

# HANDBOOK FOR SESSION CLERKS



CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PREPARED BY  
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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OCTOBER 2006

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**HANDBOOK  
FOR CLERKS OF SESSIONS  
CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**THE TERM “STATED CLERK”**

“The term ‘Stated Clerk’ first appears in the records of Presbyterianism in America in 1789 when the General Assembly of that year gave this title (apparently without any formal action) to the officer charged with the duties of the clerk or secretary. Evidently he became the ‘Stated Clerk’ to distinguish him from other clerks who were appointed as his assistants.”

Garrison, *Presbyterian Polity and Procedures*, (PCUS), P. 98

“The clerk is called the Stated Clerk, to distinguish him from those appointed to help him. At first, the Clerk was able to perform the whole duty required, but after the union of the two Synods of New York and Philadelphia his work so increased that in 1763 he was granted an assistant. They were called the Clerk and his Assistant. At the organization of the Assembly (in 1789) the title ‘Stated Clerk’ appears in describing the Clerk of that body, and the clerks of Presbytery, of Synod and of the General Assembly have since been called the Stated Clerk of those judicatories.”

Hodge, *What is Presbyterian Law*, P. 501

**DUTIES OF A STATED CLERK (RULES OF ORDER 3.0)**

Each judicatory shall elect a stated clerk who shall preserve all minutes, documents, and papers committed to the office of stated clerk and submit these records to the next higher judicatory in compliance with that judicatory’s rules and regulations. (3.1)

The stated clerk shall be elected for a definite term (normally three years) and shall hold office until a successor is elected. (3.2) Note: the minutes of the meeting must reflect the election of the clerk.

All records and documents are the property of the judicatory and shall be kept and stored in accordance with the provision of the Constitution. Upon leaving office, the stated clerk shall transfer all such records and documents to the successor. (3.3)

It shall be the duty of the stated clerk to record all minutes in permanent form and to supply extracts from them when properly requested. The stated clerk shall perform the duties of the office of stated clerk during the meeting of the judicatory unless otherwise determined by the judicatory. Other duties of the stated clerk shall be:

- a. to keep on file all committee records;
- b. to keep the judicatory’s official membership roll;
- c. to make copies of the official minutes of the judicatory and distribute them to the members prior to the next stated meeting (unless otherwise determined by the judicatory);
- d. to notify officers, committee members and delegates of their election or appointment, to furnish committees with whatever documents are required for the performance of their duties and to have on hand at each meeting a list of all existing committees and their members;

- e. to certify delegates or commissioners;
- f. to sign the minutes of all meetings;
- g. to read all papers to be acted upon (unless otherwise determined by the judicatory), and
- h. to record any vote which requires more than a majority following a polling of the judicatory or a division of the house. (3.4)

The stated clerk shall record only those motions which are adopted unless instructed otherwise by the judicatory. (3.5)

The stated clerk may or may not be a member of the judicatory. (3.6)

Minutes and all other official records of sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies are the property in perpetuity of said judicatories or their legal successors. When congregations, presbyteries, or synods are dissolved, their records are held for them by the next highest judicatory within whose bounds they were before dissolution. All minutes and other official records of existing and dissolved sessions, presbyteries, and synods, or copies thereof, are to be deposited for safe keeping in the Historical Foundation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America. It is the responsibility of the clerk of each judicatory to make recommendation to the judicatory for the permanent safe keeping of that judicatory's records. (*Constitution* 3.08)

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLERKS TO HIGHER JUDICATORIES** (*CONSTITUTION*)

### **1. Responsibilities of Session Clerks to Higher Judicatories**

Each session shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings which must be submitted to presbytery, at least annually, for review. Each session shall also keep a record of congregational meetings, of marriages, of baptisms, of additions, and of the death and dismissal of church members. (4.8) (Each session clerk should report changes of ministers, and/or session clerks immediately to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and to the Office of the General Assembly with the new name and address.) Presbytery requires pastoral contracts to be submitted to presbytery, according to recommended procedures. (7.06)

## **ANNUAL REPORTS OF CONGREGATIONS AND PRESBYTERIAL CLERKS** (*GEN. REG. E*)

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall mail to session clerks statistical forms for reporting congregational data on December 1 each year. Session clerks shall mail the completed forms to presbyterial clerks by February 1 of each year. (In the near future, statistical forms will be available online at [www.cumberland.org/gao](http://www.cumberland.org/gao).)

