee's recommendation. All members of the committee shall ordinarily participate in the interview. The committee shall declare its nominee no later than sixty days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(k) Any of the applicants for the position of Stated Clerk, including the incumbent Stated Clerk if not the nominee of the committee, who wish to be placed in nomination against the nominee of the committee shall declare their intention to the committee to do so no later than forty-five days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(l) At the convening of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly shall distribute to commissioners and advisory delegates an information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Stated Clerk who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate, including a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the committee based upon issues that will be before the church as presented in business to be considered by the General Assembly.

(iii) The material submitted shall be typewritten on paper 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size. The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but the copy submitted for each presentation shall be provided in one color on one side of one sheet. The material shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly no less than thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.

(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the

knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.

(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.

(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(4) The General Assembly, by majority vote, shall elect the Stated Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Within forty-eight hours of the convening of the assembly, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall place in nomination a single nominee.

(b) The Moderator shall then invite other nominations from those who have completed the nomination process. Only one speech, made by a commissioner or a member of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee not to exceed five minutes in length, shall be made to nominate each nominee. There shall be no speech seconding any nomination. Each person nominated from the floor shall reaffirm a willingness to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(c) In the event there are no other nominations, the election shall proceed immediately as follows:

(i) The nominee for Stated Clerk shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(ii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Time allocated shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominee for Stated Clerk. The time allocated should not exceed fifteen minutes, after which the voting shall take place.

(d) In the event there are other nominations, the election shall proceed as follows:

(i) The election of the Stated Clerk shall take place as the first order of business on the next to last day of the assembly's session.

(ii) Each nominee shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(iii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominees for Stated Clerk. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who was nominated first and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they were nominated. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly, after which the voting shall take place.

(5) Should there be a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose to the assembly, if the assembly is in session, members for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, or shall propose to the Moderator for



appointment, if the assembly is not in session, to a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. This committee shall be composed of members as outlined in Standing Rule H.2.b. and begin the process of a search for a candidate for Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an acting Stated Clerk until such time as a Stated Clerk is elected.

(6) The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall be dismissed at the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly at which the committee presents a nominee for Stated Clerk.

(7) A new Stated Clerk shall normally assume office thirty days after the adjournment of the assembly. A longer period of transition between Stated Clerks may be negotiated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, but shall not exceed ninety days.

**Acting Stated Clerk**

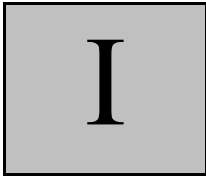
c. Acting Stated Clerk

In case of the incapacity, resignation, or death of the Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an Acting Stated Clerk until such time as the Stated Clerk is able to resume the duties or the General Assembly elects a new Stated Clerk. The person so designated may be one of the Associate Stated Clerks or another person eligible for election as Stated Clerk.

**Associate Stated Clerks**

d. Associate Stated Clerks

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.



## General Assembly Arrangements

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1. Date, Place, and Format of Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Format, Values, Electronics</li> <li>b. Date and Place</li> <li>c. Presbytery Invitations</li> <li>d. Criteria</li> <li>e. Rotating the Place of the Meeting</li> </ul> | <p><b>3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reimbursement/Per Diem</li> <li>b. Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>2. Meeting Arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Arrangements and Housing</li> <li>b. Assembly Assistants</li> <li>c. Simultaneous Interpretation</li> <li>d. Sponsorship of Events</li> </ul>   | <p><b>4. Assembly Meeting Work Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Membership</li> <li>b. Responsibilities</li> </ul>   |

### 1. Date, Place, and Format of Meeting

#### Format of the Assembly

a. Meetings of the General Assembly may be conducted by means of electronic communications equipment, by gathering at a central location, or both, as authorized by the assembly or by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly in consultation with the Stated Clerk. The technology shall enable all persons participating in the meeting who are authorized to do so to have simultaneous aural communication.

#### Values

(1) Arrangements for the General Assembly shall be made with attention to the church's commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, stewardship, and the physical and spiritual well-being of all participants.

#### Electronic Meetings

(2) When some or all participants are participating by means of electronic communications equipment, the Stated Clerk shall provide information about the platform(s) to be utilized no later than sixty days in advance of the convening of the General Assembly. Such information shall include:

- How to access the platform(s)
- The method for establishing and assuring the maintenance of a quorum
- How to seek recognition, make motions, and vote

(3) In order to be enrolled as participants with voice and/or vote, commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members must participate in a live technology orientation prior to the convening of the assembly.

(4) While every effort will be made to provide stable access to electronic platform(s), each member is responsible for their audio and internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

(5) Online meeting service availability shall begin at least fifteen minutes before the start of each meeting.

**Date and Place**

b. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and *Book of Order*, G-3.0503, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.

**Presbytery  
Invitations**

c. The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.

**Criteria**

d. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the criteria that render a place an eligible site for a meeting of the General Assembly, including the requirement that all meeting arrangements shall be made to facilitate full participation by persons with disabilities. These criteria may be obtained from the Office of the General Assembly.

**Rotating the Place  
of the Meeting**

e. In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):

- Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;
- Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid-America;
- Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;
- Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

**2. Meeting Arrangements**

**Arrangements  
and Housing**

a. The Stated Clerk shall oversee all arrangements for the meeting and housing of the General Assembly, including: the assignment of time and place for all special events and public meetings connected with or scheduled at the time of the General Assembly; the assignment of time and place for exhibits at the General Assembly; and the assignment of commissioners, advisory delegates, and others to hotels and other accommodations.

**Assembly  
Assistants**

b. The Stated Clerk shall appoint persons to serve as assembly assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. Persons appointed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly. Assembly assistants shall be assigned to particular tasks to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

**Simultaneous  
Interpretation**

c. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of proceedings into Spanish and Korean languages for any participant during plenary meetings of the General Assembly. This service shall also be provided during assembly committee meetings, services of worship, and other events during the assembly for commissioners, advisory delegates, ecumenical guests, and, when possible, for other participants.

**Sponsorship of Events**

d. An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event.

**3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses**

**Reimbursement/ Per Diem**

a. The approved reimbursement for the travel expenses, food, lodging, and other approved expenses of commissioners at the sessions of the General Assembly shall be paid by the treasurer or the treasurer's designee. The treasurer shall have the authority to deposit funds for such purposes in a bank or trust company where the General Assembly is to be in session. Commissioners shall be reimbursed by means of individual checks upon receipt of a voucher on a form provided by the treasurer. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly the amount of any per diem. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall set the per diem, and the Stated Clerk shall publish such per diem in the materials (print or electronic) provided to the commissioners. The treasurer shall determine the manner in which such checks shall be distributed and shall announce the place or places where such checks may be cashed.

**Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner**

b. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse an alternate commissioner for cost of meals (as specified in the per diem expenses for the particular session of the assembly to which the person is commissioned) during the period in which the alternate is actually seated as a commissioner. The total of the payments to the two persons shall not be larger than payment to a single commissioner attending the full assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse either the original commissioner or the alternate who replaced the original commissioner for the costs of transportation and other approved expenses, but not both. It shall be the responsibility of the two individuals, with the assistance of the presbytery that elected them, to determine an appropriate division of the costs, whether reimbursement was in cash or a prepaid ticket was provided. Both persons shall be listed in the *Journal* as commissioners, with an indication of the period during which they served.

**4. Assembly Meeting Work Group**

**Membership**

a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.

**Responsibilities**

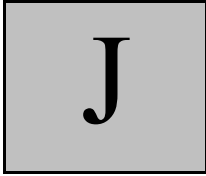
b. Responsibilities

(1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.

(2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.

(3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.

- (4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.
- (5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.
- (6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.
- (7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.
- (8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.
- (9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.
- (10) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.



## Special Meetings of the General Assembly

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|---|---|
| <b>1. Method of Calling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Petition’s Subject Matter</li> <li>b. Resolution Form</li> <li>c. Not Called for Discussion Only</li> <li>d. Resolved in 1 or 2 Days</li> <li>e. Full Text on Each Page of Petition</li> <li>f. Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills &amp; Overtures</li> <li>g. 120-day Requirement</li> </ul> | <b>2. Signatures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Verification of PC(USA) Membership</li> <li>b. Verification of Signature</li> <li>c. Removal Request</li> <li>d. Failure to Reply</li> <li>e. Verification Process Report</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>3. Date and Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Report of Decision to Call Meeting</li> <li>b. COGA Sets Date and Place</li> <li>c. Expense Plan</li> <li>d. Letter of Notification</li> </ul>                                |

### 1. Method of Calling

The *Book of Order* permits the calling of special meetings of the General Assembly (G-3.0503). The method of calling a special meeting is the required number of commissioners submitting a petition with the full text of the resolution to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

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| <b>Petition’s Subject Matter</b>                                | a. A special meeting may be called providing the petition’s subject matter falls within the General Assembly’s responsibilities. (G-3.0501).   |
| <b>Resolution Form</b>  | b. The urgent matter shall be brought in the form of a resolution or resolutions, stating the specific action proposed to be taken by the commissioners at the special meeting and shall include the reasons for proposing the decision to be made.  |
| <b>Not Called for Discussion Only</b>                           | c. A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of discussion only.   |
| <b>Resolved in 1 or 2 Days</b>                                  | d. The matters should be able to be resolved in a session of one or two days.  |
| <b>Full Text on Each Page of Petition</b>                       | e. The full text of the resolution shall appear on each page of the signed petitions.  |
| <b>Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills &amp; Overtures</b> | f. The Moderator may consult with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution meets the criteria for a called meeting or concerning the specific actions in the proposed resolution. This may take place by conference call.  |
| <b>120-day Requirement</b>                                      | g. Resolutions requiring or proposing constitutional interpretation are subject to the 120-day requirement in G-6.02. The 120-day requirement begins upon receipt of the petition by the Moderator. The Moderator may consult with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution requires a constitutional interpretation. |

## 2. Signatures

The *Book of Order* establishes the minimum number of signatures to require a called meeting. The Moderator, upon receipt of the petition, shall ask the Stated Clerk to complete the following within thirty days:

### Verification of PC(USA) Membership

a. Send each presbytery stated clerk or clerk of session a letter verifying the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) membership of the individual signatory to the petition.

### Verification of Signature

b. Send each signatory to the petition a letter of verification asking the commissioner to verify the signature on the petition and if the commissioner concurs with the purpose of the request as stated in the resolution.

### Removal Request

c. During the verification process, a commissioner may request removal of his or her name from the petition by notifying the Stated Clerk.

### Failure to Reply

d. After all reasonable efforts to establish contact have been made, the name of a commissioner failing to reply to the letter of verification shall be removed from the petition.

### Verification Process Report

e. The Stated Clerk shall report to the Moderator the results of the verification process.

## 3. Date and Location

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has the responsibility to fix the date and place of a meeting of the General Assembly when the General Assembly is not in session.

### Report of Decision to Call Meeting

a. Upon receiving certification from the Stated Clerk that the petition has met the requirements of the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Moderator shall report to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) the decision to call the meeting.

### COGA Sets Date and Place

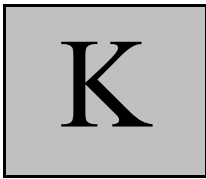
b. The COGA shall set the date and place of a called meeting.

### Expense Plan

c. The COGA shall submit to the called meeting a plan to pay for its expenses. This plan shall be considered to be part of the business of the special meeting.

### Letter of Notification

d. The letter of notification of the called meeting will be mailed to the commissioners no later than sixty days before the start of the meeting.



## Commissions, Special Committees, and Special Administrative Review

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|---|--|
| <b>1. Commissions and Special Committees</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Purpose</li> <li>b. Considerations for Creating</li> <li>c. Appointed by Moderator</li> <li>d. Length of Existence and Reports</li> <li>e. Review</li> <li>f. Representation at General Assembly and Funding</li> <li>g. Coordination</li> </ol> | <b>2. Special Administrative Review of Synods</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Three Ways to Review</li> <li>b. Written Request for Review</li> </ol> |
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### 1. Commissions and Special Committees

**Purpose**

a. The General Assembly may establish special committees and commissions to carry out decisions of the assembly or make recommendations to the assembly on matters that cannot be undertaken or accomplished by an existing entity. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0109)

**Considerations for Creating**

b. When the assembly is considering the creation of a special committee or commission, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from the most closely related assembly entity or entities as to whether the work to be assigned to the special committee could be more effectively and economically assigned to that entity or entities. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures will also consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, a representative from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, a representative from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and the assembly committee considering the proposal. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report to the assembly committee considering the proposal and to the assembly regarding this consultation and may provide comment, guidance, or an alternate recommendation to the assembly regarding the creation of a special committee or commission. Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.

**Appointed by Moderator**

c. The Moderator of the General Assembly appoints members of special committees or commissions, unless otherwise designated, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The Moderator is authorized to fill any vacancies that may occur. No person appointed may serve on more than one committee or commission unless otherwise designated by the assembly.

**Length of Existence and Reports**

d. Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.

**Review**

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review the work of each special committee or commission.



**Representation at General Assembly and Funding**

f. When the report of the special committee or commission is presented, its moderator shall serve as a corresponding member of the assembly and may be accompanied by one other member of the committee or commission. The expenses of these authorized representatives shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

In the event of a minority report, a designated member of the minority shall also be invited to attend the assembly. The expenses of this member shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

Other members of special committees or commissions may be reimbursed for attendance at the assembly only if they are required to be involved in hearings or for other official purposes.

**Coordination**

g. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services and other assistance to special committees and commissions. The work of the special committees and commissions shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly.

**2. Special Administrative Review of Synods**

**Three Ways to Review**

a. The General Assembly has authority to undertake special administrative review of synods (*Book of Order*, G-3.0502c). There are three ways the General Assembly could be requested to consider such review:

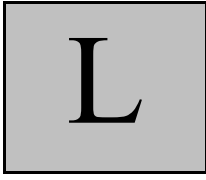
(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.);

(2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.);  
or

(3) By a commissioners' resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.

**Written Request for Review**

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.



## Amendment or Suspension of the Standing Rules

1. **Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules**
  2. **Amending the Standing Rules**
  3. **Suspending the Standing Rules**
- 

### **Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules**

1. In consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the next session of the General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before proposing to the General Assembly any amendment to the standing rules.

### **Amending the Standing Rules**

2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable. Amendments to the Standing Rules go into effect at the adjournment of the last meeting on the final day of the assembly, unless the General Assembly includes a proviso stipulating a different time.

### **Suspending the Standing Rules**

3. A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require notice no later than the previous meeting and a majority vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.



GUIDELINES AND POLICIES  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



## OPEN MEETING POLICY\*

Approved by the 209th General Assembly (1997)<sup>1</sup>

Amended by the 218th General Assembly (2008)<sup>2</sup>

1. The work of the church is strengthened when it is done in a spirit of openness and trust. Church members have a basic right to know about the work done and the decisions made by entities within the church. Church leaders have a basic responsibility to honor that right by conducting their business with a spirit of openness and vulnerability to public scrutiny. Therefore, open meetings shall be the norm for all such entities.

2. It is the policy of the General Assembly; the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the entities and work groups related to them, that their meetings shall be open to all interested persons. A separate policy exists governing non-business gatherings. Documents being considered at such meetings shall be available to interested persons at the meeting.

3. In certain circumstances, when the confidentiality of the subject matter is impeding the open work of the group, meetings of these entities may be closed. The following requirements apply:

- a. Subjects dealt with must be limited to property negotiation, personnel, civil and criminal litigation, including cases under the Rules of Discipline, or security.
- b. Closed meetings may be authorized only after serious consideration and by a majority vote of the members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to matters in 3(a) above.
- c. In closed meetings, only voting members and other persons invited by the group to serve it are to be present.
- d. The reason(s) for closing must be announced before closure and also must be recorded in the minutes.
- e. The decisions reached shall be recorded in the minutes, and shall be made public as soon as possible following the end of the closed meeting.

4. Since staff groups have neither authority nor responsibility for establishing policy, their meetings are not subject to these provisions. This does not preclude them from opening their meetings.

5. The provisions of this policy shall apply to visitors and to representatives of both church and public media, including print, electronic, and photographic journalists.

6. All the provisions of this policy are to be applied equitably to all persons and groups.

7. The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is responsible for resolving questions relating to the application and interpretation of the open meeting policy.

\*The 215th General Assembly (2003) approved the following statement in regards to the Open Meeting Policy:

The General Assembly Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the PC(USA) shall be exempt from this open meeting policy in order to go into closed session solely for the purpose of exchanging views on sensitive theological issues in cases where it is determined by two-third's vote of the members of the task force present in a duly called and constituted meeting. (*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 23)

\*The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the following statement in regards to the Open Meeting Policy:

Direct the entities subject to the PC(USA) Open Meeting Policy to post the dates, times, and locations of their open meetings on the PC(USA) calendar Web page within a reasonable time of making such plans.

<sup>1</sup>*Minutes*, 1997, Part I, pp. 212-13.

<sup>2</sup>*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 162.



# GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF MINUTES OF AGENCIES

Adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985)<sup>2</sup>  
Amended by the 215th General Assembly (2003)<sup>3</sup>

## General

1. Minutes must be submitted to the General Assembly on a calendar-year basis.
2. The original signed copy of the minutes shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly on the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly.
3. All minutes to be reviewed by the assembly shall reflect an accurate record of all substantive decisions, whether determined by negative or positive vote. Where subsequent action is required, it shall be recorded in later minutes.
4. All minutes shall be approved by the respective body before submission to the General Assembly for review and approval.
5. Minutes of all meetings shall be submitted together with those of the executive committee if the committee is empowered to act independently.
6. The minutes shall show whether or not each meeting was opened and closed with prayer.
7. A record of the attendance of members shall be included, along with a list of visitors and staff present.
8. Minutes shall be on 8-1/2 x 11-inch permalife acid-free paper that shall be supplied on request by the Department of History.
9. Minutes shall be placed in secure binding, such as a post or clamp binder.
10. Pages shall be sequentially numbered with material on both sides of the paper.
11. A slash should be inserted from the final sentence to the bottom of a partially filled page to preclude further additions, except where signatures indicate end of report.
12. One year following approval, the original minutes shall be placed on deposit at the Department of History for permanent safekeeping.

## Style

1. Acronyms or initials should either be defined in a single place at the end of the minutes or be written out the first time they are used in each set of minutes.
2. Extensive typographical errors corrected through erasures and correction fluid should be initialed.
3. Marginal topic headings should be used to facilitate referencing and reading of minutes.

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<sup>2</sup>*Minutes*, 1985, Part I, pp. 735–36

<sup>3</sup>*Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 34, 119





# GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING SYNOD RECORDS

Approved by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly  
February 16, 2024

## Content of the Minutes

The following matters shall be included in the minutes, as applicable:

1. The minutes shall contain a table of contents.
2. The date, time, and place of the council meeting; the name of the moderator presiding; and whether it is a “stated,” “adjourned,” or “special” council meeting (*Robert’s Rules*, Chapter XV, Section 48).
3. The call of the special meeting and the name of requester(s) and/or the caller in accordance with Synod’s own rules (G-3.0405).
4. The opening of each meeting with prayer (G-3.0105).
5. The closing of each meeting with prayer (G-3.0105).
6. The roll of commissioners in attendance and their presbyteries (G-3.0104).
7. The names of absentees and their presbyteries.
8. A statement that a quorum was present. (G-3.0405).
9. A record of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, if applicable (G-3.0401b).
10. The report of the Committee on Representation (G-3.0103, G-3.0401) showing implementation of the principles of participation and inclusiveness in order to assure fair representation in decision-making (G-3.0401).
11. The names of members of commissions, committees, and similar groups, including those groups that exist only during a synod meeting.
12. Action taken on reports and recommendations and all reports with clear indication of amendments.
13. The decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission and other commissions should be reported. A report should be made that lawful injunctions to the presbyteries have been obeyed.
14. Actions concerning the organization of new presbyteries or the division, uniting, or otherwise combining of presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing, subject to the approval of the General Assembly (G-3.0403c).
15. The review of the records of presbyteries, including any exceptions taken (G-3.0403, G-3.0108a).
16. The report of the synod entities, if any, and action on its recommendations (G3.0108a).
17. The approved synod budget (G-3.0113).
18. The complete report of the full financial review (G-3.0113).
19. Report of its ecumenical relationship, if any (G-5.01, 5.04).
20. Indication that the minutes have been approved by the synod according to its own rule prior to presentation of the peer review.
21. A record of the synod having considered matters referred to it by the General Assembly (G-3.0402).

22. An alphabetical roster of former members for the last six years of the Permanent Judicial Commission who may be called upon when necessary to constitute a quorum (D-5.0206b).

23. A report of property and liability insurance carried by the Synod (G-3.0112).

24. Actions taken by synod entities/commissions held between synod meetings.

### **General Provisions**

1. Each synod shall deliver to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly one copy of the minutes of all sessions of the synod that have occurred since the last review by the General Assembly, provided that such minutes have been approved by the synod or its authorized committee.

2. The minutes shall include revisions to bylaws and standing rules and all policies required by the Book of Order or attestation of the existence of these instruments, with the date of approval and/or date of revision.

3. The minutes shall be electronically signed and attested by the stated clerk of the synod; such signature should appear at the end of the journal before any attachments.

4. The minutes shall be submitted in the PDF or PDF/A file format.

5. An approval letter shall show attestation that the minutes of meetings of the most recent previous session or sessions have been reviewed by the General Assembly and shall give page references to action on exceptions, if there be such.

6. The review of the minutes of each synod shall occur as peer reviews by a gathering of all synod stated clerks. Their written review of each synod minutes shall be submitted to the General Assembly Committee assigned the review of the minutes, who shall attest that the minutes of each synod have been reviewed. If peer review is not completed, the synod shall submit its minutes for review by the General Assembly Committee charged with overseeing this review.

7. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall transfer to the Presbyterian Historical Society the signed, electronic copies of the synod minutes and their corresponding approval letters for preservation.