## **MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR CHURCH**

2.01-2.15 describes a particular (local) church. 2.21-2.26 jurisdiction over members of a particular church. The vote of a session makes one a member of the church, and once a member there are only three ways to be removed:

1. Request a letter
2. Disciplinary process under the Rules of Discipline
3. Die

The session is to review the membership annually.

## **THE SESSION**

Responsibilities are named in Sections 2.51, 2.52 and 4.1-4.8

The session consists of the minister in charge and elders elected by the congregation. A church must have a minimum of two elders. A quorum is a simple majority, unless the congregation has set a number less than a majority. In 1958 the General Assembly ruled that the minister does count toward a quorum. If a church does not have a pastor, 5.6p requires that the presbytery name an ordained minister as the Moderator.

If the church does not have a pastor, or if the presbyterial appointed moderator is not available, the session may convene to conduct business. One of the elders could be elected moderator pro temp for that meeting. A moderator pro temp cannot be elected for an indefinite time, but must be elected at each meeting in which a moderator is not present. A quorum of the session may receive and/or grant letters for church members. 4.7 The members of the session, excluding the minister, are the trustees of the church. If it seems desirable the session may elect a smaller number of trustees, however, the trustees may act only when specifically authorized by the session.

In a church without a pastor or being served by a probationer, 4.6 permits the session to designate one elder who, when authorized by the presbytery may administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the congregation. 5.6p states that the presbytery must authorize an elder to preside over Communion and must be trained by the Committee on the Ministry. The authorization is for one year only, however, the authorization could be renewed if the elder is still on the session. The elder designated must be an active member of the session and may not serve Communion in a congregation in which he/she is not a member. If the congregation is served by a minister of another congregation, that minister may not preside over the Lord's Supper nor administer baptism without the approval of the presbytery. (1987 Minutes of the General Assembly, pages 123 and 216) The word minister in the Confession of Faith refers specifically to an ordained Cumberland Presbyterian Minister and not any ordained minister.

2.93 Persons may be elected to the session/diaconate for an indefinite period or for a definite term on a rotation basis. The congregation determines whether or not officers are elected for an indefinite term or a definite term on a rotation basis, however, the congregation must have only one system. It cannot have some elders elected for an indefinite term and some elected for definite terms.

## **PROCESS IN ELECTING ELDERS/DEACONS**

2.90-2.91 The session may serve as a nominating committee or appoint a committee. After the nominating committee has the names of persons to fill the vacancies, the session will call a congregational meeting. The list of nominees will be announced to the congregation. An opportunity must be given for persons to make additional nominations. Before nominating a person, ask the person if he/she is willing to be nominated and to serve. If there is more than one nominee for a position, there must be a secret ballot and a committee named to canvass the ballots. A common error in parliamentary procedure is a

motion to elect by acclamation. To elect by acclamation means that a voice vote is going to be taken and necessitates two votes. One vote is on the motion and the second is to elect the nominees.

2.53-2.55 designates the purposes of a congregational meeting and how a meeting may be called. The 159th General Assembly affirmed that the Confession of Faith and the Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church do not allow for absentee voting in a congregational meeting. (1989 Minutes of the General Assembly, page 228)

## **ESTABLISHING/DISSOLVING PASTORAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Approving Pastoral Relations**

When a session calls a new pastor, he/she is not officially the pastor until approved by presbytery. Before extending the call, a church should contact the Presbyterian Board of Missions (or whatever agency deals with pastoral relationships) and have the relationship approved. (7.06) The Board of Missions will then make a recommendation to presbytery. No person may become a pastor, assistant/associate pastor, co-pastor, stated supply or interim pastor without the approval of the presbytery.