### **Report of the Assembly Committee**

1. The assembly committee reviewing synod minutes shall be resourced by at least two current Synod Stated Clerks chosen by at the peer review.

2. The assembly committee reviewing synod minutes shall report to the General Assembly as evidenced by the report of the Synod Stated Clerks whether the

- a. proceedings have been correctly recorded;
- b. proceedings have been regular and in concurrence with the Constitution;
- c. proceedings have been prudent and equitable;
- d. proceedings have been faithful to the mission of the whole church, and
- e. lawful injunctions of the General Assembly have been obeyed.

3. The assembly committee shall include in its report recommended corrective actions to be taken by the General Assembly regarding irregularities or delinquencies identified as exceptions in the written review of each synod's minutes by the peer review conducted by the synod stated clerks.



**SEEKING TO BE FAITHFUL TOGETHER:  
Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement**

Adopted by the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will:

Give them a hearing  
. . . listen before we  
answer

John 7:51 and  
Proverbs 18:13

Speak the  
truth in love

Ephesians 4:15

Maintain the unity  
of the spirit in the  
bond of peace

Ephesians 4:3

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ:
  - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange;
  - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.
3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.
4. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus's teachings.
5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence, or integrity; we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.
6. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.
7. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.
8. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension; we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.
9. Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:
  - urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;
  - seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
  - be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
  - abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways that are consistent with these guidelines.
10. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

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As Presbyterians, we are called to work for “the peace, unity, and purity of the church” (*Book of Order* , G-14.0207g [now W-4.4003]) as we seek to be faithful to God’s work in the world. However, disagreements and conflicts are inevitable in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) As we try to be faithful. They exist within committees, congregations, presbyteries, synods, at General Assemblies, and in the national life of the denomination.

Conflicts are inevitable in all of life and certainly in the church. The history of the church is filled with conflicts and disagreements. Several of Paul’s letters address the conflicts that were [common] in the early church. There have been and are going to be disagreements as Christians attempt to discern God’s work in the world and as we interpret Scriptures.

Conflicts can be harmful and even destructive. They can cause individuals a great deal of pain and the community of faith immeasurable damage. Congregations have been divided; denominations have experienced schisms.

At the same time, conflicts can be an opportunity for new insights, learning, and individual and corporate growth. Disagreements can illuminate a topic in helpful ways and can present solutions to problems that previously had not been seen. The successful resolution of conflict can also bind people together in a powerful way.

The Bible contains many stories of conflict and disagreement and much advice about how they can be addressed. As those stories indicate, God is already present whenever there is brokenness, granting wholeness and peace. God promises to be with us in times of disagreement and calls us to reconciliation, trust, love and forgiveness.

We realize that our perspectives are limited, so to help us affirm each other, enhance our community, stay open to the viewpoints of others and be sensitive to cultural diversity, we commit ourselves to the guidelines in a spirit of prayer, trust, and love, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

# FORMING SOCIAL POLICY

## 1. Definitions

Entities of the General Assembly use the following documents to make a social witness policy:

- a. A “policy statement” establishes the fundamental principles that guide the denomination’s social witness. From this policy base a strategy is developed, a program is defined, and personal social witness is empowered. The most current policy document produced in conformance to the requirements of 2.a.–g. of this document and adopted by a General Assembly shall be the policy in force. Any previous policies and statements, having been examined and considered by the group producing the new policy, shall be superseded by the adoption of the most current policy. When requests for policy statements are made, the most recent policy statement shall be given; however, past statements shall be included in full response to requests for information.
- b. A “resolution” applies existing policy statements to new circumstances.
- c. A “study paper” is designed to stimulate churchwide study of a social concern, social witness policy, or social witness. It does not need to be an elaboration of existing policy statements.
- d. A “social involvement report” evaluates Presbyterian social witness in light of particular social concerns and existing policy statements.

## 2. Requirements

All social witness policy documents developed by General Assembly entities, including special committees of the General Assembly (see section 1. above) must meet the following requirements:

- a. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy will be responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. If any other entity is involved in processes of developing and recommending social witness policy, then appropriate consultation and linkage with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall be undertaken.
- b. The body writing a document (i.e. task force, study group, or subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy) shall be selected in such a manner that persons of diverse viewpoints, expertise, and social experience are participants.
- c. A social witness policy document may include a section of recommendations that guide the work of divisions and related entities of the church. If approved by an assembly, recommendations shall be referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency for implementation in accordance with the practices defined in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Operations Manual. These recommendations may suggest the ways in which the document is to be distributed.
- d. The narrative reports of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and other entities shall not propose policy nor recommend witness. Moreover, narrative reports are not considered social witness policy documents and are exempt, therefore, from the requirements of these guidelines.
- e. A document shall clearly identify its type of social witness (i.e., policy statement, resolution, study document, or social engagement report).
- f. No social witness policy documents shall use language that implies the conscience of individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is bound by General Assembly statements or recommendations.
- g. All social witness policy documents, listed in section 1. above, shall have an initial distribution by the Stated Clerk and be sent with an official cover letter that indicates the nature of the document, specific recommendations approved by the assembly, and an affirmation of the freedom of a believer’s conscience.



### 3. Policy Statements Requirements

In addition to section 2. on p. 65, “policy statements” must meet the following requirements:

- a. A prospectus defining the social issue(s) to be addressed by a policy statement shall be developed, adopted, and published by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy or other entity. This prospectus shall be distributed to the Presbyterian News Office, *Monday Morning*, and other appropriate media. A brief (one-page) summary of the prospectus describing the problem to be addressed, information on where to obtain a full prospectus, and an invitation to respond with comments and suggestions, shall be sent to all synods and presbyteries. This prospectus shall be distributed to all presbyteries with sufficient copies for all congregations, encouraging input from the presbytery and the congregations and indicating how input can be made.
- b. A task force called to develop a policy statement shall be appointed from nominees submitted from the church.
- c. The task force shall develop and make known to the whole church a plan indicating the manner in which the whole church can participate (advise, offer input, etc.) in its deliberations.
- d. The task force shall listen to the
  - (1) voices of the biblical text;
  - (2) wisdom of theological discourse;
  - (3) guidance of the Reformed confessions;
  - (4) insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
  - (5) tradition of past policy statements;
  - (6) advice of members and all governing bodies of the church;
  - (7) insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in the councils of the church; and
  - (8) counsel of ecumenical partners.
- e. The task force shall cause a policy statement to be written that
  - (1) explicates its recommended social witness policy based on biblical scholarship;
  - (2) defines its recommended social witness policy in light of theological reflection;
  - (3) is consistent with the confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
  - (4) reports relevant policy statements adopted by prior General Assemblies and the manner in which church and society have participated in the development of its policy statement;
  - (5) details the contextual situation that prompted its witness;
  - (6) states the ethical norms upon which its guidance is premised;
  - (7) describes the social witness the church, its governing bodies, and members are called to make; and
  - (8) describes the manner in which society should change.
- f. The task force shall provide a summary (one-page maximum) of its policy statement that
  - (1) explains what caused the document to be written;
  - (2) outlines the document’s conclusions; and
  - (3) suggests how the document might be used, what impact it ought to have on the church, and what consequences it ought to have in the public order.

- g. The task force may cause a series of recommendations to be written for consideration by the General Assembly. The recommendations may include a strategy for distribution of the policy statement.
- h. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall submit a penultimate draft of the policy statement for consultation as described in section 3.a on p. 66.
  - (1) The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy may augment the number of participants gathered in consultation for purposes of inclusivity and expertise.
  - (2) The consultation may create a report, including suggested changes to the proposed policy statement, which shall be received by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.
  - (3) The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy may amend the proposed policy statement, refer the proposed policy statement back to the task force, or reaffirm the original policy statement.
- i. The policy statement shall be distributed with an official cover letter from the Stated Clerk that says, in part:

In exercise of its responsibility to witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every dimension of life, the (number) General Assembly (year) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved this policy statement. It is presented for the guidance and edification of the whole Christian Church and the society to which it ministers. It will determine procedures and program for the units and staff of the General Assembly. It is recommended for consideration and study by other governing bodies (sessions, presbyteries, and synods). It is commended to the free Christian conscience of all congregations and the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for prayerful study, dialogue, and action.

#### **4. Resolution Requirements**

In addition to section 2. on p. 65, “resolutions” must meet the following requirements:

- a. A resolution shall clearly identify the policy statement(s) upon which it is based.
- b. A resolution shall be distributed with an official cover letter from the Stated Clerk that says, in part:
 

In exercise of its responsibility to witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every dimension of life, the (number) General Assembly (year) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved this resolution. It is presented for the guidance and edification of the whole Christian Church and the society to which it ministers. It will determine procedures and program for the entities and staff of the General Assembly. It is recommended for consideration and study by other governing bodies (sessions, presbyteries, and synods). It is commended to the free Christian conscience of all congregations and the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for prayerful study, dialogue, and action.

#### **5. Study Document Requirements**

In addition to section 2. on p. 65, “study documents” must meet the following requirements:

- a. A study document may not contain recommendations for consideration by a General Assembly.
- b. A study document shall provide bibliographic and interpretive resources. This material shall reflect and represent various ethical stances found within the Christian Church.
- c. A study document may make a coherent, thoroughgoing argument for a particular ethical stance. In addition, however, a study document shall include a fair presentation of alternative ethical stances in either the main body of text or its appendixes.
- d. A study document shall be distributed with a cover letter that states who is invited to respond, a study guide, a “user-friendly” response form, the address and phone number of the body responsible for receiving responses, and a schedule that allows at least twelve months for completion.

- e. A study document shall include an official cover letter that says:

A study document of the General Assembly seeks to stimulate study and discussion within the church on particular social issues. It is not to be construed as a social witness policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Therefore, nothing in this document can be used to direct the mission program of the church.

- f. A study document shall state the intended outcome of a study process by adding to the above paragraph one of the following:

- (1) This study document is distributed to stimulate study and discussion as an end in itself; or
- (2) This study document is distributed to inform and help prepare a policy statement; or
- (3) This study document is distributed to inform and help revise the policy statement, [name], passed by the [number] General Assembly [year].

- g. The report, based on responses to the study document, shall not be presented to the General Assembly until at least eighteen months have elapsed since the study's initial distribution.

## **6. Distributing a Social Involvement Report**

In addition to section 2. on p. 65, "social involvement" reports shall be distributed with an official cover letter that says, in part:

A social involvement report of the General Assembly seeks to stimulate discussion on particular social issues and the church's response to these issues. It is not to be construed as a social witness policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Therefore, nothing in this document can be used to direct the mission program of the church.

## **7. Guidelines**

The church's social witness is multidirectional and multilateral. To guide entities preparing the General Assembly's social policy, the following statements encourage appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

- a. No social witness policy may purport to bind the conscience of individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- b. A social witness policy document is a minute of a council meeting. It may be extracted from the minutes for publication. If it is extracted, it shall be treated in the same manner as any other minute. (The nature of debate and the final vote are irrelevant.)
- c. A social policy document shall include instructions for its distribution (i.e., to all governing bodies, the president of the United States of America, the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, or the secretary general of the United Nations).
- d. The Stated Clerk and directors of divisions or related entities shall respond to emerging mission needs that require an "official" Presbyterian social witness by explicating the most current General Assembly social witness policy.
- e. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is prepared to respond to invitations to consult on regional social policy development in the manner defined by *Book of Order*, G-3.0106. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall participate and represent the council in these consultations.
- f. All governing bodies are communities of correspondence and may direct social witness material to the assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board refers correspondence concerning social witness policy development and supporting documents to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for response.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES PRESBYTERIES' COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE ON EXAMINATIONS FOR CANDIDATES

**NAME:** This permanent committee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called the *Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates*. For convenience, the committee may be referred to as the PCCEC.

**PURPOSE:** The PCCEC's purpose was defined by the action of the 1965 General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in creating the committee:

In order to assist and support the work of presbytery committees which are responsible for the examination of candidates for ordination, to provide a more equitable standard of expectation among all the presbyteries, and to offer candidates a more uniform basis for their preparation for ordination examination, there shall be a Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates which shall report regularly to the General Assembly. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1965, Part I, p. 113; for the full report and action, see pp. 104–118)

Historical note: A similar committee was created by the Presbyterian Church in the United States in 1976. At the time of the reunion of the PCUS and the UPCUSA in 1983, a successor committee was included in the Constitution of the re-united church.

The continuing work of the PCCEC is governed by the provisions of the most recent *Book of Order* as duly amended by the General Assembly and the several presbyteries. Its current commission derives from G-2.0607d that gives to the General Assembly the ability to approve standard ordination examinations that “shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.”

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** The PCCEC is charged with:

- Preparing those standard ordination examinations approved by the General Assembly. Currently these examinations are developed in five subject areas:
  - Bible Content
  - Open Book Biblical Exegesis (including Old Testament/Hebrew and New Testament/Greek texts)
  - Theological Competence
  - Worship and Sacraments
  - Church Polity

The PCCEC, in conversation with other bodies and representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), may propose changes to the examination areas, names, or forms of these standard ordination examinations. Such proposed changes require a two-thirds majority vote by the committee prior to submission to the General Assembly for approval. These changes will continue to uphold the importance of integrated and critical thinking in the life and work of a pastor with regard to Scripture, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. Candidates taking examinations will be directed to answer questions within the tradition of Reformed Theology, understood as theology in broad agreement with *The Book of Confessions* and the theology of John Calvin.

- Maintaining the security of the examination questions until they have been administered and maintaining the security of the Bible Content examination questions indefinitely. Security entails making sure that no one other than committee members, consultants (e.g., sensitivity reviewers), or staff of the Office of Preparation for Ministry/Examinations have access to draft or final versions of the examination questions prior to their administration.
- Administering the examinations.
- Organizing and working with readers to evaluate examinations.
- Training the readers to evaluate the examinations reliably and to write constructive comments.
- Maintaining a record of the final evaluation of each examination.
- Distributing the evaluations to the candidate, seminary, and presbytery.

- Providing a *Handbook for Candidates* that describes each examination as well as the process for registering for and taking the examinations.
- Collaboration with units within the Office of Vocation and the Committee on Theological Education.
- Reviewing regularly the nature, format, and effectiveness of the standard examinations and the means by which they are administered and evaluated.

The PCCEC is assisted in carrying out these responsibilities by staff of the Office of Preparation for Ministry/Examinations within the Office of Vocation.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** The PCCEC is accountable to the General Assembly that is mandated to regularly review the work of each permanent committee. In its on-going work, the PCCEC is accountable through the Office of Vocation to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The PCCEC assists and supports the work of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a number of ways—first and foremost through the examinations administered on behalf of the presbyteries. Presbyteries elect readers to evaluate the examinations, and these readers are strongly encouraged to report their experience to their respective presbyteries. Those who have experience with the evaluation process can be a valuable resource for their presbytery’s committee overseeing inquirers and candidates.

**MEMBERS:** There shall be a total of twenty-four members who are ruling elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any changes to this structure will require a two-thirds majority vote of the committee before submission to the General Assembly for approval.

- Twelve members are elected by the General Assembly to four-year terms and are eligible to be reelected for an additional term. Candidates for these positions shall be nominated through the General Assembly Nominating Committee with consideration being given to areas of needed expertise, to gender and racial/ethnic representation, and to an approximate balance of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament on the PCCEC.
- Each of the six regional reading groups will elect (on a staggered schedule) two members to serve as co-conveners of the reading group and as members of the PCCEC, preferably a minister of the Word and Sacrament and a ruling elder. Each convener/member will serve a four-year term and is eligible to be reelected for an additional term.

**MEETINGS:** The PCCEC meets at least once annually to develop and review the forthcoming examinations and to transact such other business as may be necessary. All members are expected to attend the annual meeting and at least one of the reading groups.

**OFFICERS:** The officers of the PCCEC are a moderator and a secretary, elected annually by the entire committee.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** The Executive Committee is composed of the moderator and secretary of the PCCEC and the chairs of the several task groups responsible for particular examinations. A designated General Assembly staff person is an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets in conjunction with the PCCEC annual meeting and at such other times as may be necessary. The Executive Committee may conduct its business through conference calls or other electronic media. Decisions reached electronically need to be confirmed and entered into the minutes of the next face-to-face or conference call meeting.

**TASK GROUPS:** The members of the PCCEC are divided into task groups of approximately equal size. Each task group is responsible for the development of questions and evaluation standards for one or more of the standard ordination examinations. Members are assigned by the Executive Committee based upon personal interest and expertise of each member as well as upon the comparative needs of each task group.

Upon approval of the Executive Committee, volunteer consultants may be invited to augment a particular task group or reading group to provide expertise or capacity needed by that group.

- **Bible Content Specialists:** The Bible task group will be assisted by two Bible specialists with responsibility to create new Bible Content questions and to assemble two forms annually of the Bible Content exam for administration on-line.
- **World Language Specialists:** Appropriate members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be designated to translate the examinations into other languages (e.g., Korean, Spanish) designated by the General Assembly.

READING GROUPS: The readers who evaluate the examinations are elected by their presbyteries to serve the wider church (G-3.0302b). Each reading group elects its own leadership (conveners) who are also members of the PCCEC. The process and procedures for conducting the reading groups is described in the *Conveners' Handbook*.

ELECTIONS: The officers and chairs of the several task groups will normally be elected at the annual meeting of PCCEC upon nomination by a nominating committee formed of the members of PCCEC who are not eligible for reelection to service on PCCEC. If a vacancy occurs between annual meetings, such vacancy may be filled by an election conducted electronically upon nomination by the Executive Committee. The person so elected will serve until the end of the next annual meeting and is eligible to be elected to the same position through the usual election procedure at the annual meeting.

FINANCES: The work of the PCCEC is funded through two sources, the General Assembly *per capita* budget and the fees charged in conjunction with registration for the examinations. The PCCEC will regularly review these fees and decide on appropriate fees for subsequent years.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY: All meetings of the PCCEC will be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised* except in those cases where the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides otherwise.

AMENDMENTS: These guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the PCCEC at its annual meeting, except in those areas noted within these guidelines where additional approval is required by the presbyteries acting through their commissioners to a General Assembly. The executive committee, subject to review by the full PCCEC, is empowered to make editorial revisions to assure compliance with changes to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

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# THE INTERRELIGIOUS STANCE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

## Introduction

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) long has advocated positive relationships with people of other religious traditions. We have seen these relationships as a specific instance of Christ's universal command to "... love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37, 39). This statement affirms that tradition.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) often has fostered a love for people of other religious traditions, but many times we have not. The first is cause for celebration, thanking God for the grace to be faithful. For the second, the church resolves to do better.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has not always agreed on *how* to do better. Disagreements over how to respect people of other religious traditions often have been sharp. Yet as we become increasingly aware of the world's religious diversity, all areas of the church are called to relate positively to people of other religious traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Many things draw us together in respect for those who have religious commitments different from our own, including the example and person of Jesus Christ, the evident need for religious peace, the necessity of meeting human needs in a world of poverty and want, and the biblical call to solidarity amid our diversity.

Other things, though, work to pull us apart, including our sometimes self-serving theologies (both pluralist and exclusivist), misplaced goals (such as an overemphasis on statistical growth), and triumphalistic attitudes.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledges that among ourselves we will disagree on how to relate to others even as we strive together to understand Jesus' commandment amid a world with people of many different religious traditions. The stance offers help to chart the way forward.

## Biblical Backgrounds and Teachings

Interreligious appreciation must arise out of one's most profound religious beliefs. For Presbyterians it must arise out of interpretation of the Bible, the church's confessional statements, Reformed theology, and the lived experiences of the church.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites found themselves dwelling with Canaanite, Moabite, Babylonian, and Persian peoples among others and influenced by their religious understandings. The stories of God's gracious activities through Abraham (Genesis 12–17), Joseph (Genesis 37–50), prophets, matriarchs, and patriarchs toward other peoples of the region are part of a growing understanding of God's love. God's love is particularized later to cities such as Nineveh (Jonah 3) and to empires such as Assyria and Egypt (Isaiah 19:23–25). And teachings abound: all humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), all have access to God through God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:8–17), strangers are to be treated with hospitality (Leviticus 19:33–34), and God has province over all the nations (which the Psalms tell us repeatedly, e.g., Psalms 47:8).

As the followers of Jesus spread to the cultures of the Roman Empire, they were challenged and influenced by Greek philosophies, Roman emperor worship, Gnostic teachings, and mystery religions of the day. In this setting the writings of the New Testament made crucial contributions that continue to be our guides. As we have indicated above, Jesus' Great Commandment sets the standard for all of our relationships; furthermore, the Gospel writers and letter writers all expand on the language of God's love (e.g., 1 John 3, 5).

Much of what we learn about how to relate to people of other religious traditions comes from the letters of Paul. Paul focused on taking the gospel to *all* people. Paul's sermon to the Athenians in Acts 17 has provided many with insights helpful to interreligious relationships. As a missionary, Paul encountered a great diversity of religions. Paul took seriously the question: What claims do people of different religions make on one another as they live in



accordance with what they believe to be true? Paul's answer was to honor both our commitments to Christian conscience and our commitments to Christian hospitality.

These passages come to us in the context of other biblical texts. Not all references are loving. Israelites are instructed to destroy Canaanite religious shrines (Deut. 12:2–3), and Paul uses negative terms to describe religious ideas of Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:22). Some Christians use similar statements to condone disrespecting the religions of other people. Overall, however, the biblical intent is clear: God loves all people—and we are to do likewise.

To be sure, not all the religious resources of the Presbyterian tradition were written to address our current interreligious context. Consider, for example, parts of the *Book of Confessions*. As might be expected, little is written in the confessions that acknowledges the religious plurality in which most of us live today. In fact, the confessions contain elements of polemics, even between Christians, that are inappropriate to today's context. Moreover, The Second Helvetic Confession makes direct negative references to our Jewish and Muslim neighbors, their beliefs and practices (*Book of Confessions*, 5.014, 5.019–5.020, 5.176, 5.225).

To move in a positive direction in our interreligious relationships and dialogue, these particular texts and the perspectives of our religious neighbors must be acknowledged. As God alone is the Lord of the conscience, the church renounces human judgment in favor of repentance over the harm we have caused our religious neighbors. We repent, but we do not forget, lest we perpetuate unhealthy relationships of division among our neighbors and ourselves.

It is important to reject harmful stereotypes of Jews and Muslims. We also must acknowledge the importance of authentic relationships with people of any religion. Although the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to this point has invested most of its interreligious efforts in relationships with Jews and Muslims, the PC(USA) believes in the importance of relationships with people of every religion.

The Confession of 1967 marked a turning point for Presbyterians in their quest to have loving relationships with people of other religions. It discusses the positive engagement of the church with people of other religions. It reminds the church that in its encounter with other religious traditions it may discover “parallels between other religions and his [*sic*] own and must approach all religions with openness and respect” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.42). The confession calls the church to a greater spirit of reconciliation, part of which is an acceptance of human difference.

## **Foundations for the Future**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been active in interreligious efforts during at least the past four decades as religious plurality has become an issue of prime importance in North America. The general approach to interreligious relations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has given priority to relationships with people rather than traditions—with Muslims rather than Islam, for example. Statements by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have provided *direction* to church leaders and *guidance* to local congregations.

The guidance and direction these statements offered have been and continue to be supported by an Office of Interfaith Relations, which was established in 1988 and has functioned since as a catalyst and a platform for affirming and commending the efforts of Presbyterians in interreligious engagement. Together these actions of successive General Assemblies have established six basic building blocks that serve as a foundation for today's interreligious initiatives:

*Building Block #1: The Church. In our pluralistic society, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes that it must work with others because of the sure faith that the church, through the power of the Spirit, is a sign and means of God's intention for the wholeness and healing of humankind and of all creation.*

In A Brief Statement of Faith (1991) the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirmed, “In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image . . . to live as one community” (*Book of Confessions*, 10.3, Lines 29–32). The ecclesial implications of this affirmation inform one of the “Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue” (211th General Assembly [1999]): “We are called to work with others in our

pluralistic society for the well-being of our world and for justice, peace, and the sustainability of creation. We do so in the faith that, through God's Spirit, the Church is a sign and means of God's intention for the wholeness and unity of humankind and of all creation."

At its best, the Christian Church makes God's gift of community visible in human life, recognizing that God is at work in all of God's creation. This requires relationships with people belonging to a multiplicity of faith commitments as well as those belonging to none.

*Building Block #2: Ecumenical and Interfaith. Presbyterians develop relationships with people of various faiths in ecumenical and interfaith contexts wherever possible.*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s interest in interfaith relations has been intimately related to its ecumenical commitments. The 199th General Assembly (1987) called for engagement with those of other religious traditions through "ecumenical and interfaith channels and organizations whenever possible" (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 494, "A Study on Islam," B.3.e.). This was an extension to interreligious relationships of the historic Lund Principle that churches should do all things together except where differences of conscience require their acting separately.

*Building Block #3: Mission, Dialogue, and Evangelism. Presbyterians approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as they follow Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the freedom of others. Thus the church affirms that dialogical (i.e., mutually interactive) relationships are an authentic and appropriate form of witness in which we share ourselves and our commitments and also listen intently to what others express to us.*

The reuniting 195th General Assembly (1983) affirmed "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation" (from the World Council of Churches, 1982) as a "faithful expression of the basic commitment of [the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)] to mission and evangelism" (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 436). Declaring that "Christians owe the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and every people" (*Ibid*, p. 551, 7. Witness among People of Living Faiths, 41), it stated that "true witness follows Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the uniqueness and freedom of others" (*Ibid*). A new World Council of Churches document (2013) says this freedom "flows from the dignity of the human person, grounded in the creation of all the human beings in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26)" ("Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes", paragraph 96).

All witness must be led by a discernment born of the Holy Spirit, offering opportunities for both speaking and listening. Allegiance to Christ is not compromised in dialogue when we (1) do not bend or trim our faith in order to reach artificial agreement with doctrines of another; (2) learn from other religions insofar as it enriches our relationship with the God revealed in Christ; and (3) express our faith as a part of authentic dialogue (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 452, "The Nature of Revelation in the Christian Tradition from a Reformed Perspective," IX.F., Christians in Interfaith Dialogue).

*Building Block #4: Peace, Justice, and Ecology. Presbyterians are called by God to work with those of other religions for peace, justice, and the sustainability of creation. Experience has taught that the most fruitful interfaith relationships often develop when people of different faiths explore concrete ethical concerns and unite to act on them together.*

In 1987, Presbyterians were counseled that "the most fruitful interreligious relationships are likely to develop where persons of different faiths share concrete ethical concerns and can unite to put them into action, with mutual acknowledgment of the religious motivation for action" (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, p. 452, "The Nature of Revelation in the Christian Tradition from a Reformed Perspective," IX.F., Christians in Interfaith Dialogue).

The practical aspects of human well-being have led to a series of recommendations concerning advocacy and action. "Guidelines for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Participation in Interfaith Bodies" (204th General Assembly [1992]) recommended establishment of relationships with multifaith bodies whose "goals, grounded in spirituality, ... enable common work toward justice, peace, and the integrity of creation" (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 600, Recommendation 6.c.).

*Building Block #5: Modesty in Witness. Presbyterians urge a humble modesty in witness that recognizes God’s Spirit is at work in ways we often least expect. Whatever the form of witness—mission, dialogue, evangelism, peace, justice, environmental issues—the church affirms that it is not called to respond to others in judgment but in awareness of the limitless grace of God.*

Statements about God’s ways with humankind have urged upon Presbyterians a humble modesty in witness. “Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation” (paragraph 43) declared that “... [t]he Spirit of God is constantly at work in ways ... that to us are least expected. ... Christians seek to discern the unsearchable riches of God and the way he [*sic*] deals with humanity” (*Minutes*, 1983, Part I, p. 551). Yet “The Study Catechism” (answer to question 38), says, “The limits [of] salvation ... are known only to God” (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 613).

A modesty of claims is present in the statement on “Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ” (section on “We Believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ,” 214th General Assembly [2002], *Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 525) when it affirms that grace, love, and communion belong to God and are not ours to determine. Modesty leads to rejection of judgmental attitudes toward others. The PC(USA) evangelism document “Turn to the Living God” (section on “People of Many Religions,” 203rd General Assembly [1991]) reads, “As our Christian affirmation meets the faith of others, we are not called to respond in judgment but in awareness of the limitless, saving presence, power, and grace of God” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 676).

*Building Block #6: Unfinished Conclusions. Presbyterians acknowledge the unfinished nature of our conclusions about relationships with people of different faiths, in recognition of the limits of our knowledge, our sinful nature, and the mystery of God’s workings in human lives.*

Not all questions are humanly answerable. Thus, an element of interreligious relationships has been a commitment to be unfinished in our conclusions.

## **Spheres of Relationship**

Interreligious interactions are not limited to just one aspect of living. The implications of loving our religious neighbors as ourselves must pervade all areas of our life together. Following are nine spheres of life in which interreligious understandings are challenging us and need to be acted on by the people of God. These spheres and the suggestions offered are areas for attention and reflection as we implement the policy implications of the building blocks. Each sphere ends with actions that can be undertaken by church agencies, congregations, and individuals.

### **1. Human Needs**

Human need is everywhere. Often the religions of the world are called on to meet the needs of hunger, natural disasters, poverty, and disease. In meeting human needs around the globe, the religions need one another. We can do more together than we can do apart. How do Presbyterians engage in an interreligious response to human need from our position of historical religious and cultural privilege? How can we collaborate with faith partners to meet these pressing challenges?

#### **Actions:**

- Engage in self-reflection through education on seminary and college campuses and in congregations to examine breakdowns in existing paradigms of poverty relief.
- Listen to and incorporate the voices of the marginalized and underrepresented, many of whom have led and are leading the way in meeting human needs.
- See ourselves as friends, not competitors, with people and institutions of other religious traditions as we meet human needs around the globe.
- Be willing to be the gracious recipients of humanitarian and spiritual aid from our neighbors of other religious traditions, especially recognizing God’s concern for the poor.

### **2. Social Justice**

The search for social justice in the world today is one of the most compelling reasons for interreligious activity. Global challenges—such as forced migration, human rights violations, unjust imprisonment, militarism, and totalitarianism—cannot be solved by any single segment of the world’s people or any single religion. Social justice cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the world’s religions.

Actions:

- Explore interreligious opportunities for truth and reconciliation work, including formal acts of repentance for unjust actions of the church, past and present.
- Participate at all levels in established multireligious groups working toward the common good.
- Encourage all the PC(USA)’s entities to do social justice work on an interreligious basis, as appropriate.
- Remember that those in need of social justice, including those of other religious traditions, often have much to teach us about how the gospel manifests itself in cultures different from our own.

### **3. Mission and Evangelism**

Mission and evangelism are central to the Reformed tradition. In our relationships with people of other faiths, dialogical interreligious conversations promote the virtues of mutual respect and mutual understanding. This is an appropriate form of witness in the sense that we are as “living letters” that others can read, which Paul wrote about (2 Cor. 3:1–3). We witness because God, the creator of life in all its diversity, acted first.

As we consider witness through mission, evangelism, and dialogue, we commend for study the 2013 World Council of Churches document, “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes.” This document states, “Authentic evangelism takes place in the context of the dialogue of life and action, and in ‘the spirit of dialogue’: ‘an attitude of respect and friendship.’ Evangelism entails not only proclamations of deepest conviction, but also listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others” (“Together Towards Life,” paragraph 95).

In the context of interreligious interactions, we witness to our faith with humility, knowing that what we know about God is limited by our human condition. We accept the challenge of expressing our faith in dialogue, often in spite of the fact that we may not feel as articulate as we would hope, but knowing that peaceful and fruitful relationships with others is surely what God intends as we witness to a truth that is beyond ourselves.

Actions:

- Recognize that the relationship between dialogue and evangelism is not an either/or choice for the church but a both/and requirement.
- Commit to having no hidden agendas in our interactions with people of other religious traditions.
- Have a humble modesty of witness in all our mission and evangelism efforts.

### **4. Conflict**

Too many of the world’s conflicts have a religious component. Religion is used by governments and nongovernmental groups alike either to justify war or to motivate people to fight wars, practice religious discrimination, or engage in acts of persecution. Too often religious people stand by and watch their religions being used to justify conflicts that run counter to the values of love and justice that our traditions espouse.

Actions:

- Advocate justice and peace in all levels of human activity, especially involvement in interreligious peacemaking efforts.
- Work for reconciliation, identifying and resisting destructive interreligious conflict wherever possible.
- Recognize that sometimes Christians may be the cause of conflict; such complicity urges us to repent and change.
- Be open to learn from our religious neighbors.
- Stand with and support, where appropriate, those suffering religious persecution.

### **5. Families**

Interreligious families are common in many of our communities. Challenges can arise for interreligious families as they seek meaningful religious expression across multiple narratives and traditions, work through

disagreement and division over religious beliefs, and make choices about how to raise children. Congregations can help families engage issues that likely will arise in their life together.

Actions:

- Engage the whole congregation in important conversations about topics such as: “Families of Origin,” “Life-Cycle Rituals,” “Planning Your Wedding,” “Death and Grief,” “Holiday Observances,” and “Talking with Your Children about God and Values.”
- Draw on spiritual resources to help family members articulate religious values, beliefs, and practices they cherish most and to seek ways to be faithful to them in their family life.

## **6. Education**

Challenges for education in contexts of religious plurality are many. Christians must become self-aware about the assumptions they hold and the habits of mind that guide their thinking about religious neighbors. Christians should know more about the history, beliefs, and practices of our neighbors’ religious traditions.

Actions:

- Articulate a broader definition of education that includes and values lived experiences as a way to engage with people of different religions.
- Develop opportunities for multilevel, interreligious engagement. This might include local, area, or regional conferences involving networks of interreligious people.
- Work to make interreligious dialogue less specialized and more normative, integrated into church members’ lives.
- Identify and share examples of churches engaged in doing interreligious interactions well.
- Train congregational leaders in interreligious work as a way to introduce it to congregations.
- Encourage PC(USA)-affiliated seminaries to expand curriculum that prepares students for ministry in a religiously plural world.
- Reflect more deeply on the interrelationships between mission and evangelism and interreligious work.

## **7. Communities**

Many neighborhoods and communities across the United States are welcoming of greater religious and cultural pluralism. Many are not. People from non-Christian, non-white, non-Western backgrounds often experience discrimination due to religio-cultural bias. Note especially the rise in Islamophobia. Religiously based violence has risen throughout the United States. This violence divides communities and discourages the neighborliness advocated in Scripture and modeled in the life of Jesus Christ.

Actions:

- Reach across religious borders to create community alliances to address social problems in ways congruent with the church’s identity and mission.
- Promote public education regarding religions and the diversity of religious communities.
- Advocate for the rights, protection, and safety of all.

## **8. Congregations**

Even as many congregations are becoming more racially, culturally, and socioeconomically plural, the diversity of the culture at large continues to create challenges: our children develop friendships with their non-Christian acquaintances; our sons and daughters proclaim love for someone from another religious background; our interreligious neighbors invite us and our families to visit their religious services.

In the midst of such opportunities and challenges, the church must make efforts to interact with other religious communities. In the past, we have tended to relate to people of other religions in one-way modes of witness; we now are challenged to forge new relationships of friendship and collegiality that respect our neighbors’ religious search.

Actions:

- Build interreligious relationships not just as a response to crises and conflict, but also as a sign of hospitality and neighborliness.
- Visit our neighbors’ houses of worship when invited, even as we invite our neighbors to visit ours.

- Equip members to appropriately engage religious and social situations involving people of different religious traditions and to receive people from these traditions in Christian contexts.
- Explore what it means to be a Christian community in the midst of multiple faith communities.
- Look for ways to be in dialogue and relationships of mutuality.
- Develop a mutual agreement with another religious community that involves concrete ways in which the two congregations will be in relation.
- Recognize that enduring interreligious alliances can be built around social issues and that people of different religious traditions can work together to address them.

## 9. Workplace

The interreligious reality of today's workplace cannot be ignored. Often, the workplace is a space where people for the first time are asked to work across lines of religious difference. Presbyterians have the opportunity to model and express an environment of respect and love for people of other religions in their workplace settings, including respect for holiday observances, time and space for prayer, religious dress, and articles of faith.

Actions:

- Recognize the importance and validity of individuals' freedom to choose their religious identity and commitments, and advocate that employers work to accommodate the religious practices and observances of employees, knowing that it may not be possible in every case.
- Allow for deeper cooperation and respect among coworkers; education about religious diversity is needed to address much of the prejudice and hatred that exist.

Trust between religious communities is hard-won. In our efforts to build such trust in all these spheres, we will not always see eye-to-eye, especially on issues born from histories of conflict. At times, we may unintentionally misunderstand, disappoint, and hurt one another. Only within a framework of commitment to people of other religious traditions can we remain faithful to these relationships despite such differences and misunderstandings. Following is an affirmation of our commitment to positive interreligious interactions.

### An Affirmation of Interreligious Commitment

We believe the Bible proclaims God's love for all people, that Christ's Great Commandment sets the standard for all of our relationships: "... 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,'" and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, "... 'love your neighbor as yourself'" (Mt. 22:37, 39).

We confess

that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to live up to its commitment to love people of other religious traditions, but many times we have not;  
with God's help we resolve to do better;  
that self-serving theologies and goals and triumphalistic attitudes pull us apart;  
with God's help we resolve to do better;  
that some of our confessions and the dated perspectives of our religious heritage have resulted in patterns of unhealthy relationships with people of other religions;  
with God's help we resolve to do better.

We resolve to do better and not perpetuate divisive relationships among our neighbors and ourselves.

God calls us to have loving relationships with people of other religions.

God calls us to approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the freedom of others.

God calls us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to work with people of other religions for peace, justice, and the sustainability of creation.

Guided on our way by the Holy Spirit, we will  
meet human needs,  
work for social justice,  
participate in mission and evangelism,

pursue peace,  
strengthen families,  
educate for greater understanding,  
nurture diverse communities,  
value hospitality in our congregations, and  
respect one another in our workplaces.

We follow Christ's call to work for God's kingdom; we believe that God will complete what we leave incomplete. To God be the glory!

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Note: Throughout this document, religion and religious practices include organized religions, folk religions, and indigenous religions and spiritualities practiced throughout our world.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was organized on May 21, 1789, in the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia as, “The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.” The Reverend John Witherspoon, the only active member to sign the Declaration of Independence, was the first presiding officer and preached the sermon at the opening service of worship. While the General Assembly was meeting in Philadelphia, the first United States Congress to convene under the new Constitution was also in session in the same city.

Organized Presbyterianism in America had its beginnings with the establishment of “The Presbytery” about 1706. “The Presbytery” remained the most inclusive governing body until 1717. While records of that period are incomplete, there is a record of the presbytery meeting of December 26, 1706. In 1717, with seventeen ministers on its roll, the presbytery transformed itself into a synod, divided into the four presbyteries of Long Island, Philadelphia, New Castle, and Snow Hill.

The Presbyterian church was one of a number of denominations that organized on a national basis following the American Revolution. In 1788, the synod organized a General Assembly with four synods: New York and New Jersey, Philadelphia, Virginia, and the Carolinas. The young denomination contained 16 presbyteries, 177 ministers, and 419 congregations. Since its first session in 1789, the General Assembly has met every year.

Twenty-three ministers and eleven elders served as commissioners to the first General Assembly. Today the assembly enrolls approximately 280 elders, 280 ministers, and 140 advisory delegates. The intervening decades have seen both divisions and unions in the life of the Presbyterian family in North America. In 1810, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was formed as a separate denomination. The year 1837 saw the division of the church into Old School and New School factions. The tragedy of the United States’ Civil War had an impact on both groups. In 1861, the Old School presbyteries in the South separated to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, renamed the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (PCUS) four years later. The southern presbyteries affiliated with the New School had already split off in 1857, and formed the United Synod of the South in 1858.

The forces leading to unity began to grow even before the end of the war, with the United Synod of the South joining with the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States in 1864. Soon after the end of the fighting, the New School presbyteries in the North were reunited. In 1906, a major part of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church returned to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Another part of the family was also moving toward a greater expression of unity. In 1858, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Associate Synod of North America united to form the United Presbyterian Church of North America. That body united with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1958 to form the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA).

In 1983, after several efforts to heal the major split that began in 1861, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. reunited to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the largest and most diverse member of the reformed family of churches on the continent. It incorporated not only the ancestors described above, but also the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church that united with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1920. The reunited church maintains close relationships with the continuing Cumberland Presbyterian Church that shares common roots with churches taking part in the unions listed above, and also with churches established by Christians from different cultural groups in the immigrant population of the nation—the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, Hungarian Reformed Church, and several others. It continues to seek closer relations with other Reformed churches (including several composed of congregations that have left its fellowship to form separate denominations) and with even more diverse denominations that are part of the modern ecumenical movement.

During the two hundred years of the Presbyterian church history, clergy have most often served as Moderators, with thirty-two elders having been elected to the office since 1900. Women and people of color have been elected Moderator nine times in the past twenty-one years. Edler G. Hawkins, an African American, was elected Moderator of the UPCUSA General Assembly in 1964, and the PCUS General Assembly elected an African American Moderator in 1974 when Lawrence Bottoms was chosen. The first women to hold office were



Lois H. Stair, elected Moderator by the 1971 UPCUSA General Assembly, and Sara Bernice Moseley, 1978 Moderator of the PCUS General Assembly. The UPCUSA General Assembly in 1976 chose as its Moderator, an African American, Thelma C.D. Adair. Of the forty-five Stated Clerks who have served the churches that reunited in 1983, all were ministers except two. John Frizzell was elected Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1872, and William P. Thompson was elected Stated Clerk of the UPCUSA General Assembly in 1966. James E. Andrews was elected Stated Clerk in 1984, following the Reunion that formed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

# STANDARDS FOR REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY PERMANENT, ADVOCACY, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

[As Approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004)]

## A. *Process*

The responsibilities of the committee or commission that are being reviewed

1. A self-study of its work based on the review standards covering the previous six years.
2. The self-study will have to be available by the 120-day deadline before the General Assembly at which it is to be reviewed.
3. Representatives of the committee or commission will need to be available at the assembly to serve as resources for the assembly committee.
4. The committee or commission may include responses in the self-study and additional questions that explore the standards that apply to its particular work.
5. The committee or commission may utilize former members to help develop the self-study.

## B. *The Responsibilities of the Office of the General Assembly in the Review*

1. The Office of the General Assembly (OGA), in consultation with the leadership of the committee or commission, will supervise the development of a survey instrument by the Office of Research Services.
2. Specific training of assembly committee leadership and members as needed to accomplish the evaluation process.
3. Budget for development of self-studies.
4. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the PMA will evaluate the review process after each assembly.

## C. *The Work of the Assembly Committee for Review*

1. The review assignment will be given to a designated assembly committee.
2. The assembly committee's review will be limited to certain questions:

Is the committee or commission fulfilling its mandate (based on self-study, surveys, consultations with committee or commission leadership)?

3. Are there items that need to be referred for further study?
4. The assembly committee will hold hearings, etc.
5. The assembly committee will be in dialogue with representatives of the General Assembly permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees or commissions being reviewed.
6. The assembly committee may break into subgroups to cover each committee or commission being reviewed.
7. The review committee will respect the distinction between a committee and a commission.
8. The assembly committee will make a final report, possibly with recommendations.

## Standards

### A. *Fidelity to Mission and Partnership*

1. Each committee or commission was created by the church and exists to serve and support the church's mission in a particular area. Each committee or commission is expected to exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

2. The basic process of the committee or commission should demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The committee or commission should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the committee or commission acts.

3. The committee or commission should exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity.

4. The committee or commission should provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

### B. *Effectiveness of Services*

The services of the committee or commission are consistent with its assembly or constitutional mandate.