When a Church is seeking a pastor, the following procedure is recommended:

1. Fill out a church information form with the Board of Missions of the Denomination. (Approved by General Assembly in 2006)
2. As soon as the search committee is formed, its chairperson shall communicate with the presbytery Board of Missions and the Board shall appoint one of its members to work with the committee throughout the search process.
3. When the session is ready to issue a call, the moderator (or clerk of the session) shall communicate with the chairperson of the presbytery's Committee on the Ministry. The Committee on the Ministry shall then (as expeditiously as possible) conduct an investigation to assure that the pastor/candidate's credentials are in order and that there are no charges against him/her.
4. After the call has been issued and accepted, and the terms of a contract are finalized, the contract shall be submitted to the presbytery's Board of Missions for tentative approval.
5. The contract shall be formally approved by the presbytery in a subsequent meeting.

When a congregation desires the services of a minister as pastor, he/she shall be given an indefinite call. Such a call implies a request on the part of the church, and the acceptance by the minister implies a request for the presbytery to install the person. (1963 Minutes of the General Assembly, page 196) The presbytery will elect a commission consisting of a minimum of four people. The commission must have both minister(s) and elder(s), and the elders elected to the commission must be a member of the presbytery which names the commission. In 2006 the General Assembly encouraged presbyteries to consider elders who are not members of the congregation in which the installation is occurring.

### **2. Dissolution of Pastoral Relations (Constitution 7.07)**

The relationship between a minister, licentiate, or candidate and a particular church may be dissolved only by presbytery, acting on the request of both parties, or on the request of one party if sufficient reasons are presented, or when, in the opinion of the presbytery, the well-being of the particular church demands it. (The session clerk and the minister should each send a correspondence asking for the dissolution or they may send one letter jointly provided both sign the letter. The letter can be sent to the presbyterial clerk or to the chair of the Presbyterial Board of Missions. The presbyterial clerk should be notified immediately when a minister is leaving a congregation.)

The dissolution of the relationship is not complete until approved by the presbytery. (Constitution 7.07)

## **CONGREGATION REPRESENTATION IN PRESBYTERY**

### **1. Elder Representatives (Constitution 5.4, 8.2, and 3.06)**

Each congregation having an active membership of 1 to 300 shall be entitled to send one ruling elder representative to presbytery; a congregation having 301-600 shall be entitled to send two ruling elder delegates; the basis for representation shall continue in this proportion. All elders may be required to give proper evidence of their election by the session they represent (5.4).

An elder is a member of the presbytery when actually enrolled at the meeting. If an elder has been elected to represent a session, then is unable to attend the meeting of presbytery, the presbytery will excuse the session, and the session will be responsible for excusing the elder.

6.17 permits an elder who is on the session, and who becomes a candidate for ministry, to remain on the session if the committee on the ministry and the session agree; however, the elder may not represent the church in any higher judicatory.

### **2. Elder Not Elected by Session May Be Seated By Presbytery (Digest, 5.4)**

There may be exceptional instances that would make it proper for the presbytery to accept evidence other than election by the church session as the right of a ruling elder to represent his/her session.

## **SOME COMMON ERRORS IN PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE CORRECTED**

### **1. Election by Acclamation**

A motion to elect by acclamation does not elect. When such a motion carries, the moderator must then carry out the intent of the motion by calling for the vote that would elect the person to the office. It is this last vote that elects.

### **2. When the Question is Called For**

When a member of the body calls for the question, the moderator must take the vote to determine if the body is ready to vote on the previous question. Once it is determined that the body is ready to close debate the moderator then states the immediate pending motion and calls for the vote.

At this point clarification is in order but not debate.

### **3. Two-thirds Majority Required to Cut Off Debate**

Cumberland Presbyterian Rules of Order do not state the vote required to cut off debate when the question is called for. Since we have no rule we follow *Robert's Rules of Order*, Section 37, which requires a two-thirds majority. (The general principle is that any motion that takes away rights or limits freedom requires more than a majority vote.)

### **4. Negative Vote Must Be Taken**

Even though it seems to the moderator that the positive vote is a clear majority, the negative vote must be taken; otherwise the action could be questioned.

### **5. Presentation of Report of Nominating Committee**

The report of a Nominating Committee is read to the body and treated as any other nomination(s). No action or motion to receive is necessary (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Section 46). At the appropriate time the moderator must allow for nominations from the floor for each office to be filled.

### **6. Nominations Need Not Be Seconded (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Sec. 46)**

### **7. Voting Not Limited to Nominees**

When the vote is by ballot a member is at liberty to vote for any member who is not declared ineligible by the bylaws (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Sec. 47).

### **8. Appoint a Committee; Elect a Commission**

Presbytery may appoint a committee, however, a commission must be elected. A commission reports directly to the presbytery/synod, then is dissolved by the proper judicatory after the task is completed. A commission for ordination must have at least two ordained ministers, and one or more elders who were members of the presbytery approving the ordination. The presbytery could approve elders serving on the commission if they had not been a member of the particular presbytery, so long as some elders on the commission were members of the presbytery. Elders on any commission must be active on their session as commissions are authorized to conduct the particular business of the judicatory, therefore, elders must be eligible to be a part of the judicatory from which they were elected.

### **9. Making a Motion**

In making a motion some address the moderator and say "I move you..." One does not move the moderator. It is proper to address the moderator and say "I move that..." (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Sec. 2).

### **11. Closing the Sessions**

The moderator of every judicatory above the session, in closing its meeting, may have a hymn to be sung in addition to the praying of a closing prayer or the pronouncement of a benediction. (*Rules of Order*, 5.4)

## RECORDING MINUTES

The ABC's of minutes are accuracy, brevity, and clarity. Generally, minutes should state what was done, not what was said. They should reflect no personal opinions or criticisms.

### 1. Minutes should include:

- a. name of body
- b. date and place of meeting
- c. kind of meeting (regular, called, adjourned session, congregational)
- d. presiding officer (who took the chair?)
- e. roll - making sure a quorum is present
- f. constituting prayer—"All church courts shall be opened and closed with prayer." (*Constitution* 3.05, *Rules of Order*, 5.1, 5.4)
- g. any action regarding previous minutes, (e.g., called meeting)
- h. correspondences received or acted upon
- i. reports received (committee, etc.)
- j. actions of the body (motions, consents, program records...)
- k. approval of minutes
- l. adjournment and prayer

### 2. Minutes must be signed by clerk and, when necessary, the moderator.

(*Rules of Order*, 1.4 & 3.4f)

Generally, in practice, most sessions require the clerk and moderator to sign the minutes. This may also be a requirement of the presbytery. Historically, when clerks wrote the minutes in long-hand, the handwriting verified who had written the minutes. Today, with printed minutes, the signatures have become necessary to certify the minutes.

### 3. Committee of the Whole

The proceedings of a Committee of the Whole should not be entered in the minutes, but the report of the Committee should be entered. (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Section 32)

### 4. Recording motions

The clerk shall record motions, resolutions and items of business in separate paragraphs that they may be easily discovered. (*Robert's Rules of Order*) It is good practice to give headings to as many items as is practical.

The clerk will not record, unless required by the judicatory, any motion or resolution not adopted (*Rules of Order*, 3.5). The body may direct the clerk to record a main motion that was lost in order to have a record of how a business item was disposed of.

The clerk may request that the mover of any motion reduce it to writing. (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Secs. 4, 54)

It is not required to record the mover of the motion. The one who seconded the motion should not be recorded (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Section 51).

## **5. Recording the Vote**

Record the vote when required such as when a 2/3 majority is necessary. (Rules of Order, 3.4-h) It is always required when there is a change in a standing rule or any regular motion carried that requires more than a majority of votes. In a roll call vote the name of the moderator shall be the last called (*Rules of Order*, 12.4). When you tabulate a vote give the results to the moderator to announce to the body. (*Robert's Rules of Order*, Section 38)

Any member may request that their vote be recorded.

## **6. Roll**

The clerk maintains a roll of the body, keeps it current during the meeting and makes it available to the moderator. (*Rules of Order*, 3.4-b)

Members of a particular church may be received or removed from the church roll only by action of the session. (*Constitution*, 2.20, 4.4) In 1995 a memorial to the General Assembly was approved defining active member as one who has been constitutionally received into membership in a congregation, who has attended services of worship at least once each quarter, who regularly contributes of her/his time, talent, and/or substance during each quarter of the church year or who, in the judgement of the session, though unable to attend services of worship, and/or contribute regularly of her/his time, talent or substance to the church, still maintains a faithful, prayerful and loving commitment to Jesus Christ and His church. Approval was also granted by General Assembly to authorize church sessions to remove from their membership rolls the names of members who are inactive by virtue of the fact that their whereabouts have been unknown to the session for a period of two calendar years.