1. The committee or commission has a defined and consistent process for completing its work.

2. The committee or commission has a regular process of self-evaluation of its services.

3. The committee or commission employs a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large.

4. The committee or commission utilizes current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

5. The committee or commission has developed a vision and plans for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

# STANDARDS FOR REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES

## **Purpose**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to the understanding that ‘the unity of the Church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it’ (G-4.0201). The basic principles of Presbyterian polity include the responsibility of a higher governing body to review those ministries for which it is accountable (G.-4.0301f). The purpose of the review process is to provide an equitable evaluation of the ministry of the agencies of the General Assembly. The review will focus on the quality of the relationship of the agencies’ ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the agencies’ collaborative efforts with other agencies, and the quality of the agencies’ program based on the standards for review.

## **Timing of the Process and Formation of Review Committees**

The review process for General Assembly agencies occurs over the cycle of three General Assemblies. In the first assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. In the second assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The A Corporation/Administrative Services Group shall be reviewed together with the All Agency Review, including any current service agreements. In the third assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the effectiveness of the six agencies, the A Corporation/Administrative Services Group, and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly’s mission directives.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate to each meeting of the General Assembly for election the appropriate committees and a moderator to conduct the review assigned based on the six-year schedule described above. The agency review committee’s responsibility is to provide an objective report to the General Assembly as to the agency’s compliance to the standards of review. The agency review committee may provide advice on areas of program improvement. The agency review committee’s role will be to examine the agency’s church relations, its policies and practice, history of collaboration with other agencies, and its program effectiveness. It will visit the agency and talk personally with leadership staff and the governing board or committee. The agency review committee is to conduct its work within the context of the General Assembly’s concern for the strong vital connections within the agencies of the General Assembly and the whole church. The governing board of the agency is responsible for the internal management of the agency and its operational details. The agency review committee’s role is to strengthen the bonds of the agencies to the General Assembly, the essential mission of the church, and the basic accountability of the governing board and executive leadership of the agency to the PC(USA). The agency review committee should celebrate with the whole church the successful ministries of the agency it is reviewing, and to consult with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding representation of employees. The agency review committee will report to the General Assembly through the General Assembly committee to which the agency reports.

## **Staffing and Funding**

Staffing will be provided by an agency that is not being reviewed. The funding for the review process will be paid from per capita income.

## **Manual**

A manual will be maintained to provide guidance in the review process to the agency review committee and the agencies. The manual will contain information on the process for review and the report format for the agency review committee. The format will outline the opportunities for dialogue between the agency review committee and the agency in preparation of the final report. The manual will provide guidance for the whole agency review committee on its organization and the role of individual members in the review process.

## **Criteria for Review of Individual Agencies**

A. *Church Relatedness*

1. Each agency was created by the church, and exists to serve and support the church's mission in a particular area. The agency is expected to have the expertise necessary to accomplish the work it has been assigned, and is also expected to exhibit a constant awareness of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

2. The basic work, programs, and services of the agency demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The agency should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in its engagement with the work and resources in which the agency acts as the church's expert.

3. When appropriate, printed materials of the agency clearly identify the agency as a part of the PC(USA).

4. The agency honors the policy statements of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Constitution.

5. The agency includes in its administrative officers, and in its governing board in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, persons who understand and respect the relationship with the PC(USA).

6. The agency provides responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

7. The agency is actively working to open wide the doors of the church to God's amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and all expressions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in striving to increase the membership of our denomination and achieve the great ends of the church.

#### B. *Policies and Program Effectiveness*

1. The agency understands that its responsibility is to manage its assets for the good of the whole of the PC(USA).

2. The governing board is properly constituted, clearly identified, and fully conversant with (a) the mission of the agency, (b) the current overall condition of the agency, (c) its specific responsibilities as directors, (d) the legal relationship of the agency to the church, and (e) its relationship to the president or chief officer.

3. The agency exhibits full compliance with all appropriate external regulatory and accrediting agencies, including consultation and review with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding principles of participation and representation in the employment of personnel, and conformity with 'A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action' or subsequent guidelines.

4. An annual audit of the financial affairs of the agency is conducted by qualified and disinterested parties.

5. The governing board of the agency has a process for the selection and review of its chief officer or president.

6. The president or chief officer and the governing board have policies and procedures by which they assure that the agency staff hold the necessary and appropriate skills, licenses, and experience to make it reasonable to anticipate that they can perform their work satisfactorily and a functioning policy with expectations of staff development.

7. The agency has in place and operating a long-range and short-range planning process and a process for measuring its delivery of services and of monitoring the effectiveness of those services with its constituencies.

8. The agency exhibits an effective strategy for producing high-quality communication with its constituencies.

9. The agency is currently structured to face effectively the challenges of the future and demonstrates appropriate attention to current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

#### C. *Collaboration*

1. The agency presses beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration and, where appropriate and/or directed by General Assembly, shares agendas and work with other agencies toward fulfillment of shared goals.

2. The agency maintains open and regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to, other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies, including mid council bodies.

3. The agency has conducted an evaluation of the potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavours with other agencies whenever new programs are initiated.

4. The agency seeks pragmatic solutions to operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies.

D. *Criteria for Review of the Collective Work of the Agencies*

The review of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies shall focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other councils in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly's mission directives.

The focus in reviewing the effectiveness of the agencies and other councils with respect to their effectiveness in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives shall be on the following areas:

1. The effectiveness of and obstacles to collaboration between the agencies;
2. The accountability of the agencies to the General Assembly and to one another;
3. The agencies' responses to the General Assembly's mission directives, individually and collectively, in light of the call to a new openness in *Book of Order*, F-1.0404;
4. The stewardship and effective use of resources by the agencies, individually and collectively;
5. Their work to open wide the doors of the church to God's amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and all expressions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in striving to increase the membership of our denomination and achieve the great ends of the church.

## STANDARDS OF ETHICS FOR COMMISSIONERS AND ADVISORY DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. **Foundations.** The standards of ethical conduct for commissioners and advisory delegates to the General Assembly are founded in our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ and the witness of Scripture. Commissioners and advisory delegates to the General Assembly should find particular guidance in the *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*.<sup>1</sup> In fulfilling the particular responsibilities of service as commissions and advisory delegates to the General Assembly, particular ethical obligations arise from the nature of the assembly and the role commissioners and advisory delegates play in it. Among the foundational principles of our polity that lead to particular ethical responsibilities for commissioners and advisory delegates are that:

- a. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is governed by presbyters exercising “shared power ... by presbyters gathered in councils” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0208 & F-3.0202).
- b. “Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0204).
- c. “Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0205).

All commissioners and advisory delegates have a responsibility to act in a manner that preserves these principles. These specific aspects of these responsibilities are set forth below.

2. **Independent Judgment.** All commissioners and advisory delegates shall avoid actually or potentially compromising the exercise of their independent judgment in seeking to discern the will of Christ in the decisions made by the General Assembly, and situations that give even the appearance of compromising the exercise of their independent judgment.

- “a. Definition. ‘Compromising independent judgment’ means any situation in which the commissioner or advisory delegate may be influenced or appear to be influenced in decision-making by any motive or desire for personal advantage or obligation to others with an interest in the decisions of the General Assembly. Personal advantage means a financial interest or some other personal interest, whether present or potential, whether direct or indirect. Such situations can arise not only during the meeting of the General Assembly, but at any time after an individual has been selected as a commissioner or advisory delegate.**
- “b. Potential Compromises of Independent Judgment. Any commissioner asked to serve in a committee leadership position shall disclose prior to accepting such an appointment any matters and relationships that have the potential for giving rise to the appearance of compromising his or her independent judgment. All commissioner or advisory delegates are likewise to disclose promptly, in writing, matters and relationships that have the potential for giving rise to the appearance of compromising his or her independent judgment in the business before the General Assembly. Examples include, but are not limited to, financial interests in a decision of the assembly, acceptance of gifts or trips provided by those with an interest in or who are advocating for or against a recommendation or overture before the assembly. All disclosures are to be made promptly in writing to the moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures. When in doubt, the commissioner or advisory delegate is to assume there might be at least the appearance of a compromise of his or her independent judgment, and should raise the question pursuant to these standards.”**
- c. Gifts and Relationship Building.** To avoid even the appearance of impropriety, any gifts, gratuities, special favors, and hospitality to a commissioner or advisory delegate shall not be accepted by any commissioner or advisory delegate from any person or organization that sells, delivers, or receives any goods, materials, or services to or from any entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or from any person or entity who are advocating for or against a recommendation or overture before the General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> While not all advisory delegates will have been ordained to the ordered ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the standards set forth therein are appropriate guidance to all who have accepted service as an advisory delegate to the General Assembly.

This prohibition includes those persons or organizations that desire to enter into such relationships with any entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). There are four exceptions to this rule:

- (1) Gifts, meals, outings, and relationship-building activities provided by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churches, middle councils, partner churches or related organizations. Commissioner or advisory delegate shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.
- (2) Gifts that primarily benefit the General Assembly and not an individual commissioner or advisory delegate, such as gift cards, gifts of complimentary rooms given to the General Assembly by hotels, conventions, and conferences in relation to official General Assembly business.
- (3) Occasional small gifts (less than \$50 in value, such as flowers or foodstuffs) to an individual commissioner or advisory delegate. Where gifts are shared with other commissioner or advisory delegates or other General Assembly participants (e.g., foodstuffs set out for all to partake), then the gift is not deemed to be to an individual commissioner or advisory delegate.
- (4) Luncheons, dinners, outings, and relationship-building activities in connection with General Assembly business may be received. If an activity permitted under this paragraph results in a value of more than \$100 to the commissioner or advisory delegate, the commissioner or advisory delegate shall promptly report this in writing to the General Counsel of the PC(USA) and the moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures. The written report will include a description of the activity, the dollar value, the name of the person/organization providing it, and the business that person/organization does with an entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the recommendation before the General Assembly that the person/organization is advocating for or against. The Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures shall maintain a log that includes all of the written reports submitted under this Section (4).

- d. Process and Resolution.** All disclosures, reports, or questions regarding actions that might actually or potentially compromise a commissioner's or advisory delegate's independent judgment are to be made promptly and in writing to the moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures. The Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures will consult with the Stated Clerk and with the General Counsel of the General Assembly or designee as appropriate. After consultation, the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures will make a recommendation to the General Assembly. The General Assembly makes the final decision as to whether any action of a commissioner or advisory delegate has compromised a commissioner's or advisory delegate's independent judgment.

**3. Confidentiality of General Assembly Information.** In the rare circumstance in which the General Assembly meets in executive session, commissioners or advisory delegates shall not disclose information disclosed in the course of such a session that is not known outside of the General Assembly or is not known by public means (Standing Rule F.5.g.)

**4. Preservation of the Deliberative Process.** Each commissioner and advisory delegate should act in a manner that preserves the rights of other commissioners and advisory delegates to participate in the deliberative process.

- a. Cellular telephones.** "Use of cellular telephones is prohibited during meetings of the General Assembly and meetings of the assembly committees. During these meetings, pagers may be used only in the silent mode" (Standing Rule F.5.e.).
- b. Demonstrations.** "Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets" (Standing Rule F.11.b.).

**5. Violations.** Allegations of any violation of these standards during the course of a General Assembly shall be brought to the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures. The Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures shall give the accused reasonable opportunity to be heard. If it finds a violation of these standards has occurred after giving the accused due process (RONR §61), the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures may bring to the General Assembly a motion to reprove the accused commissioner or advisory delegate. A decision by the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures not to bring a motion to reprove to the General Assembly is not



appealable to the General Assembly. Violation or noncompliance with this policy may also result in discipline by the council with jurisdiction over the commissioner or advisory delegate.

**6. *Amendments.*** These standards may be amended from time to time. In consultation with the General Counsel of the General Assembly, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly is authorized to periodically review this policy and to recommend reasonable and necessary changes to these standards.

**7. *Designees.*** Where these standards assign a duty to a particular officer or staff position, that officer or staff position may use the General Counsel or its designee to complete the duties.

**8. *No Waiver by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*** Nothing in these standards shall be construed to waive any claim, assertion, or defense of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to exemption or exclusion from applicability of a statute and/or regulation or lack of jurisdiction of a civil court or governmental agency.

**9. *Trainings.*** Trainings to familiarize the commissioner or advisory delegates with these standards and its related forms and procedures will be posted on the General Assembly website in advance of each meeting of the General Assembly. Commissioners assigned to the Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures will receive training regarding their responsibilities under this policy.

# CULTURAL PROFICIENCY STANDARDS

## Standards for Review of PC(USA) Agencies

### Short Definition:

Cultural Proficiency: The policies and practices of an organization, and the values and behaviors of individuals, that enables an organization or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. Cultural proficiency defines diversity as a strength rather than a problem in organizations. It is a process for strategic, intentional organizational transformation that addresses culture, commitments, practices and skills.

Cultural Proficiency is an approach to building organizational capacity to thrive on the strengths of diversity, a process for intentional systemic change. It encompasses a set of tools for change and a vision of community that nurtures the diverse gifts of all its members. Implementing cultural proficiency incorporates both:

- *Policies* and *practices* within organizations, and
- *Values* and *behaviors* of individuals.

As a transformational tool, cultural proficiency is an inside-out process that builds on the core values, norms and traditions within the existing organizational structure to equip the organization to live out its vision with integrity. This approach creates a platform for creative, innovative leadership for change.

The Tools of Cultural Proficiency are not strategies or techniques. They provide a framework for assessing organizational practices and individual behaviors with an eye to giving direction to change and setting parameters for developing strategies for change within an organization.

- The Continuum: Language for describing both healthy and non-productive policies, practices and individual behaviors.
- The Essential Elements: Behavioral standards for measuring, and planning for, growth toward cultural proficiency.
- The Barriers: Caveats that assist in responding effectively to resistance to change.
- The Guiding Principles: Underlying values of the approach.

The *Continuum* recognizes that change processes are fluid and do not happen uniformly.

There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate various ways of perceiving and responding to differences. They provide a vocabulary for assessing policies,

practices and behaviors. Organizations and individuals may have practices at multiple points on the continuum at any time.

- Cultural destructiveness works to eliminate any vestige of culture or difference defined as “other,” practices exclusion or segregation.
- Cultural incapacity works to define culture or difference defined as “other” to be wrong, requires assimilation to the normative culture.
- Cultural indifference refuses to acknowledge the culture of others, treats difference as insignificant, and of no value to the organization.
- Cultural pre-competence accepts difference as normal, reflects an initial awareness of the need to adapt in order to incorporate diversity in a constructive manner in an organization and work effectively as an individual in a diverse environment.

- Cultural competence works to build individual skills and organizational capacity to incorporate cultural diversity in an interactive manner, creates a culture that welcomes cultural difference.
- Cultural proficiency values difference, works to learn from the “other,” nurtures full participation and contributions of diverse cultural and social groups.

*The Essential Elements* of cultural proficiency provide the standards for building individual competencies and organizational practices.

Organizational change begins with individual actions.

- **Assessing Cultural Knowledge:** Aware of one’s own cultural identity and organizational norms, aware of what you know about other’s cultures, about how you react to difference and what you need to do to be effective in cross-cultural situations.
- **Valuing Diversity:** Makes intentional effort and adaptation to be inclusive of people whose cultural perspectives and experiences are different from yours or the normative culture of the organization, in order to enrich the conversation, decision-making and problem-solving processes.
- **Managing the Dynamics of Difference:** develops problem-solving and conflict resolutions strategies that are accessible to everyone and attend to cultural differences as normal processes within the organizational culture.
- **Adapting to Diversity:** Develops habits and ways of being within the organization that facilitate learning about differences of experience and cultural perspectives as normative practices.
- **Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge:** Learning about cultural differences, developing skills for cross-cultural communication and problem-solving become integral to the organizational culture and standards for professional excellence.
- *The Barriers* to cultural proficiency area present in varying degree in any organization. Effective strategies for change will be cognizant of the need to educate and motivate employees to gain support for change. The barriers also point to the importance that each individual plays in effecting change within an organization.
- **Unawareness of the need to adapt (resistance to change):** Persons who are served well by the existing organizational culture may see the pressure to change as unnecessary and respond with indifference or see it as threatening. Resistance can create adversarial relationships within an organization if not addressed.
- **Systems of oppression:** Racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, etc. are historically embedded in the internal cultures of organizations and the external culture of society. Systems of oppression create barriers for members of non-dominant groups and extend unearned privilege to the members of the dominant group. Being able to recognize these systemic patterns apart from individual behavior is critical to effecting change within an organization, just as recognizing ways that the organization is impacted by external systems is important.
- **The presumption of privilege and entitlement:** When one group is defined as marginal and denied access to rights and privileges within a system, those same rights and privileges accrue to those who are by definition members of the dominant group, through no effort of their own. Failure to recognize this impact of systemic oppression leads to the presumption of privilege and entitlement as normative.

This skewed sense of reality can lead to negative perceptions of persons in marginalized groups and undermines the moral force for organizational transformation. *The Guiding Principles* provide the core values and assumptions on which cultural proficiency is built. They reflect the significant role of culture in perpetuating systems of oppression, the complexity of attempting deep systemic change, and the potential for culture to be an instrument of change and transformation.

- Culture is a predominant force in people’s lives and in organization’s lives. Within an organization, you cannot NOT participate or be influenced by the organizational culture.
- People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture.
- Acknowledge group identities. People have group identities and personal identities. The group identities that an individual participates in are important to that person as an individual.
- Diversity within cultures is important. Cultural groups are neither homogenous nor monolithic. Persons within a cultural group are unique individuals.
- Respect unique cultural needs. Culture shapes every aspect of life. Members of different cultures bring different needs to organizational life. In a culturally proficient organization, the dominant culture is attentive to the needs of non-dominant groups.

Adapted from: *Cultural Proficiency: Tools for School Leaders*. Nuri-Robins, et al: <https://www.aesa.us/about/Resources/CulturalProficiencyforLeaders.pdf>; and *The Cultural Proficiency Framework*. Nuri-Robins, et al: <http://www.teacherleadershipinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Cultural-Proficiency-Framework.pdf>.

### **Assessment and Review of Cultural Proficiency or a Comparable Approach of the Six Agencies**

The six-year plan drafted by each agency for the implementation of cultural proficiency becomes the document by which an agency is assessed.

The six-year plan shall come into effect once approved by the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), who will consult with the Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Concerns (ACWGC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) before it is approved.

The affirmative action goals for employment and purchasing are established by the 1985 Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action and the 1984 Minority Vendor Policy. These are the church’s policy goals until they are reviewed and/or revised by GACOR in 2014.

The six-year plan shall include:

1. Expression of the commitment of top management, evidenced through:
  - a. A mission and/or vision statement (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0103, F-1.0403),
  - b. Regular discussion in management meetings,
  - c. Training to develop management skills in support of cultural proficiency goals,
  - d. Evaluation of management performance in support of cultural proficiency goals.
2. Training and education strategies to promote employee support for cultural proficiency goals and provide opportunities to enhance skills.
3. A communication strategy to ensure employee awareness and promote the transformation of organizational culture to support the goals of cultural proficiency.
4. Recruitment, training, promotion, and retention strategies to achieve affirmative action employment goals at all levels of the organization, including senior management.

5. Employee education programs to promote employee compliance and support for minority vendor policy and/or supplier diversity goals.

6. Strategies to promote the employment and create a supportive working environment for persons with disabilities.

The six-year plan shall have measurable targets and goals set out in three, two-year cycles.

Each agency is to submit to GACOR biennial reports giving employment data (e.g., salaries, occupations, separations, new hires, promotions, in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender). The GACOR will share this data with REAC and ACWC for purposes of monitoring and assessing cultural proficiency.

Every two years (consistent with the meeting cycle of the General Assembly), REAC will monitor each agency to determine if it is meeting the church-wide benchmarks and to discuss the status of the cultural proficiency goals, allowing for adjustments as appropriate.

The REAC will conduct its detailed assessment of each agency simultaneously with the six-year agency review conducted by the OGA agency review committee.

The REAC will consult with each OGA agency review committee in the early stages of the review process.

# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES

## Policy Application Statement

It is the policy of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ["PC(USA)"] and all entities of the General Assembly ("Entities") that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and Entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This Policy applies to all General Assembly Entity sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

## Distribution

Copies of this Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures ("Policy") shall be made available to all agency, council, and entity offices in hard copy or electronically or via the internet. It is intended as guidance for churches, mid councils, and related Entities. This is a Policy of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and is a Policy of General Assembly agencies and Entities, including the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Administrative Services Group, and the other four agencies of the General Assembly and General Assembly Entities. Other councils and organizations of the PC(USA) may use this Policy as a guide to develop their own policies and procedures related to the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Wherever this Policy indicates that entities shall do something, if a council adopts all or part of this Policy, the council should do likewise.

## Policy Rationale

The implementation and documentation of a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me." The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
- Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ's healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.
- The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is unable to do the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm perpetrated that woefully hinders God's call on the Church.
- The *Book of Order* states, "The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life," and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church's care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (*Book of Order*, W-3.0403).
- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15-16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ's love, in the

same way taking up all children, youth, and vulnerable adults into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

## **Procedures to Follow When Entities Are Providing Care for Minors**

When entities provide care and supervision for minors at one of its meetings, events, or conferences (this excludes meetings, events, or conferences for which an Entity reimburses parents or guardians to pay for care for minors), the following procedures shall be utilized.

### **Definitions**

Each state has its own statutes regarding what is defined as child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse. This Policy advises all entities of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to consider and be familiar with state statutes pertaining to the location of each event/activity.

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this particular Policy. For the purpose of this Policy:

**child:** A child is defined as a person between the ages of 0–11.

**youth:** A youth is defined as a person between the ages of 12–17.

**minor:** A minor is defined as any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

**child/youth worker:** Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at General Assembly Entity sponsored events or activities involving children and/or youth. This includes chaperones who accompany minors to and during meetings, events, and activities covered by this Policy.

**vulnerable adult:** Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

**vulnerable adult abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

**child/youth abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in physical abuse, neglect, and or sexual molestation or abuse, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, or exploitation of a child or youth.

**sexual abuse:** In the *Book of Order*, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

**misuse of technology:** The use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry

**PMA:** Presbyterian Mission Agency.

**OGA:** Office of General Assembly.

**Safe Child Response Team:** The Safe Child Response Team is a team comprised of a minimum of at least three members of or appointed by the Entity of the General Assembly who are specifically trained to respond to allegations and reports of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse at General Assembly Entity sponsored activities. These teams must be readily available to be contacted and used at all General Assembly Entity sponsored events.

**sexual misconduct:** As that is defined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures (219th General Assembly (2010)) and revised by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (2013).

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

Child sexual abuse; including, 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. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.

Sexual abuse as defined in the *Book of Order*: “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

Sexual harassment is defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued status in an institution;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
- c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or
- d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.

Sexual conduct is offensive, obsessive, or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.

Sexual malfeasance is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.

## **Screening, Training, and Background Checks**

A child/youth worker, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to:

1. The organizing Entity’s receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the event policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references.
2. All child/youth workers must be at least eighteen-years-old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.
3. The applicant’s consent to a comprehensive background check, including a criminal background check. The Entity must consult with the insurance company through which they have coverage to determine what background checks are appropriate for their particular event. The Entity should cover the costs of the background checks for all child/youth workers. These checks shall be run no more than six (6) months prior to the event. (This time restraint is also at the discretion of the organizing Entity’s insurance company’s requests. Child/Youth



workers who participate annually in events may only be required to have one (1) background check per calendar year, depending on insurance company standards.)

4. All child/youth workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training sometime within the year prior to the event. The training is to be provided by the Entity and shall cover the event child/youth protection policy thoroughly as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The Entity may contract with others to provide these trainings. These trainings shall further cover:

- What constitutes child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- State laws concerning definitions of abuse and reporting.
- Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of those files.
- Explanation of the importance of the application and screening processes.
- Appropriate boundaries with minors, especially regarding adult/child/youth ratios, transportation, and use of technology.
- If an overnight event is planned, discussions of boundaries involving appropriate sleeping arrangements and restroom/shower facilities use shall be discussed.
- The presence of a Safe Child Response Team at each event and how to contact them.
- All paid employees working directly with children or youth at any General Assembly Entity sponsored events must be certified in first aid and CPR.
- Other related topics.

5. No person may serve as a child/youth worker who has a conviction on his/her record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault;
- Injury to a youth;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a youth;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to youth;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;

- Any crime that involves Sexual Misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
- Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
- Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
- Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping;
- Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated.

In addition, if an Council or General Assembly Entity is aware that a child/youth worker has a prior conviction for one of the aforementioned crimes or a related crime, the child/youth worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend a child/youth event in any capacity.

6. No person may act as or be engaged as a child/youth worker if that person has been found guilty of an offense, in local, state or federal court or in an ecclesiastical proceeding, that includes actions that fall under definitions or prohibitions set forth in this Policy.

7. Whenever a General Assembly Entity organizes an event for minors for which the Entity will invite minors from other church Councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the Councils who selects the youth workers shall:

- a. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker whom the Council knows has violated the provisions of the *Book of Order* or policy of a local congregation or presbytery pertaining to Sexual Misconduct or child/youth protection.
- b. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker for minors when that person is also scheduled to work at the event.
- c. Require Councils at all levels of church life who are assisting in organizing General Assembly Entity events for minors or sending child/youth workers to these events to abide by the same screening, training, and background check standards mandated in this Policy for the General Assembly and its Entities.

8. Whenever a General Assembly Entity organizes an event for minors that invites minors from Councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the General Assembly Entity shall:

- a. Provide guidance to the Councils that are sending child/youth workers about best practices for securing child/youth workers and eligibility requirements.
- b. Provide guidance to the Councils that are sending child/youth workers concerning the requirement that the Council perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth workers and how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker with minors.
- c. Provide guidance to the Councils on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.
- d. Identify someone on the organizing committee or staff of the General Assembly Entity to be the designated recipient of background checks from Councils and train that person:
  - i. To review every background check received;
  - ii. To identify criminal convictions on background checks that should disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker;
  - iii. To notify a Council if the staffer believes the Council has erred in selecting a child/youth worker whose background check indicates that the person should not act as a child/youth worker;

iv. Report to the General Assembly-Entity of the event of each potentially disqualifying background check and related concerns so that a formal decision can be made to inform the Council that the person whose background check is in question is not eligible to attend the event as child/youth worker.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

The Entity shall maintain all child/youth worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

### **Reporting**

Each sponsoring-General Assembly Entity will publicize a procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the event. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of child abuse may report such violation to any leader of the General Assembly Entity sponsored event. Any child or youth who suspects or has knowledge of any type of minor abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the General Assembly Entity sponsored event. Anyone who has knowledge or suspicion of child/youth abuse should be made aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any adult leader should report such violation to any Stated Clerk or Associate or Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or any other leader designated by the sponsoring General Assembly Entity of the event. Any person receiving information under this paragraph shall share that information immediately with the designated response team.

### **Safe Child Response Team**

At every meeting, conference, event or activity for minors planned by an Entity of the General Assembly, a Safe Child Response Team must be trained by the sponsoring Entity and be present and available throughout the entire duration of the event. This team should be comprised of at least three members, staff or appointed, selected and sent by the sponsoring Entity. An attorney chosen and secured by the General Assembly Entity shall be on-call for all events. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this Policy as well as established procedures under the Rules of Discipline, *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* for responding to complaint(s) of alleged child/youth abuse against any teaching elder, ruling elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) with the sponsoring Entity and any events they may sponsor.

The Safe Child Response Team shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect incurred against any child/youth worker or event participant:

1. Immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved.
2. If the report alleges abuse or harassment of a minor, the response team will:
  - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law;
  - b. immediately notify the parents or guardian of the minor;
  - c. notify the insurance company of the allegation and that no investigation has yet occurred.
3. Make immediate decisions concerning the temporary removal of the individual accused from any contact with Minors pending an investigation and/or removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.
4. Notify designated people at the General Assembly Entity immediately of the report of alleged abuse/neglect including the attorney who is on-call throughout the duration of each event, who has been previously secured by the General Assembly Entity in case of such allegations during each sponsored event. Any possible media requests will be handled by a designated person or office with advice from the on-call attorney, taking care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

5. Consult the OGA and PMA about resources available for victims of the alleged abuse prior to each event and have those resources readily available at every event. This will provide victims and their families immediate resources that may aid in the particular spiritual, psychological, or emotional needs and trauma that arise from the devastation of abuse.

6. If the report is against a teaching elder, the response team shall send a written statement of allegation to the stated clerk of the presbytery that holds the teaching elder's membership. This written statement of allegation shall trigger the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*.

7. If the report is against a ruling elder, the response team will notify the clerk of session of membership that an allegation of offense has been received against an elder that triggers the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II*.

8. If the report is against an employee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee, Human Resources, and Legal Services. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.

9. If the report is against an employee of a sponsoring Entity other than Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.

10. If the report is against a volunteer, or nonmember of the PC(USA), the response team will request that the General Assembly Entity appoint an investigating committee of three persons to initiate an investigation of the allegations in order to:

- a. gather any statements of abuse from those making the report, including any information from the Safety Response Team, and any party to the abuse;
- b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse;
- c. make written determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.

11. Provide for pastoral counseling for the principal parties involved (accuser(s), possible victim(s), accused, family members).

12. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the General Assembly Entities.

13. Any person bringing a report of abuse or assisting in investigating will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

### **Event Rules For Working With Minors And Vulnerable Adults**

The sponsoring Entity of the General Assembly shall ensure that the following measures be in place and actions taken for each event or activity involving Minors and Vulnerable Adults:

1. Child/Youth workers shall:

- a. respond to Minors and Vulnerable Adults with respect and consideration and treat all of them equally, regardless of race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age (40 and over), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation; and

- b. act as a positive role model for Minors and Vulnerable Adults by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.
- c. maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- d. not give money or gifts to Minors, except within the context of a group gift given to all participants in the celebration of special events or recognitions.

2. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of Minors or Vulnerable Adults, for both in person and online gatherings. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.

3. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10 for both in person and online gatherings. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17 for both in person and online gatherings. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there is one or more Minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.

4. View Windows and Open Doors: When Minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.

5. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the Minors and Vulnerable Adults to whom they provide care. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations (ex. Taking age-appropriate photographs and movies, not taking photographs of Minors who are not fully clothed). Adults and minors are required at all times to wear appropriate attire. Child/youth workers are not permitted to take photographs of minors or vulnerable adults under their care or at the meeting or event and share them in any way, including on the internet, without the written permission of a parent or guardian of the minor or vulnerable adult.

6. Age appropriate training to Minors should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to caregiver or leader of the event.

7. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the organizing Entity. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).

8. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off-campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing Entity must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access.

9. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.

10. Minors and adults must maintain different showering and grooming hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing. These hours must be posted on site.

11. Adults should never share sleeping quarters with Minors. The exception to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child situation or parent/child situation. If a Minor requires a caregiver/parent, written permission must be given and kept on record from the Minor's parent/legal guardian.

12. All volunteers and employees at any General Assembly Entity sponsored meetings and events who are responsible to supervise Minors and vulnerable adults must also abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:

- a. Display of sexual affection toward a Minor.
- b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
- c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Minors or Vulnerable Adults or in any way involving Minors in personal problems or issues.
- d. Dating or becoming "romantically" involved with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
- g. Having secrets with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- h. Staring at or commenting on the bodies of Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- i. Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.
- j. Working one-on-one with Minors or Vulnerable Adults in a private setting.
- k. Abusing Minors or Vulnerable Adults in anyway, including (but not limited to) the following:
  - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restraint.
  - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
  - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
  - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
  - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
  - Permit Minors or Vulnerable Adults to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

### **Social Media—Electronic Communications**

**General Social Media Policy**—No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) without the explicit written permission of the General Assembly Entity, or event leadership. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the General Assembly or its Entities, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official General Assembly Entity sites/channels when they have been made available by the Entity of the General Assembly. These may include Web pages, Facebook, e-mail, and similar means.

## **Social Media Communications**

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of General Assembly Entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the General Assembly Entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from Minors and Vulnerable Adults under-age as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by under-age Minors and Vulnerable Adults is a violation of the code of conduct.

If Minors and Vulnerable Adults reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using Facebook to communicate with Minors and Vulnerable Adults, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each Minor and Vulnerable Adult that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

## **Social Networking Code of Conduct**

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their Minors and Vulnerable Adults interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind Minors and Vulnerable Adults how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to Minors and Vulnerable Adults and parents/guardians.

## **Misuse of Technology**

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall misuse technology in the following ways:

- Using technology to send suggestive messages and/or images to a Minor.
- Having contacts by misuse of technology to contact a Minor or vulnerable adult that is not preapproved by the Minor’s or vulnerable adult’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, unless the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church or Entity website or church or Entity social media program.

- To view pornography or sites (ex. dating websites) that include pornography or naked bodies on the premises of a General Assembly Entity event, activity, or meeting, no matter where it is held or by which Entity it is organized.

### **Signing of Policy and Application to Serve**

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly Entity event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing a form verifying they read the Policy. In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly Entity event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this Policy.

### **Procedures to Follow When an Entity Is Providing Care for Minors Outside the U.S.**

There are times when a General Assembly Entity may offer care for minors at a meeting, conference, or event to be held outside the United States (ex. a regional meeting of World Mission liaisons and/or mission co-workers). The organizing Entity will take all appropriate actions to comply with this Policy to the extent they can be complied with, considering the venue of the meeting, the resources and facilities available, and the laws of the country of the venue. Exceptions should be discussed and addressed with leadership of the Entity and its legal advisors.

### **Process to Revise This Policy and Its Procedures**

Between meetings of the General Assembly proposed changes to this Policy and its procedures shall be submitted to the Mid Council Ministries office in the OGA and the Legal Services Office of the Administrative Services Group who will review and present any proposed changes to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors (“A Corp.”) for review and approval, after consultation with the Coordinating Committees of the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Changes will become effective when approved by the Board of the A Corp. Changes approved by A Corp. that are substantive, and more than mere editorial changes, should be reported by A Corp. Board to the next meetings of the General Assembly after the changes are approved. The General Assembly can receive and accept those changes, but any assembly may revise this Policy with or without a report of changes from the A Corp.





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ORGANIZATION FOR MISSION  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
2022–2024





This document supersedes all previous descriptions of mission program and organization and became operative upon the action of the 225th General Assembly (2022).

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Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission that are submitted by overture shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission from related bodies or from within the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly.

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Office of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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## Introduction

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love (Eph. 4:11-16).<sup>1</sup>

These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council. The larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller. (*Book of Order*, F-3.0203)

### I. History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)]

The two denominations that came together in 1983 had similar ecclesiastical polity and theological beliefs. They were leaders in the ecumenical movement and in commitment to the unity of the church. Each had been faithful in ministering in Christ's name. Each had been intentional in revising mission policy and program in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and a changing world context. Within the previous two decades, each had a major reorganization of General Assembly agencies as it attempted to be more effective in mission.

These two denominations also had developed some differences in their styles, structures, and expectations of the various mid councils. Though they were engaged in similar mission programs, the agency structures they formed did not easily fit together.

The uniting General Assembly in 1983 directed that consultations be held to discern the church's understanding of mission before preparing a mission design. "Today Into Tomorrow: A Year of Consultations" was the process followed, and it challenged all parts of the church to examine their understanding of what God required of the church. The result of this process was the "Life and Mission Statement," which was adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985).

The biblical image of the church as the body of Christ was a major theme in the "Life and Mission Statement" and provided the pattern for the church's life and work. This pattern was marked by interdependence and sensitivity to the needs, experiences, and gifts others brought; by honest communication and courage to risk, and by a global vision of both the church and the world. It called for working in partnerships characterized by enduring commitment, equality, humility, openness, sensitivity, flexibility, and love.

A number of basic principles were significant in the drafting of the Structural Design for Mission, which was approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986), and prescribed the organization for mission from 1986–93. These principles are based on the Reformed interpretation of Scripture represented in the *Book of Confessions*.

The year 1992–93 was devoted to the theme "Discerning the Spirit, Envisioning Our Future." A convocation on this theme manifested a deep sense of the Spirit's stirring among us, creating an excitement and passion for the future ministry of the church. One theme was the resounding emphasis on the importance of the ministries of congregations as they are resources for mission. Another was the yearning for church wide organizational forms that are flexible and innovative, with the ability to let agreed-upon priorities lead our work and so restore confidence in our connectedness. The convocation contributed to a continuing process of discernment and envisioning that reflected a sense of the future mission direction of the denomination.

A new organizational structure for mission was approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993). Several of the specific elements of the new structure derive from the Report of the General Assembly Committee on Review, which reported to the 204th General Assembly (1992). A simpler design called for fewer ministry units and related bodies, fewer priority goals, and a balanced budget that reflects the mission priorities.

The PC(USA) is committed to working in partnership with other churches in this nation and around the world. Such a mutual ministry is consistent with the denomination's self-image as one part of the body of Christ, as a servant community willing to be poured out on behalf of all people.

The church's mission finds its center in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in witnessing to that gospel. Beneath the variety and complexity of its forms of witness, the church's mission is one—from the congregation to the General Assembly. To share fully in that mission is the task of every Presbyterian and every council. As the most inclusive council, the General Assembly represents the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the PC(USA). Among its other responsibilities, the General Assembly has the power to set policies, objectives, and priorities for mission, to provide the agencies appropriate for that mission, and to superintend their work (*Book of Order*, G-3.0501).

The General Assembly, its entities, the synods, the presbyteries, and the sessions work together in partnership on behalf of the mission of the church. The Organization for Mission places emphasis on the congregation as an instrument of mission and on the mid councils working together to provide resources and services to the congregations.

#### A. *The Unity of the Church*

The unity of the church, with Christ as the Head of the body, is a fundamental principle that affirms the church is called to demonstrate unity, both within a given denomination as well as ecumenically and internationally. Perhaps the strongest image of this unity is the apostolic vision of the body of Christ, in which the many members, though different, work together for mutual health and upbuilding. Recognition of the unity of the whole church carries with it a series of implications for the internal structure of the PC(USA) and for the denomination's ecumenical commitment.

Clear communication is needed among the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors. These relationships and coordination of program, policy implementation, and support functions give visible expression to unity within the denomination.

While the PC(USA) is called to be the church in and of itself, there is an important sense in which this denomination recognizes that it is one part of the church of Christ. The PC(USA) undertakes its ministry with a full awareness of the global and ecumenical dimensions of Christ's call, and provides a means to share mutual mission, decision making, and resources with partner churches in this nation and around the world.

#### B. *Commitment to Mission*

The church, as the body of Christ, exists to share the love of Christ with the world. The *Book of Order* states the great ends of the church in terms of the call to mission through proclamation, nurture, worship, preservation of truth, promotion of social righteousness, and exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world (F-1.0304). The vitality of the life and mission of the congregation is central to the calling of the church as a whole. As has been noted, the PC(USA) is called to be the church, yet is itself a member of the worldwide body of Christ. Each congregation, too, is called to be the church of Jesus Christ in its own time and place. Furthermore, the responsibilities of the session include: "to [govern] the congregation and [guide] its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world" (G-3.0201).

### C. *Diversity and Inclusiveness*

Within the denomination, the PC(USA) has affirmed the strength of a unity characterized by mutual interdependence in which diversity contributes to wholeness. Various members of this body enrich the whole through the particular qualities they bring:

- As people of color of multicultural constituencies that make visible our rich diversity and offer varied histories and traditions;
- As persons with a variety of physical and mental abilities and disabilities;
- From diverse geographical areas and socio-economic backgrounds;
- As persons of all genders and ages;
- With a variety of theological perspectives within our Reformed tradition;
- With many differing gifts;
- With various histories and traditions within the Reformed family of churches.

Patterns are established to ensure that elected bodies represent the wealth of diverse gifts found in the church and to provide a means to share power and decision making. Similarly, churchwide personnel procedures promote equal employment opportunity.

### D. *Tradition and Flexibility*

The PC(USA) professes a Reformed theology that is solidly grounded in Scripture as the rule of faith and practice. The *Book of Order* affirms: “The Protestant watchwords—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone—embody principles of understanding that continue to guide and motivate the people of God in the life of faith” (G-2.04). The church has also inherited and continues to affirm a Reformed polity that is representative in nature.

Openness to renewal by God entails a flexibility of structure and openness to growth and change. The PC(USA) recognizes the need for growth and is open to it under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Reformed tradition’s awareness of the fallen nature of humanity and human institutions has led to the development of church government made up of a system of checks and balances. In recent years, these checks have included limited terms and rotation for elected officers, and plans to ensure fair representation of the diverse elements of the church on mid councils.

The PC(USA) shares with all Reformed churches a belief in the priesthood of all believers. For this reason, persons called to leadership positions in the denomination are envisioned by this organizational plan as enabling the whole church to do the work of mission.

### E. *Partnership*

The PC(USA) seeks to develop a system of relationships among mid councils functioning through collaboration rather than competition. Partnership is characterized by enduring commitment, equality, humility, openness, sensitivity, flexibility, and love. More than an end to be attained, partnership is a process or journey that can be undertaken only under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Consultation is highly valued as part of the process of decision making.

Each council is a primary agent in mission and has two foci: 1) its appropriate role in assisting congregations and other mid councils in the mission of the whole church, and 2) the performance of its own mission as a council in consultation with other mid councils.

F. *Additional Factors*

Additional factors to guide the structure and style of mission are:

- The need to affirm the centrality of the mission of congregations, and their need and desire for resources from General Assembly entities, as well as from presbyteries and synods;
- The need to recognize demographic realities that bear on the life of the PC(USA);
- The need to be responsive to persons who identify themselves as Presbyterian without actually taking part in a particular congregation's life and ministry;
- The need for styles that support and enable the momentum of movements rather than styles that create or lead to institutional inertia;
- The need to reverse the trend toward reducing the church's function and style to that of a regulatory agency, creating instead a more responsive, less bureaucratic reality;
- The need to be more simple yet holistic;
- The need to build hope and trust within the denomination, while maintaining commitments to and safeguards for those historically ignored, excluded, or silenced; and
- The need for an evolutionary design that can be responsive to unfolding changes in the structure and work of the General Assembly, synods and presbyteries.
- The value of shared services in the PC(USA) exists when all agencies, carrying out their respective missions as directed by the General Assembly, collectively best serve the church with excellence, transparency, and efficiency. Simultaneously, sharing any service must be accomplished without harming the safety, soundness, well-being, or missional goals of any individual agency.

**II. Mission of the General Assembly**  
*(Book of Order)*

G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the PC(USA). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

- 8,000 members or less: 1 ruling elder and 1 minister of the Word and Sacrament
- 8,001–16,000: 2 ruling elders and 2 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- 16,001–24,000: 3 ruling elders and 3 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- 24,001–32,000: 4 ruling elders and 4 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- 32,001–40,000: 5 ruling elders and 5 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- 40,001–48,000: 6 ruling elders and 6 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- 48,001 or more: 7 ruling elders and 7 ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Each person elected Moderator shall be enrolled as a member of the General Assembly until a successor is elected and installed.

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes

by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

In light of this charge, the General Assembly has responsibility and power to:

- *provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.* This responsibility shall include establishing a comprehensive mission strategy and priorities for the church; establishing and maintaining ecumenical relationships and correspondence with other ecclesiastical bodies; uniting with or receiving under its jurisdiction other ecclesiastical bodies consistent with the faith and order of this church, subject to the provisions of G-5.02 and G-5.03; and commissioning, sending, and support of such mission personnel as will spread the good news of the grace of Jesus Christ to the world and foster the growth and development of God’s people.
- *provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.* This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at meetings of the General Assembly and other events and gatherings under its jurisdiction; authorizing the participation in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in ecumenical gatherings attended by authorized representatives of the General Assembly; and exercising pastoral care throughout the whole church in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the church may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.
- *nurture the covenant community of disciples.* This responsibility shall include providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level; communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline; deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with this Constitution; authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the *Book of Order* in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the *Book of Order* being binding; and establishing and maintaining an office of the Stated Clerk.

### **III. General Assembly Officers and Committees and the Office of the General Assembly**

#### **A. Moderator of the General Assembly**

The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical officer, along with the Stated Clerk, of the PC(USA). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

1. The Office of Moderator, with all rights and privileges thereof, may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the Office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.
2. The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the (number) General Assembly (year) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”
3. The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly. When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.



When the Moderator travels throughout the church, it is for the purpose of strengthening the mission of congregations and mid councils, encouraging officers and members, and their work. The Moderator listens for the joys and concerns of the church and ascertains the needs of the world and the gifts of the church's mission program.

When the Moderator serves as an ecumenical representative, s/he expresses the concern of Reformed churches for the visible unity of Christ's body and fuller communion among churches.

When the Moderator visits national and international mission sites, s/he encourages mission personnel, brings the prayerful concern of the PC(USA) to sister churches, and helps to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the world.

When the Moderator addresses the church and the society, s/he speaks pastorally and prophetically from within the standards of the PC(USA), preserving the rights and responsibilities outlined in G-2.0105.

a. The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. "The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body" (G-3.0104).

b. The Moderator of the General Assembly is a corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and a voting member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The Moderator of the General Assembly may attend and participate without vote in the meetings of all other entities of the General Assembly. When the Office of Moderator is shared by Co-Moderators, at least one shall serve on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, while both Co-Moderators shall serve as voting members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

c. The Moderator shall be the official representative of the church at gatherings and functions, both civic and ecclesiastical, at which the PC(USA) is invited or expected to be represented, unless otherwise provided by the General Assembly. In the event that the Moderator is unable to attend, the Vice Moderator, or some other person designated by the Moderator in consultation with the Stated Clerk, may represent the church.

d. The Moderator and the Vice Moderator (when filled) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

#### 4. Enabling the Moderator and Vice Moderator to Serve

a. It is incumbent upon the church to understand, respect, and remain accountable for the balance of the stewardship of time between the ministry of the Moderator and Vice Moderator and the larger vocation of the ones serving in these roles. That balance includes a commitment to respect the need for Sabbath by the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

The church should expect the Moderator to ordinarily spend no more than half of her/his work time responding to invitations in attending meetings of General Assembly entities, in participating in other opportunities, and attending to constitutional functions. In assisting the Moderator in these activities, the church should expect the Vice Moderator to ordinarily spend no more than a third of her/his work time.

b. The Moderator, the Vice Moderator, and the Office of the General Assembly shall jointly develop a comprehensive plan for their travel based upon the mission of the church and the needs of entities, mid councils, institutions, ecumenical partners, and other constituencies.

Each synod, in consultation with its presbyteries, will be invited to develop a plan for itineration of the Moderator or Vice Moderator. Ordinarily, a single invitation for a visit within a presbytery will be accepted during each term.

c. The Stated Clerk shall request the congregation or employer of the Moderator and Vice Moderator to grant a leave of absence for time appropriate to their commitments to permit the Moderator and Vice Moderator to fulfill the functions of their offices.

No later than three months following the election, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator and Vice Moderator and representatives of the congregation or employer they serve, shall conduct an appropriate service of dedication and covenant between these leaders and their faith and/or vocational community, recognizing the unique demands and responsibilities placed upon these officers.

d. To prevent financial sacrifice to these leaders personally, or undue adverse effect upon the work in which they are engaged, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator and Vice Moderator, shall propose appropriate financial arrangements to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall budget for the official travel of the Moderator and Vice Moderator and their spouses, and other expenses incurred in the performance of official duties.

f. An office for the use of the Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be provided within the office suite of the Office of the General Assembly.

## 5. Vice Moderator

a. The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

b. The Vice Moderator shall serve as a corresponding member without vote on the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

c. Should there be a Moderator's Conference, the Vice Moderator participates with the Moderator in planning the Moderator's Conference.

d. The Vice Moderator is expected to itinerate at the request of the Moderator.

e. The Vice Moderator shall consult with the Moderator and the Office of the General Assembly about the special emphasis for the Vice Moderator's itineration.

f. The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

## 6. Regular Reporting: Accountability of the Moderator and Vice Moderator

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) shall assist the General Assembly in ensuring the accountability of the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the General Assembly by receiving and reviewing, at each of their stated meetings, a written report from the Moderator and Vice Moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall also report at each stated meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

## B. *Stated Clerk of the General Assembly*

1. The title of the Stated Clerk is "The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);" and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

2. Functions of the Stated Clerk (For functions related to General Assembly meetings, see Standing Rule H.2.)

a. In partial fulfillment of his/her role as the continuing ecclesial officer and Head of Communion for the PC(USA), the Stated Clerk will offer constitutional and spiritual leadership for the life and witness of the church and exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis. The Stated Clerk is the PC(USA)'s chief ecumenical officer and its primary representative in national and international interchurch and interfaith organizations and speaks to and for the church in matters of faith and practice in accord with the beliefs, policies, and actions of the PC(USA).

b. The Stated Clerk shall conduct the general correspondence of the PC(USA). In this connection, all items of correspondence directed to the PC(USA), or to the General Assembly, shall be routed to the Stated Clerk.

c. As an officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall preserve and defend the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and support the decisions, actions, and programs of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall give advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall give advisory opinions on the meaning of the actions of the General Assembly. When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, the Stated Clerk may refer to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, any request for authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, the Stated Clerk may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

d. The Stated Clerk shall publish the Constitution of the PC(USA), and other materials as may be necessary to help the church understand and be guided by the Constitution. The Stated Clerk shall prepare editorial changes in the *Book of Order*, which should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, provided the changes do not alter the substance of the text approved by vote of the presbyteries. The Stated Clerk shall be a member ex officio of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, without vote.

e. On receipt of the certified record and final decision in a case of judicial process from the clerk of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall report the decision to the General Assembly if it is in session, or to its first session thereafter if it is not. When a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another council, the Stated Clerk shall obtain from the council a statement of its compliance and make a full report to the next General Assembly.

f. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and any other committees established to draft, consider, or amend The Book of Confessions or any of the documents it includes.

g. As the continuing ecclesial officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall be a member of each committee that may be established to undertake discussion regarding organic union with another church or churches.

h. The Stated Clerk is the permanent ecumenical representative of the General Assembly and shall be a member of each delegation representing the PC(USA) in ecumenical or interchurch bodies or Presbyterian Mission Agency Boards, and in faith and order bodies, including bilateral conversations and dialogues. The Stated Clerk shall be a member of any body responsible for coordinating, formulating, or implementing the ecumenical and interfaith policies and programs of the General Assembly.

i. The Stated Clerk is the chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall have available personnel to assist in performing the assigned functions.

j. The Stated Clerk, with the concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, may nominate to the General Assembly one or more persons to serve as Associate Stated Clerks of the assembly (Standing Rule H.2.d.).

k. The Stated Clerk, after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, may appoint one or more Assistant Stated Clerks. The term of the appointment shall be four years, subject to reappointment by the Stated Clerk, after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

l. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for its action and recommendation to the General Assembly, a proposed budget. This budget shall provide for the funding of the sessions of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly and all bodies related to it, the funding of the participation of the PC(USA) in ecumenical bodies, and other expenses deemed necessary.

m. The Stated Clerk is responsible for maintaining the archives and records management facilities of the PC(USA), for the supervision of an agency for the preservation of the history of American Presbyterianism, and for the promotion of the study of Presbyterian history. The Stated Clerk shall assure the implementation of a records management program.

n. The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve ex-officio on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

o. The Stated Clerk shall receive all resignations from service on General Assembly entities and shall declare the positions vacant in accordance with Paragraph III.C.1. below entitled "Serving on Assembly Entities."

p. Serve as primary spokesperson for General Assembly actions, unless the General Assembly has directed otherwise.

### 3. The Office of the General Assembly

a. The Stated Clerk shall employ and supervise the personnel necessary to do the work of the Office of the General Assembly, and provide oversight of the personnel of all bodies related to the Office of the General Assembly who shall be accountable to the Stated Clerk unless other provisions have been made. Staff vacancies within the Office of the General Assembly (other than the appointment of Assistant Stated Clerks) may be filled by the appropriate supervisor (with the concurrence of the Stated Clerk).

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the Stated Clerk, in coordination with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, subject to the Office of the General Assembly Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the President/Executive Director for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, authority: (i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly; and (iv) to promote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources record keeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation shall coordinate with the Office of the General

Assembly to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

b. All equal employment opportunity and other uniform policies relating to employment and compensation of the personnel of General Assembly agencies shall apply also to personnel of the Office of the General Assembly and all bodies related thereto. All personnel appointments shall be in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the requirements of the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103.

c. The Stated Clerk may designate a member of the staff of the Stated Clerk to be the budget officer of the Office of the General Assembly.

The following will be related to the Office of the General Assembly for staffing and budgeting purposes: Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent Judicial Commission, Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Committee on Representation, Advisory Committee on

the Constitution, Advisory Committee on Litigation, General Assembly Nominating Committee, Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (staffed in partnership with the Presbyterian Mission Agency), Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates, Educator Certification Committee, and commissions and special committees of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule K.I.).

d. All income received by the Office of the General Assembly from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the treasurer. All payments related to the Office of the General Assembly shall be made by the treasurer upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, bearing the authorization of the Stated Clerk or a person designated by the Stated Clerk.

e. The Presbyterian Historical Society in the Office of the General Assembly shall be under the direction of a person appointed by the Stated Clerk and headquartered in Philadelphia. The mission of the Presbyterian Historical Society and Records and History shall be carried out from Philadelphia.

### C. *Committees of the General Assembly*

#### 1. Serving on Assembly Entities

a. Each person nominated shall be an active member in good standing of a congregation, or a minister member in good standing of a presbytery, of the PC(USA), with the exception of nominees for election to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

b. A person may serve as a member-at-large of only one General Assembly entity at a time. Ordinarily, no more than one member-at-large from any one presbytery may serve on the same General Assembly entity at the same time. Members serving by virtue of office, elected to membership on a second entity to fulfill the requirements of the Organization for Mission or other General Assembly actions, or serving on a second entity by virtue of their position on an entity are not affected by this provision.

c. Persons nominated for election by the General Assembly shall ordinarily be eligible to serve a four-year term and be eligible for election to one additional term. Ordinarily, no person may serve more than two consecutive terms, full or partial. Ordinarily, the terms of those elected to service on General Assembly committees or boards begin at the adjournment of the last meeting of the assembly that elects them, unless otherwise specified in the action taken by the assembly or in the entity's Bylaws or Manual of Operations. At the conclusion of their term of service, a person shall not be eligible for nomination to a General Assembly entity until two years have elapsed.

d. Persons who serve as staff on any of the entities of the General Assembly, committees or commissions of the General Assembly, or persons employed by agencies of the PC(USA) may not serve as elected members of committees, commissions, or special committees and commissions unless otherwise designated by the General Assembly.

e. Consideration shall be given to the full requirements of full participation expressed in the *Book of Order*, G-1.0401, and shall ensure that nominations are made by an entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council, and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403) (see G-3.0111).

f. A member of a General Assembly entity who finds it necessary to resign shall send his or her resignation to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall notify the entity and the nominating committee or other body that originated the person's nomination or election. When any member of an entity of the General Assembly (council, commission, unit, division, committee, task force, or any other body) resigns, ceases to be a member in good standing of a congregation or presbytery, or becomes unable to serve because of chronic or permanent physical or mental illness or disability, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall declare the position vacant.

g. When any member of the board of an entity of the General Assembly, a council, commission, unit, division, committee, task force, or any other body authorized by the General Assembly does not attend two successive sessions of that body and such absence is unexcused, the membership of that person shall be automatically vacated, and that person shall be notified by the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be notified of the vacancy by the chairperson of the entity, and the Stated Clerk shall announce the vacancy and shall notify the General Assembly Nominating Committee or other body that originated the nomination or election of the person who has been absent without excuse, in order that the vacancy may be filled in the manner by which the same position had been filled originally.

h. If a minister of the Word and Sacrament serving as a member of a General Assembly entity representing a synod or presbytery shall transfer his or her presbytery membership and thereby cease to be under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or synod that nominated her or him to serve on the assembly entity, the position shall be declared vacant by the Stated Clerk. If a member of a particular church serving as a member of a General Assembly entity representing a presbytery or synod shall transfer her or his membership to a particular church that is not under jurisdiction of the presbytery or synod that nominated him or her, the position shall be declared vacant by the Stated Clerk.

i. The Stated Clerk shall also notify appropriate entities and mid councils upon being advised of the death of any person holding membership on an assembly entity or who is unable to serve for any other reason. The Stated Clerk shall also declare vacant a position on any such entity held by a minister of the Word and Sacrament who ceases to be a minister of the Word and Sacrament member of a presbytery of this denomination, or a position held by a member of a particular church who ceases to be a member of a congregation of this denomination.

All such vacancies shall be filled by the same process under which the former incumbent was elected. If a vacancy shall occur during the first term of service of an incumbent, then the original source of the nomination shall propose a nominee for election to complete the unexpired term, and such nominee shall be eligible for renomination and election to an additional full term. If a vacancy shall occur during the second term of service of an incumbent, and the position vacated is one designated for a representative of a presbytery or synod, then the privilege of proposing a nominee for the unexpired term shall pass to the next appropriate presbytery or synod under any rotation system that may be in use, and the nominee so proposed shall be eligible for nomination and reelection to an additional full term. Any vacancy in a position for which the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations may be filled until the next succeeding General Assembly by appointment of the Moderator of the General Assembly upon advice by the nominating committee that the committee has decided to present the name of the appointee to the next session of the General Assembly as its nominee for the position.

2. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

a. The General Assembly shall elect a Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, which shall be empowered to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly; to assure the accountability of the Stated Clerk to the General Assembly during the interim between sessions of the assembly; and to provide linkage with the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The committee shall consist of fourteen persons elected by the General Assembly in two classes of seven members each. These members of the committee shall serve a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial.

The Moderator (or Co-Moderator) of the General Assembly will serve as an ex officio member with vote during his or her moderatorial service. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall designate a member to serve a two-year term without vote in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly (if the position is filled), and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency will serve as corresponding members of the committee without vote.

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall elect its own officers and determine its structure, including any subcommittees (see Standing Rule I.4.a. for exception).

c. The committee shall be funded from the per capita apportionment and its financial activity shall be reported through a separate line in the General Assembly per capita budget. The proposed budgets of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be submitted to the General Assembly.

d. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall have the responsibility to do the following:

(1) Assist the General Assembly in assuring the accountability of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and of the Office of the General Assembly by reporting to each session of the General Assembly, including a report or summary of any evaluation of the work of the Stated Clerk and of the Office of the General Assembly that has been completed since the last session of the assembly.

(2) Review annually the work of the Stated Clerk and be responsible for an end-of-term evaluation (see Standing Rule H.2.b.(3)(f)) or exit interview.

(3) Review the budget requests submitted by the Stated Clerk for that portion of the per capita budget administered by the Stated Clerk, and to forward the requests to the Administrative Services Group with the comments of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will also be responsible for approving proposed changes in the staffing design of the Office of the General Assembly presented by the Stated Clerk.

(4) Consult with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly regarding any proposals to the General Assembly concerning persons being recommended for election to the office of Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, and any proposals concerning the appointment of persons to the office of Assistant Stated Clerk (see Standing Rule H.2.d.).

(5) Meet annually with the Coordinating Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to discuss items of concern and common interest.

(6) Be available to the Stated Clerk for consultation on all proposed amendments to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and that such consultation shall occur prior to the Stated Clerk proposing any amendments to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule L.1.).

(7) Review the work of special committees and report to each session of the General Assembly a summary of the work being carried out by special committees, including recommendations to transfer the work assigned to a special committee elsewhere or to dismiss the committee (see Standing Rule K.1.e.).

(8) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.

(9) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.

(10) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule C.4.a.).

(11) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.3.).

(12) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.1.c.).

(13) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly (see Standing Rule G.a.).

(14) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.

(15) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, mid councils, other entities related to the PC(USA) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

(16) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.

(17) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set (see Standing Rule I.1.a.).

(18) Review the recommendation of the Stated Clerk and set the amount of per diem for sessions of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.).

(19) On behalf of the General Assembly, bring forward according to G-6.02 any such questions requiring an interpretation of the Constitution that may arise from the work of the General Assembly.

### 3. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

a. The *Book of Order*, G-6.02, provides for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The committee is composed of nine (9) voting members who shall be stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, polity professors, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church.



b. Except as otherwise specified in the *Book of Order*, the committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly and receive staff services as provided by the Stated Clerk.

#### 4. Advisory Committee on Litigation

a. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in connection with instituting or participating in legal proceedings (see Functions of the Stated Clerk earlier in this section).

b. The members of the committee shall ordinarily be attorneys, and the members shall be experienced in fields related to issues that may be the subject of legal proceedings in which the church is, or may become, interested. The committee shall be composed of six persons, elected by the General Assembly upon nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The advisory committee may invite other persons with special competency related to particular cases or situations to participate in the consideration of particular cases or issues. The members shall be evenly divided into three classes, shall serve six-year terms, and shall be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Members of this committee are exempted from the prohibition against service on more than one entity of the assembly set forth in Section III.C.1.c. above.

c. The committee shall elect its own moderator and ordinarily shall meet at the call of the Stated Clerk. The committee may carry on its work by correspondence, telephone consultation (including conference telephone calls), or meetings.

d. The committee shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding participation in litigation related to matters of civil and religious liberty, relations between church and state, and any other matters related to the mission and interest of the church. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding the establishment and maintenance of a resource file of legal documents as a means of assisting the mid councils and agencies of the church in initiating or participating in litigation in the areas within the concerns of the committee.

e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly, receive staff services as provided by the Stated Clerk, and designate a representative to the annual session of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule B.3.).

f. The committee shall report to each session of the General Assembly.

#### 5. General Assembly Committee on Representation

a. As provided for in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103, council above the session shall establish committees on representation to fulfill the following function: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.

b. The committee shall

(1) Advise the assembly and all entities created by and accountable to the General Assembly with regard to diversity and inclusiveness in its elected and employed leadership.

(2) Reflect in its membership the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.

(3) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.1.c).

- (4) Evaluate each General Assembly session and share that evaluation with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
- (5) Participate in any review and/or revision of the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.
- (6) Make recommendations to the assembly regarding inclusion of leaders for emerging communities and concerns as well as methods of decision-making that increase participation and representation, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.
- (7) Review the work and impact of committees on representation at councils below the General Assembly in accordance with the functions and commitments assigned in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103.
- (8) Assist the church to build an ethos of inclusion and involvement of all persons in the decision-making, sharing power across differences.

#### 6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

There shall be a General Assembly Nominating Committee responsible for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the General Assembly. The Moderator of the General Assembly, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, shall appoint persons to serve on special commissions and special committees. These nominations and/or appointments shall be made in accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-3.0111 and F-1.0403.

#### 7. Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Historical Society

- a. The board of directors exists to assure that the mission of the Presbyterian Historical Society—to collect, preserve, and share our history—is achieved in the most effective and efficient manner, in faithfulness to God’s call and in support of the mission of the PC(USA).
- b. The board of directors shall be composed of a minimum of eight and a maximum of twenty-four persons. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall elect and the General Assembly shall confirm the board. The members of the board of directors shall serve a four-year term and shall be eligible to serve one additional full or partial term.
- c. The budget for the Presbyterian Historical Society shall be submitted as part of the Office of the General Assembly’s regular budget process.
- d. The responsibilities of the board of directors shall include:
  - (1) Establishing the strategic direction for the Presbyterian Historical Society with the concurrence of the Stated Clerk.
  - (2) Providing oversight of and accountability for the Presbyterian Historical Society to the church at large.
  - (3) Ensuring the financial stability of the Presbyterian Historical Society.
  - (4) Advocating for and promoting the work of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

#### 8. Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

- a. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall function to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical and interreligious involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and councils of the church,

the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical and interreligious relations and work; connect the ecumenical and interreligious efforts of all council levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical and interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; and promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom to the world.

b. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall be composed of twenty members. Twelve shall be members of the PC(USA) nominated for at-large positions by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly in as nearly equal classes as possible. Four shall be members of four churches invited by the Stated Clerk to appoint one member each from their communion to serve as voting members of the committee. One of the four churches shall be one of our ecumenical church partners. The other three shall be our full communion partners. One member shall be appointed by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. One member shall be appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The other members of the committee shall be the Stated Clerk or the Associate Stated Clerk for Ecumenical Relations and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or designee.

In addition, the following PMA persons may be corresponding members: the President/Executive Director and up to three ministry directors appointed by the President/Executive Director.

c. Elected members of the committee shall be elected to a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Appointed members from ecumenical church partners shall serve for four years and be eligible for appointment to one additional term.

d. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations will meet twice annually and shall have the responsibility to do the following:

(1) Envision, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, how the PC(USA) leads and participates in the search for the unity of Christ's Church within this nation and worldwide, and propose appropriate strategies to the General Assembly, its agencies, and other mid councils;

(2) Provide oversight to the implementation of the responsibilities given to the General Assembly in Book of Order, Form of Government, Chapter XV. Relationships, G-5.02; G-5.03; G-5.05;

(3) Act on and process recommendations and proposals addressing ecclesiastical ecumenical work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

(4) Propose to the General Assembly, for election, PC(USA) members to serve on ecumenical delegations to the National Council of Churches of Christ (USA), the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Caribbean and North American Area Council assemblies;

(5) Represent the PC(USA) in negotiation and coordination of the search for Christian unity with other communions as authorized by the General Assembly;

(6) Select PC(USA) representatives to serve on ecumenical dialogues, ecumenical negotiations on church unions, multilateral and bilateral dialogues, and representatives from the PC(USA) serving as PC(USA) ecumenical representatives to other church assemblies;

(7) Oversee the implementation of "A Formula of Agreement" (Full Communion) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Churches

of Christ, and represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in planning and coordinating structures to carry this out;

(8) Give guidance to the nurturing of unity among Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the U.S.A., with one another and with the PC(USA);

(9) Empower all agencies of the General Assembly and mid councils to carry out their mission program with an ecumenical consciousness and in close coordination with one another and to model this consciousness in their own work;

(10) Propose and advocate to appropriate bodies of the PC(USA) that they share in funding ecumenical and conciliar ministry;

(11) Propose to the General Assembly names of churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the General Assembly meeting (see Standing Rule B.2.g.);

(12) Select three religious traditions to be invited to send representatives to the General Assembly as interfaith observers (see Standing Rule B.2.f.);

(13) Give guidance to the Stated Clerk and General Assembly agencies on ecclesial (church-to-church) ecumenical relations, helping to carry out the General Assembly's G-3.0501c responsibilities;

(14) Give guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on interreligious relationships;

(15) Give guidance to the Mission Agency on ecumenical mission opportunities in partnership with churches in the United States and around the world; and

(16) Give guidance to program entities on ecumenical formation of Presbyterians, both ministers of the Word and Sacrament and lay members.

e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly. The co-chairs of the Ecumenical Staff Team will have primary staffing responsibilities. The Ecumenical Staff Team shall be a staff resource to the committee.

#### D. *Review of Agencies*

Based on a six-year schedule, the agencies of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate the relationship of their individual ministry with the mission of the whole PC(USA). On nomination of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect three committees in the first year of the rotation, three committees in the second year of the rotation, and one committee in the third year of the rotation, each to review the work of an assigned agency/entity of the General Assembly. Each review committee of the individual agencies will be composed of eight at-large members. The All Agency/ASG review will be composed of 10 at-large members. Special consideration should be given to include commissioners of the last three assemblies and individuals who understand the work of the six agencies. The committee(s) will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The committees shall be granted access to all relevant information regarding their work including, but not limited to, policies, financials, and race and equity audits. The committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.

#### E. *Meetings*

Meetings of commissions, committees, and task forces of the General Assembly may be conducted by means of electronic communications equipment, by gathering at a central location, or both, when authorized by the entity or its leadership. The technology shall enable all persons participating in the meeting who are authorized to do so to have simultaneous aural communication.

#### F. *Proposed Amendments to Section III*

Proposed amendments to this Section III of the Organization for Mission from related bodies or from within the Office of the General Assembly, shall be submitted to the Committee on the General Assembly (COGA). The COGA shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly.

### **IV. The Presbyterian Mission Agency**

Mission, God's mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the *Book of Order* reminds us:

... In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, calling all people to discipleship in Christ (F-1.01).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is the body of the General Assembly in which are lodged the following responsibilities to implement the mission of the General Assembly domestically and internationally:<sup>2</sup>

- To cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;
- To provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of people of color groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;
- To develop and propose a Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency consisting of the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval a comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and program, including a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan;
- To act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency by the General Assembly or the Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;
- To perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

In service to the Presbyterian Mission Agency as it fulfills its place in this, the Church's calling, the primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is to lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly. In order to steward this function, the Board and the Agency shall understand this mission based on the Constitution and General Assembly actions, an accounting of denominational resources, and the interpretation of our times and national context.

Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board's work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs and strategies; to lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then to report back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board's responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board's work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs, and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God's calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multi-layered and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the PC(USA)'s ability to respond faithfully to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God's mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.

In performing this role, the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall report directly to the General Assembly. (See also Rule A.2. of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.)

A. *Policy Responsibility*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may recommend churchwide policies to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall establish overall procedures for the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to implement the policies established by the General Assembly.

B. *Planning and Priority Setting*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for carrying out mission planning and priority-setting processes. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for instituting ongoing mission review processes.

C. *General Assembly Budget*

It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive General Assembly mission budget and program. The Board develops the General Assembly mission budget, which includes a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan as well as a budget for all other costs and expenses of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In preparing these budgets, the Board has the responsibility for approving its own revenue and expense projections, after consulting with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation in doing so. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment recommendation to the Assembly.

All income received by the Presbyterian Mission Agency from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the Treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as is income received by the Office of the General Assembly pursuant to Section III.B.3.d. of this Organization for Mission. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the Treasurer. All payments related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be made by the Treasurer only upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, consistent with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and bearing the authorization of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or a person designated by the President/Executive Director. All restricted and unrestricted funds (principal or income) that support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible, are allocated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency pursuant to budget and other procedures established by the General Assembly including those arrangements with respect to funds held by the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation.

D. *Personnel Responsibilities*

Regarding the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall, subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board responsibility for the following:

1. The President/Executive Director shall employ and supervise the personnel necessary to do the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and provide oversight of the personnel of all bodies related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency who shall be accountable to the President/Executive Director unless other provisions have been made. Staff vacancies within the Presbyterian Mission Agency may be filled by the appropriate supervisor.

2. All equal employment opportunity and other uniform policies relating to employment and compensation of the personnel of General Assembly agencies shall apply also to personnel of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and all bodies related thereto. All personnel appointments shall be in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the requirements of the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103.

a. Approval of personnel procedures.

b. Annual performance reviews of the President/Executive Director as specified in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations, and in concurrence with the Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies.

c. Approval and monitoring of the “Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.”

d. Approval of compensation guidelines recommended by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, within which salaries may be administered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are not eligible for election or selection as staff during the period of their term of service.

#### E. *Reporting*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for submitting a report to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report regularly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, keeping the Board fully informed about its work. Matters that involve an exception or a proposed change in Presbyterian Mission Agency procedures, a major shift in program emphasis, or a major budget adjustment, require action by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Issues of social witness policy, advocacy for people of color and women’s concerns, and those related to Presbyterian theological institutions are reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. To support this reporting requirement, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the right to full access to all information related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency maintained for it by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including the accounting and financial records of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; information about donors, funds, and fund restrictions for funds that have been designated to support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible; external audit reports with respect to such funds and the Presbyterian Mission Agency itself; and, to the same extent as any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), access to the corporate minutes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

#### F. *Elected Leadership*

##### 1. Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. Direction and oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is accomplished by Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members as specified in its Manual of Operations.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures advocacy functions for women and people of color, and advisory functions for social witness policy by providing direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency

Board and General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also provides for the development of social witness policy.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) as a committee that includes representatives of each theological institution identified as in institutional or covenant relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to attend to the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] and those theological institutions that are formally related to the PC(USA) either by historic relationship and governance commitments ('Institutional' relationships), or by covenant commitments and shared concern for the training of ministry leaders and members of this denomination ('Covenant' relationships). COTE has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

## 2. Membership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The membership, terms of office, and officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be provided for in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and approved by the General Assembly.

### G. *Staff Leadership*

#### 1. President/Executive Director

**Election and Review**—The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the President/Executive Director are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be reelected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date that work commences following election. Subsequent four-year terms commence on the day following expiration of the prior term. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with the relevant Employee Handbook and then-current personnel policies and procedures.

The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:

- a. Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its responsibilities to the General Assembly;
- b. Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other General Assembly agencies, mid councils, and people of color caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding);
- c. Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- d. Providing leadership to, and administrative oversight of, the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency;



- e. Leading the personnel decision-making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency delegated by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including but not limited to implementing policies and procedures related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity;
- f. Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- g. Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds development; and
- h. Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies.
- i. When resolution of a particular legal dispute has been delegated by the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the President/Executive Director may, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

## 2. Staff

All staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency are accountable to the President/Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority:

- a. To implement and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- b. To maintain and recommend amendments to an employee handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- c. To retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and
- d. To promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The President/Executive Director shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources recordkeeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation shall coordinate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

## 3. Board Meetings

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board holds regular meetings with the appropriate and invited Presbyterian Mission Agency staff in order to build collaboration, collegiality, coordination, and trust, while also discussing finances, investment results, and any pertinent legal matters.

## V. Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships

The Presbyterian Mission Agency works in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions to enable the various councils to join together in churchwide expression of the life and mission of the PC(USA). This means that, as is the case with all agencies of the church, that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its officers, directors, board members, and staff, must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will cooperate in the preparation and presentation of the per capita budget and apportionment and other opportunities for joint endeavors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for carrying out the mission program for the General Assembly. The ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are linked together and with the church on behalf of that part of the mission entrusted by God to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The principal legal corporation that provides direct support to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church's corporate affairs. Its role with respect to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is to work with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency in support of its mission as directed by the General Assembly.

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are subordinate to the General Assembly. Thus, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, with regard to the mission directives of the General Assembly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to the matters for which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is authorized by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. As both organizations and their leaders recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of them has any authority but in Him, they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in this and all respects. Consistent with this, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegates specific authority, as set forth in its Bylaws, this Organization for Mission, and resolutions of its Board of Directors, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to personnel, contracting, finance, and legal issues so that the Presbyterian Mission Agency may better accomplish the mission goals of the General Assembly. As the disbursing agent under the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly that authorized the Plan of Division for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, it also disburses for the Presbyterian Mission Agency the amounts authorized by the General Assembly in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and the Per Capita Budget for mission. It therefore defers to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board's mission decisions to the fullest extent permitted by those budgets, fund restrictions, and applicable law.

Other relationships include the following committees:

### A. *Advocacy and Advisory Committees*

The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees. All three groups have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

1. The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) shall assist the PC(USA) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world.
2. The Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*,

F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

3. The LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of LGBTQIA+ persons in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

4. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, p. 65, Forming Social Policy, 2.a.

#### B. *Committee on Theological Education*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) ensures the continuation of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) as a committee that includes representatives of each theological institution identified as in institutional or covenant relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as set forth below. COTE has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Its work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area, with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area. Access shall be in the form of resolutions, a biennial narrative report, comments on issues before the assembly, and other appropriate correspondence. The biennial narrative report shall be forwarded to the PMAB for possible comment.

The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to attend to the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] and those theological institutions that are formally related to the PC(USA) either by historic relationship and governance commitments (“Institutional” relationships), or by covenant commitments and shared concern for the training of ministry leaders and members of this denomination (“Covenant” relationships).

“Institutional” relationships require that the theological institution meet the following criteria: (1) The institution must have a historic relationship to the PC(USA), seen in its having been founded with the purpose of training pastoral leaders for the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations, and in a history of significant financial support from Presbyterian denominations that have merged into the PC(USA); (2) The institution must have a continuing relationship to the PC(USA), which is articulated in its governing documents (as used herein, governing documents shall mean charter, articles of incorporation, or constitution required by its state of incorporation); (3) The institution must agree to abide by the reporting and confirmation policies prescribed by COTE for those in institutional relationship with the PC(USA).

These include the following provisions approved by the General Assembly: (a) The institution shall report to the General Assembly through the Committee on Theological Education; (b) Presidents/executive officers and trustees/directors elected under the various charter provisions shall be presented to the General Assembly for confirmation [Note: This confirmation vote, while recognizing the autonomy of each institution’s governing board, allows the denomination to note and affirm the leadership of its theological institutions]; and (c) Material changes in governing documents shall be reported to the General Assembly; (4) Where degrees are offered, the degree programs offered by the institution shall be accredited through the accreditation procedures of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

Providers of theological education who have significant and long-lasting relationship to the PC(USA) may enter into a formal covenant relationship with the PC(USA). “Covenant” relationships require that the theological institution meet the following criteria, and will be elaborated in the covenant document, which may include additional commitments between the parties: (1) Its mission in relation to the Presbyterian theological education enterprise is evident and substantive. It shall provide clear evidence that it intends to partner in mission with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); (2) It shall report the names of its president/executive officer and board to the General Assembly as part of COTE’s biennial report to General Assembly; (3) It demonstrably supports the teaching of Presbyterian and Reformed ecclesiastical and theological material.

The number of COTE institutional members shall be at least one more than the number of covenant members with vote.

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly provide for the presidents/executive officers (or their designee) of the theological institutions in institutional or covenant relationship with the PC(USA) to be corresponding members of the General Assembly.

## **VI. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is a corporate entity of the General Assembly. It holds funds and title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws. Among other things, it provides accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly and its entities, and employs the staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly shall maintain ongoing service agreements with the Administrative Services Group that will govern the provision of services.

With the exception of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, no other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly, and with exception of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly, is obligated to purchase or use any facilities or services provided by or through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall work together and with the other entities of the PC(USA) to help determine what facilities and services the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, may best offer or cease to offer to the church and its entities in the future. If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is not able to provide services that are desired/required by entities requiring service, they may procure services from another vendor.

The officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, their terms, and their election are defined in its Bylaws. The Treasurer of the corporation shall commission the preparation of an audit report or reports by an independent public accountant of the financial position and operations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and, to the extent not otherwise separately commissioned and prepared, the financial position and operations of the General Assembly and its other entities.

## **VII. Other General Assembly Corporations**

### *A. Board of Pensions*

The Board of Pensions is the legally responsible corporate body established under a civil charter for the purpose of administering the pension and benefits program of the PC(USA). It is required by law to administer these programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of its participants and members.

The relationship between the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Mission Agency is set forth in an official Memorandum of Understanding to provide the necessary and desirable cooperation between these bodies,

while respecting and reflecting the special needs of the Board of Pensions as it carries out its ministry to the PC(USA) within an ecclesiastical structure.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

In view of the close relationship between compensation, benefits, pensions, and financial assistance, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Board of Pensions. Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Board of Pensions, the chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (or designee) serves as a corresponding member of the Board of Pensions. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board proposes to the General Assembly

Nominating Committee one of its members to be elected to the Board of Pensions. This person also represents the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in regard to churchwide personnel and compensation policies. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Board of Pensions without vote. At the staff level, the Board of Pensions' president has the privilege of the floor at the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings but without vote. The Board of Pensions reports directly and is accountable to the General Assembly.

#### B. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation*

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the Foundation) is a corporate entity that acts as a "fiduciary" for the General Assembly, providing investment services, holding title on behalf of the church to the investment assets of the church, providing a deferred giving and wills emphasis program, and otherwise assuring that there is strict adherence to the wishes and restrictions of donors and others who have entrusted funds to its care. The Foundation holds title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance. In addition to its work on behalf of the General Assembly, the Foundation offers similar services to churches and church organizations as well as to individuals who wish to use such programs as an expression of their Christian faith and stewardship. The board of the Foundation is elected by the General Assembly through the normal nominating processes. It reports to the General Assembly with a definitive copy to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which may comment on the report. The Foundation provides information about its work to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Committee on the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation on a regular basis. The total budget of the Foundation is made available for review by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Committee on the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Foundation reports directly and is accountable to the General Assembly.

In view of the close relationship between stewardship, mission funding, and deferred giving, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Foundation. A future appendix will define such a relationship. The joint report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Foundation, as reported to the 208th General Assembly (1996), provides agreements and understandings regarding restricted funds. The chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (or designee) sits with the trustees of the Foundation with voice and without vote, for purposes of coordination. The President of the Foundation serves on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board as a corresponding member.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or

entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

At the staff level, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are trustees of the Foundation.<sup>3</sup> The Foundation's president has the privilege of the floor at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings, but without vote. In addition, the Foundation's president is included as part of the Expanded Staff Leadership Team through the Office of the Executive Director. The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Board of Pensions without vote.

### C. *Presbyterian Publishing Corporation*

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is a legally independent, self-supporting corporation dedicated to the mission of the PC(USA). It is responsible for publishing books and educational materials for the PC(USA) and for a broad ecumenical audience around the world. The publishing program strives to extend the mission of the church to the widest possible audience, representing a wide range of religious, social, and cultural points of view.

In view of the dynamic interrelationship between the printed word and the mission of our church, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. The corporation is governed by its board of directors, which includes the corporation's President and Publisher, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as ex-officio members without vote.<sup>4</sup> The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation without vote. The remaining directors are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms and shall be eligible for reelection to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. The board of directors elects officers of the corporation in accordance with its corporate bylaws.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The chairperson of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is a corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with voice and without vote. At the staff level, the president and publisher of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation has the privilege of the floor at the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings but without vote. The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation reports directly and is accountable to the General Assembly.

### D. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.*

The PC(USA) is a great commission community. It tells and retells the story of salvation in Jesus Christ to successive generations. It does so in buildings that are shaped to meet the needs of worshipping, witnessing, serving congregations. Generating capital to build and rebuild church buildings is the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., (the Program) is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Program offers unsecured, interest-bearing investments in various states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. In general, any individual and any organization related to the PC(USA) may invest. The funds generated by investments become mortgage loans that are used by congregations, mid councils, and related entities for building church buildings and rebuilding existing facilities.

Close relationships of cooperation exist among the Program, Foundation, and Presbyterian Mission Agency. Both the Foundation and Presbyterian Mission Agency have significant investments commitments with the Program.

The Board of Directors consist of fifteen members. All members are elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board elects two members from among its membership. The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates six at-large members, one member from among the synods, and one member from among the presbyteries. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation nominates two members and the Corporation's Personnel/Nominating Committee nominates three at-large members.<sup>5</sup> The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Program without vote. The Program reports to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board<sup>6</sup> and is accountable to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.<sup>7</sup>

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII of the Organization for Mission), including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The President and Chief Executive Officer have privilege of the floor without vote at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings. In addition, the President participates in the Synod Executives Forum.

## VIII. Corporations Related to the General Assembly

### A. *Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.*

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW), is organized and operated to be an inclusive, caring community of women, forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that strengthens the PC(USA) (the Church) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom by nurturing faith through prayer and Bible study, supporting the mission of the Church worldwide, and working for justice and peace. Members of Presbyterian Women are first and foremost members of the Church. The organization is structured at the congregation, presbytery, synod, and national levels in order to support the Church at each level.

PW is an integrated auxiliary of the PC(USA). PW is not subordinate to the General Assembly. PW's Certificate of Incorporation includes a Statement of Faith which provides that PW holds to the doctrines and principles of the Reformed tradition as expressed in the Church's Constitution. PW is related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency through an agreement that is reviewed and approved by the General Assembly every four years.

## IX. Amendments

Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission from General Assembly corporations or entities shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup>All Scripture references in this document are New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>2</sup>These responsibilities were part of the *Book of Order* until 2011, when the new Form of Government was approved and they were moved to the Organization for Mission.

<sup>3</sup>1986 Deliverance, Section 3.(b)(2)

<sup>4</sup>2006 Deliverance, Section 2.(e)

<sup>5</sup>1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(b)

<sup>6</sup>1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(g)

<sup>7</sup>1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(a)



**APPENDIX A**  
**Financial Issues**

Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008)

I. Glossary of Terms Related to Financial Issues

II. Values Statement

III. Churchwide Mission Support

- A. Forms of Giving in Churchwide Mission Support
- B. Roles and Responsibilities of Mid Councils
- C. Special Offerings and Other Specific Appeals
- D. Validation of Mission
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- F. Collection, Reporting, and Audits

IV. General Assembly Budget Development

- A. Budget Cycle
- B. Budget Scope
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- D. Basic Budget Design
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- G. Roles and Responsibilities in Developing Budgets

V. Administrative Services

## I. Glossary of Terms Related to Financial Issues

**adopted budget:** The formally approved budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly.

**consultations:** Ordinarily, face-to-face experiences between duly selected representatives of mid councils to exchange information, perspectives, opinions, and advice regarding mission planning, funding, and personnel staffing for the health of the whole church.

**contributor:** An individual, agency, or council that transfers control of a gift to another tax-exempt agency or council; see *donor*.

**designations:** Budget categories as described or determined by a council. Only mid councils may make designations; see *restricted giving*.

**division of committed dollars:** Agreements among mid councils giving concrete expression to the sharing of mission support commitments for the church's mission.

**donor:** An individual or other taxable entity (e.g., an estate or trust) making a gift for charitable purposes eligible for favorable tax treatment. When mid councils are nontaxable entities, they cannot be donors. See *contributor*.

**emergency appeals:** Properly authorized and approved calls for an immediate response to emergency needs through an Emergency Relief Alert.

**equalization:** The use of unrestricted funds to fulfill the commitments and/or agreements that have been made by a council.

**funding for general mission:** Gifts and contributions received with no restrictions for the overall support of the adopted budgets of mid councils.

**funding for specific mission:** A form of restricted giving for designated budget categories or projects within adopted budgets.

**ministry areas:** The primary areas of work within the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff structure.

**mission:** For the purposes of Appendix A, *mission* is understood in its broadest sense, as in proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

**mission support commitment:** A specific dollar figure or a percentage of total dollars adopted by a council to be given in a specified year to support the mission and ministry of other councils.

**mission support consultation:** A face-to-face event among duly selected representatives of mid councils to establish shared ownership of the church's total mission, advocate recommendations of mission support goals, and agree upon means for the division of committed mission dollars.

**mission support goals:** Specific dollar figures for mission support projected as goals for some subsequent year or years.

**other specific appeals:** Requests for support of specific validated mission projects or programs, which may not be included in adopted budgets.

**per capita apportionment:** A means for all members to share in the costs of coordinating and evaluating mission, and performing the ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**projects beyond the budget:** Approved projects not included in the adopted budgets.

restricted giving: Gifts that are restricted by a contributor or donor for use in support of a validated project, budget category, or appeal. The processing of restricted gifts will comply with the standards established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

special offerings: Planned, organized, and approved supplemental offerings for specified causes that may or may not be included in approved budgets.

taxable entity: For the purposes of Appendix A, individuals, partnerships, estates and trusts, or corporations who may be taxpayers under the federal income tax law.

unrestricted giving: Unrestricted gifts received for the overall support of the adopted budget of a presbytery, a synod, or the General Assembly.

validated mission: Any project or program within the bounds of and approved by formal action of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly, whether or not it is funded from the adopted budget of the council.

## II. Values Statement

The funding of the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests on the following principles:

**Faithfulness to Jesus Christ:** Because God loves the world and Christ gave his life, we are called, as individuals and groups, to respond with our lives and resources.

**Flexibility:** Because we believe that the Holy Spirit informs the missional instincts of all God’s people honoring the promises of the past and preparing the promise of the future, we will accommodate regional differences, historical practices, and changing realities.

**Respect:** Because we seek to have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, who looked not to his own interests but to the interest of others (Phil. 2:4-5), we will acknowledge the passion of donors through accountable systems and transparently open, informed, and inclusive decision making, acknowledging the many views of mission designed and enacted in every part of the church. We recognize the tension that exists between respecting the passions of donors and encouraging support of our connectional nature, but confess that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1-2).

**Communication:** Because we are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1), we will commit ourselves to frequent interaction with mid councils and individuals, for the purpose of mutual clarification and unity of experience and hope across diverse boundaries.

Therefore, a design for funding Christ’s work throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be consistent with the following core values:

1. A design for funding Christ’s work will recognize stewardship as integral to Christian discipleship:
  - promoting the biblical concept of tithing,
  - encouraging stewardship education that is understood as the faithful response of discipleship to God’s gifts in all of life,
  - requiring the development of stewardship education materials that are creative, attractive, clear, and affordable.
  
2. A design for funding Christ’s work will appeal to the passions and values of members, pastors, mid councils, and benefactors:
  - communicating to the head and heart of the people of God
  - engaging the donor in the mission of the church
  - recognizing that everyone is a beneficiary of God’s grace, and everyone benefits from joyful stewardship.

3. A design for funding Christ’s work will be transparent and accountable:
  - honoring donor intent,
  - offering easily understood opportunities for giving,
  - meeting clear standards of accountability for pastors, sessions, and potential donors.
  
4. A design for funding Christ’s work will utilize our connectionalism, recognize our interdependence, and demonstrate our partnership in mission:
  - emphasizing the value of interpersonal relationships,
  - encouraging the more inclusive council to facilitate the mission of its constituent members,
  - encouraging the less inclusive council to participate in the mission of the church beyond its bounds,
  - encouraging mutual investment of time and resources among mid councils and constituent membersrecognizing that Presbyterians are the primary base of support for Presbyterian missions, and affirming the importance and priority of funding Presbyterian validated mission.
  
5. A design for funding Christ’s work will emphasize information sharing between mid councils leading to a dynamic mission and vision:
  - placing mid councils in structural and interactive relationships,
  - valuing the wisdom of other mid councils,
  - recognizing the need for consultation prior to engaging in ministries beyond one’s bounds.
  
6. A design for funding Christ’s work will encourage two-way communications:
  - welcoming and encouraging a flow of information and feedback,
  - recognizing that information sharing benefits the whole church,
  - encouraging face-to-face communication when possible.
  
7. A design for funding Christ’s work will honor historic relationships:
  - recognizing that previous funding systems had value and may continue to inform the development of new funding systems,
  - requiring careful investigation of current funding partnerships before altering or eliminating those partnerships.
  
8. A design for funding Christ’s work will affirm the unity of purpose of General Assembly agencies and entities:
  - Sharing resources to foster the mission, ecclesiastical, and administrative ministries of the whole church,
  - Respecting the authority of the General Assembly to hold its entities accountable (G-3.0106),
  - Promoting transparency by providing members of the church clear information about the structures and systems and how they are funded, and
  - Orienting the whole church to the call to “a new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world, to a more radical obedience to Christ, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work” (F-1.0404).

### III. Churchwide Mission Support

#### A. Forms of Giving in Churchwide Mission Support

Churchwide Mission Support is the funding system used by all mid councils to plan and implement the mission of the whole church, with three overall forms of giving.

##### 1. Basic Mission Support

- a. Funding for General Mission: gifts, with no restrictions, for the overall support of the adopted budgets of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly.

- b. Funding for Specific Mission: gifts, with restrictions, for use within the adopted budgets of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly.
2. Churchwide Special Offerings: gifts, with restrictions, for General Assembly planned, organized, and approved offerings for specified purposes that may be included in approved budgets.
3. Other Specific Appeals: gifts, with restrictions, for specific use in support of validated mission that ordinarily are not included in the budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly. Such appeals may be ongoing, time-limited, or responsive to emergency needs.

There are additional forms of giving that are distinct from Churchwide Mission Support. These include giving through Presbyterian Women, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Validated Mission Support Groups, and other organizations. Some of these gifts may be applied to adopted budgets. These gifts are and may be increasingly important to support the work of the church.

## B. Roles and Responsibilities of Councils

To encourage openness and accountability in all financial matters, the following roles and responsibilities will be observed.

1. Roles Held in Common by All Councils
  - a. Select representatives who will participate in inter-council consultations on mission support goals and the division of Mission Support Commitments.
  - b. Share mission priorities, budget projections, funding needs, and mission support goals.
  - c. Provide information for, support of, and participation in an annual season of interpretation
  - d. Consider other councils' mission priorities and funding needs.
  - e. Adopt mission support commitments and honor these commitments in budgets for which the council is directly responsible.
  - f. When changes in mission support commitment are contemplated, promptly communicate with other affected councils.
  - g. Thank leaders and donors.
  - h. Hold receiving sites accountable to accepted churchwide standards.
  - i. Provide full financial reports annually to other councils and congregations on the receipt and expenditure of funds and of a council's assets, and liabilities.
  - j. Collect and transmit mission support from donors, congregations, and organizations within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt.
  - k. Provide General Assembly, and as appropriate, synods and constituent presbyteries, a regular accounting of church-by-church giving and any relevant data requested by a council, while maintaining the right to privacy by individual donors.
2. Role of the General Assembly
  - a. Assist the development of mission support goals at every council level.
  - b. Adopt a mission budget and a per capita budget.

- c. Annually provide full financial reports and program assessments to sessions, presbyteries, and synods.
- d. Disseminate industry standards in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and in compliance with applicable accounting pronouncements and regulations specific to the not-for-profit industry as best practices for council treasurers and financial officers.
- e. Approve the purposes and beneficiaries of the four churchwide special offerings, upon recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

## C. Special Offerings and Other Specific Appeals

### 1. Churchwide Special Offerings

#### a. Criteria for Receiving Special Offerings Funds

The Special Offerings provide important bonds for the connectional church, and are a critical resource for the long-term mission of the whole church. The following criteria outline ways of discerning whether a particular ministry is eligible for funding by one of these special offerings.

- (1) Special Offerings ministries will provide valuable mission interpretation opportunities within the overall funds development and communications strategy of the whole church.
- (2) Special Offerings ministries will enable the church to meet historical and ongoing needs in relationship to the total mission priorities of the church, always proclaiming the name of Jesus.
- (3) Special Offerings ministries will have potential for churchwide donor support.
- (4) Special Offerings ministries will specify the needs to be met, provide plans for ministry implementation, set measurable goals, and demonstrate impact, effectiveness, and accountability to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

#### b. Operating Guidelines for Special Offerings

The following principles and practices will guide the churchwide special offerings of the PC(USA):

##### (1) Review

a) On an annual basis, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director, or designee, will review Special Offerings ministries' impact, effectiveness, and accountability against stated goals. The review will also include the appropriateness of Special Offerings ministries' reserves. Funds development expense and staffing will also be reviewed annually with respect to goals, effectiveness, and strategies. All review findings will be forwarded to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

b) On a four-year cycle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will provide a task force for the review and evaluation of the Special Offerings and the recipient ministries and the consideration of new Special Offerings purposes in light of established criteria, for recommendation to the General Assembly.

(2) When allocating funds, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will align Special Offerings ministries with its strategic vision and mission.

(3) Each Presbyterian Mission Agency Special Offerings ministry will maintain financial reserves of not more than two years of that ministry's annual budget. Understanding the particularity

of Presbyterian disaster response ministries, with commitment to long-term recovery, it is understood that disaster response funds are exempt from this requirement, provided that the Presbyterian Mission Agency has approved and annually reviews a plan for disbursement.

(4) Churchwide Special Offerings promotions will occur in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Funds Development ministry area rather than within programmatic entities.

(5) Costs of promoting and receiving each churchwide Special Offerings will be paid from receipts of the offering. After deducting each offering's costs from total receipts, restricted and unrestricted, of that offering, all receipts will then be considered permanently restricted to the purpose of the Offering. Each Offering's costs will be determined by the Presbyterian Mission Agency through its regular budget process.

(6) Start-up costs for new or significantly revised Special Offerings will be expensed as incurred.

(7) Promotion materials for a Special Offerings will relate to the liturgical season in which the Offering is received.

(8) Any change in the pattern of distribution of a churchwide Special Offerings will allow for an eighteen-month time period before becoming effective to allow adequate time for development and distribution of interpretive and promotional materials.

(9) There will be no more than four churchwide Special Offerings in any given calendar year. The General Assembly will identify times for the promotion and receipt of offerings.

(10) The ministries receiving churchwide Special Offerings funds will prepare an annual report concerning the receipt and distribution of those Special Offerings funds for review by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. This report will be made available to churches and other councils.

(11) All ministries receiving funds from churchwide Special Offerings will work with Communications staff and Funds Development staff to identify and develop networks of interpreters throughout the church.

(12) All churchwide Special Offerings will develop interpretive materials that are well-grounded in Reformed theology and appropriate to the offering's recommended liturgical season.

(13) To advance mission and acknowledge generosity, congregations are asked to submit Special Offerings receipts directly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and presbytery as designated by each offering. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will record and notify presbyteries of congregational donations and thank congregations in a timely manner.

## 2. Other Specific Appeals

a. Other specific appeals include the Theological Education Fund, special campaigns or gifts (national, regional, or local), Emergency Relief Alerts (national, regional, or local), and additional giving opportunities.

(1) The Theological Education Fund is a unique type of an annual specific appeal to sessions through the 1% Plan as approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986).

(2) Special time-limited campaigns approved by one or more councils are essential for meeting capital needs and achieving other mission purposes. These require council approval and may include needs across council lines with advance concurrence of other appropriate councils. In the case of the

General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may approve time-limited campaigns between sessions of the General Assembly.

(3) Emergency Relief Alerts enable persons to respond compassionately to emergency needs, such as natural disasters of large proportion or other crises. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will authorize a process for issuing national Emergency Relief Alerts, providing timely information indicating how church funds are being used to meet the emergency and how individuals and sessions may contribute additional funds to meet such needs. There may be occasions when sessions, presbyteries, or synods will issue Emergency Relief Alerts in response to more localized emergencies.

(4) Additional giving opportunities provide a way for contributors or donors to support mission not funded by adopted budgets.

a) A validation process that maintains the integrity of the church's mission will be used to identify such opportunities. Whenever possible, such opportunities will be promoted jointly by mid councils beyond the session through a program of additional giving opportunities.

b) Contributors or donors desiring to support validated mission beyond established budgets may do so through additional giving opportunities up to whatever limits have been set by a more inclusive council. Concurrence in the purpose of the gift by the receiving council or agency is required.

c) An effective additional giving program depends on significant sharing of information about adopted budgets and additional giving opportunities.

b. All campaigns for other specific appeals shall identify in advance the anticipated administrative costs that may be charged to receipts. A council that designates an other specific appeal may apply a charge, not to exceed an agreed upon percentage, against other specific appeals receipts to cover actual costs of promoting, receiving, and disbursing funds. Contributors and donors will be informed of the actual percentage. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine the cost of communicating national Emergency Relief Alerts and may authorize a charge against receipts with this charge being reported for each specific appeal.

c. Acknowledgment of receipt of gifts to all validated projects or agencies will be made to the contributor or donor by the receiving council or validating agency in a timely manner, including concurrence in the purpose of the gift (see further at Appendix A, Churchwide Mission Support, Item E.2.).

d. All recipients of validated mission funds are responsible for reporting all gifts received directly from Presbyterian contributors or donors to the validating council.

#### D. Validation of Mission

1. Validated mission is any project or program within the bounds of and approved by formal action of a session, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly that is consistent with the responsibilities assigned by the Form of Government, whether or not it is funded from the adopted budget of the council. Validated mission should cohere with the great ends of the Church (F-1.0304) and is determined in accord with the following provisions of the *Book of Order*:

- a. F-1.00 The Mission of the Church
- b. G-3.0106 Administration of Mission
- c. G-3.0113 Finances
- d. G-3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities (Sessions)
- e. G-3.0301 Presbytery Responsibilities
- f. G-3.0401 Synod Responsibilities
- g. G-3.0501 General Assembly Responsibilities



2. Each and all councils serve the mission of the whole church and thereby appropriately validate mission. Such validated mission may be commended to others but does not require their concurrence or support.

3. Validated mission may be within or beyond council budgets.

a. Validated Within Budget: Projects or programs included in the adopted budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly, including projects that will be funded with Funding for General Mission and Funding for Specific Mission.

b. Validated Beyond Budget: Projects or programs not included in adopted budgets, but validated by action of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly. The validating council may specify dollar and/or time limitations.

E. Accounting Definitions and Standards: Designated, Restricted, and Unrestricted Giving

1. For accounting purposes, the following definitions of designators, contributors, and donors are observed.

a. Designations may be made only by councils. A designator has received funds from a contributor or donor and applies such funds to designated categories or items. A designator must be a council.

b. Contributors can be donors, councils, or other sources of income. Contributors may make unrestricted or restricted gifts.

c. The term donor applies to persons or entities whose gifts are eligible for a tax deduction. Donors may make restricted gifts consistent with IRS regulations and acceptable to the receiving entity. Restrictions must be agreed to prior to the completion of the gift.

2. For accounting purposes, unrestricted giving and restricted giving are defined as follows:

Restricted giving refers to gifts with restrictions by a contributor or donor for use in support of a particular project, budget category, or appeal. The processing of restricted gifts will comply with the standards established by the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Internal Revenue Service regulations. Unrestricted giving refers to gifts made without restriction and subject to the use and discretion of the receiving council.

a. Unrestricted giving remains foundational in the System of Giving. Through unrestricted giving, individuals and councils share in support of the whole mission and ministry in which the church engages.

b. Restricted giving, such as churchwide special offerings and other specific appeals, is a valuable and important method of adding to unrestricted giving. Contributors wishing to use restricted giving are encouraged first to choose projects or categories within adopted budgets. Special offerings and other specific appeals are always restricted by their stated purpose.

(1) Each council must handle funds according to the donor's intention in giving the gift. If the intent cannot be honored, the gift must be returned.

(2) Clarity in this regard may on occasion require conversation and/or negotiation with donors even beyond the council where the gift is first received.

c. Restrictions on the use of gifts may come from a donor or a council making the gift but always require concurrence by the council or validated not-for-profit agency receiving the gift.

(1) A donor must relinquish control of a gift or it does not qualify for tax preference treatment and the receiving organization jeopardizes its tax-exempt status.

(2) When restricted gifts are accepted, they will always be used for the restricted purpose within designations approved by the council.

3. The obligations of designators are to:

a. Honor restrictions that have been accepted or to consider permitting additional support of a project beyond its approved budget;

b. Ensure conformity with all applicable civil law;

c. Report back to all donors and contributors;

d. Contact all donors or contributors if restricted giving cannot be used according to its restrictions—if restrictions cannot be met and the donors or contributors do not agree to the use of funds for other purposes, the gifts are to be returned to the donor.

4. Budgeting and Equalization

a. Funding of approved budgets is accomplished as follows:

(1) First, restricted funds are applied to the appropriate budget items.

(2) Then, unrestricted funds are applied toward fulfilment of all budget items.

(3) This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization within a council's budget. This process supports the orderly planning and budgeting decisions of councils while honoring appropriate restrictions and designations.

b. Sessions are encouraged to follow the division of mission support commitments adopted by their presbyteries. If a session does not follow these division agreements, a presbytery may seek to fulfill agreements through use of unrestricted funds—provided that such a policy is communicated to its sessions. This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization among councils. Churchwide special offerings and other specific appeals shall not be used to fulfill mission support commitments and are not subject to equalization.

F. Collection, Reporting, and Audits

1. Collection and Transmittal of Funds

a. The General Assembly will maintain financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and in compliance with all applicable accounting pronouncements and regulations specific to the not-for-profit industry. Software and systems will be appropriate to support compliance with the requirements stated above.

b. The General Assembly will observe the following minimum standards for its operations. It is expected that presbyteries and synods will also adopt and adhere to these same standards:

(1) Provide a detailed receipt to a contributor or congregation for all money received.

(2) Close monthly.

(3) Utilize the Federal Reserve system to expedite the transfer of funds whenever and wherever possible.

(4) Use a standardized, detailed transmittal format for transmitting data and funds electronically between presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly.

(5) Establish and follow cash management policies and procedures that are designed to maximize cash management earnings.

## 2. Reporting

The General Assembly will provide financial information quarterly for receipt of funds from all sources, and this information will be posted to the PC(USA) Web site on the financial page.

a. Each presbytery and synod will be responsible for obtaining with remittances the detailed information required for disbursement.

b. Each presbytery and synod will report all giving on an approved information transmittal form to the General Assembly site no later than sixty days after receipt of funds.

c. The General Assembly will furnish to every presbytery and synod an annual information report on a church-by-church basis. This annual report will provide information for churches within a synod or presbytery bounds on all funds received by it for presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.

d. The General Assembly will furnish, in cooperation with the presbyteries, at least quarterly and not more often than monthly, an information report to every presbytery showing the agreed upon distribution of dollars (including the presbytery's mission support commitments) between the presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly as compared to the actual funds received. Should discrepancies exist, the General Assembly site will work with the reporting site to clarify and to effect the necessary changes and/or corrections.

## 3. Internal Audit

The Presbyterian Mission Agency will establish an internal audit function involving a broad variety of audit services. Included among these are:

a. Reviewing the reliability and integrity of financial information and how that information is identified, measured, classified, and reported;

b. Reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of particular financial management functions;

c. Reviewing established internal control systems for efficiency and compliance;

d. Reviewing compliance with internal policies and procedures;

e. Reviewing financial statements contained in the annual report with management and the independent auditors to determine that the independent auditors are satisfied with the disclosure and content of the financial statements;

f. Reviewing and recommending to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Audit Committee, the independent auditors to be selected to audit the financial statements of the corporation; and

g. Reporting directly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Audit Committee.

## IV. General Assembly Budget Development

### A. Budget Cycle

The General Assembly Budget refers to the combined Mission, Per Capita, Administrative Services Group, and Designated Budgets. The Unified General Assembly Budget will be developed in budget cycles. Each budget cycle will consist of two consecutive calendar years, where the first year is the year following a biennial General Assembly meeting (e.g., 2022 General Assembly, 2023/2024 budget cycle). Each cycle, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall propose a unified budget using a process approved by those three boards. The proposed budget shall reflect the priorities established by the General Assembly in the Mission Work Plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as well as the other actions as approved by the General Assembly. The proposed budget shall reflect the unique work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Administrative Services Group, further the unity of purpose of General Assembly agencies and entities, and promote the value of sharing resources to build up the ministry of the whole church.

#### B. Approving the Unified General Assembly Budget

The appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will recommend a balanced budget for each year in the budget cycle, incorporating work from the proposed budget and overtures, commissioners' resolutions, and other actions of the General Assembly, for approval as the outline of work for the budget cycle. The General Assembly may take actions to add or subtract any element to or from proposed budgets. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will then make appropriate adjustments after the Assembly within the approved budget constraints.

#### C. Budget Monitoring

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation will monitor the appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the budget cycle and report to each biennial General Assembly on the financial results of each year and other information related to the financial condition of the church. The report will cover the financial results of the previous two budget years (e.g., 2022 General Assembly for budget years 2020 and 2021). These two budget years will not be within the same budget cycle.

### V. Administrative Services

Administrative Services is accountable to the President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

#### A. Provides accounting and reporting services for the following entities:

1. Presbyterian Mission Agency, its ministry areas, and certain related bodies and committees.
2. Office of the General Assembly.
3. Other entities as requested on a fee-for-service basis.
4. Synod, presbytery, and session finance officers, as appropriate.

#### B. Performs and establishes policies and procedures for the following functions:

1. Controller/financial accounting controls, general ledger maintenance, general accounting, financial reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, church and student loans, payroll, budgeting, fixed asset management, overseas accounting, inventory control, and project accounting.
2. Treasury/central receiving service, bank relations and services, overseas treasury service (as appropriate), foreign exchange, short-term investments, working capital/cash management, and endowment and revenue accounting.
3. Financial planning, capital planning and economic forecasting, and financial modeling.

4. Property maintenance and management including acquisitions, gifts, leases, and dispositions, purchasing and print services, and mail services.

5. Establishing standards for receiving sites throughout the church in consultation with other parts of the church.

6. Distribution management services, including order processing, customer services, warehousing, and shipping.

C. Ensures that no payment of any expenditure is made in excess of the total budget approved by the management of entities of A Corporation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each entity to ensure that expenditures for their respective areas are within the approved budget before commitments are made.

D. Maintains all financial records and prepares quarterly reports to the entities.

E. Prepares and presents the annual report of the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets, and Statement of Cash Flows of the General Assembly that will be audited by a certified public accountant and presented to the General Assembly.

**APPENDIX B**  
**List of Documents Related to Various Organizational Structures**

(The following documents related to various organizational structures can be viewed at  
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org>. These were formerly Appendixes B-J.)

- B. 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly [Adopted June 17, 1986, modified by the 199th General Assembly (1987)\* and the 214th General Assembly (2002)]
- C. Deliverance Concerning Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
  - The Publishing Corporation - Amended by 217th General Assembly (2006)
- D. Memorandum Defining the Relationship Between the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- E. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Establishment of a Corporation and Related Matters [(Approved by the 207th General Assembly (1995) and amended by the 209th General Assembly (1997)]
- F. Joint Report—Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Minutes, 1996, Part I, pp. 617–18)
- G. Ratification of Establishment of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. A Subsidiary of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and Related Matters [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999), amended by the 212th General Assembly (2000) and the 214th General Assembly (2002).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 492–94; *Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 339]
- H. Establishment of New Covenant Annuity Insurance Company and Related Matters [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 500–502]
- I. Ratification of Foundation Participation in Formation of New Covenant Funds [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 505]
- J. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mortgage Corporation [Approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001).] [*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 173–75]

\*From Structural Design for Mission