## **7. Committee Appointments**

The clerk is responsible for notifying persons of committee appointments and referrals to the committees. (*Rules of Order*, 3.4-d)

## **8. Agenda**

The clerk should keep a record of changes in the agenda and assist the moderator concerning the orders of the day.

### **PRESERVATION OF RECORDS**

The records belong to the judicatory and not to the clerk. All records and documents are the property of the judicatory and shall be kept and stored in accordance with the provision of the Constitution. Upon leaving office, the stated clerk shall transfer all such records and documents to the successor. (*Rules of Order* 3.3)

It shall be the duty of the stated clerk to record all minutes in permanent form and to supply extracts from them when properly requested.....(*Rules of Order* 3.4)

#### **1. The Official Copy of the Minutes**

The official minutes of the judicatory may be the master copy from which the published minutes

are printed, or the published minutes provided any errors are corrected and they are certified by the signatures of the moderator and clerk (*Digest*, Rules of Order 3.4). If the master copies are the official copies they should be bound in permanent covers, e.g., session record book binders. Either way it would be worthwhile to have bound into book form copies of all published minutes. Several minutes may be bound into one volume.

## **2. Copies of the Minutes Should Be Sent to Archives**

Copies of session minutes which are not needed for frequent reference may be sent to the Historical Archives of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1978 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104. All old session records, originals (preferably) or copies, should be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for deposit in the archives of the Historical Foundation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

The following would appreciate a copy of your minutes: Presbyterian Historical Society, 425 Lombard St., Philadelphia, PA 19147; and Historical Foundation of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, NC 28757.

## **CHURCH PROPERTY**

Church property should be deeded to the presbytery. (3.30-3.35 Constitution)

## **PRINTING THE MINUTES**

Certified minutes may be printed, photocopied or mimeographed as long as they are officially signed by the Moderator and Clerk. (*Digest*, Rules of Order 3.4).

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF CLERKS**

### *Robert's Rules of Order*

1. Located at the meeting so as to allow convenient private conversation with the Moderator.
2. Act in the absence of the Moderator in calling emergency meetings and calling meetings to order.
3. In consultation with the Moderator prepare a proposed agenda for the meeting.
4. Report to the Moderator the number of votes on each side when a division of the house is called for.

### **Cumberland Presbyterian** *Rules of Order*

1. Record all minutes in permanent form and preserve minutes, documents, and papers, and submit such records to higher judicatories. (3.1 and 3.4)
2. Store documents in accordance with the *Constitution* and transfer records and documents to successor. (3.3)
3. Keep on file committee records and membership roll. (3.4)

4. Copy and distribute to the members the minutes of the previous meeting. (3.4)
5. Notify officers, committee members and delegates of their election. (3.4)
6. Certify delegates or commissioners. (3.4)
7. Sign the minutes. (3.4)
8. Read papers to be acted upon, unless otherwise determined by the judicatory. (3.4)

### **MINUTE KEEPING FOR CLERKS**

#### *Robert's Rules of Order*

1. Record books should have margins sufficient for corrections.
2. Minutes should reflect objectivity, without personal comments.
3. Generally the minutes should record what is done, not what is said.
4. Lost motions are not recorded.
5. When the vote is by ballot, the results of the vote should be reported.
6. When the vote is by roll call, each member's vote should be indicated.
7. Previous minutes may be amended.
8. Names of makers of motion may be recorded but not those who second.  
(Other authorities contend that the actions taken are the action of the whole body and therefore the names of those who offer motions need not be recorded.)

#### **CP Rules of Order:**

1. Record only motions adopted.
2. Clerk verifies extracts of minutes for higher judicatories.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SAMPLE OF BLANK MINUTES**

Session of \_\_\_\_\_ Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Regular (called, congregational) Meeting  
Date

The session of \_\_\_\_\_ Cumberland Presbyterian Church met in (regular, called, congregational) session on (date) at (location).

Moderator (full name) called the meeting to order at (time).

A quorum (or the total number of members) was present.

The opening prayer was led by (full name).

If there is a devotional, it may be summarized here.

Members in attendance were:

(Listing names alphabetically makes it easier to find a particular name.)

Previous minutes approved (if this has not already been done)

Communications:

Excuses for absence

Official communications requiring action or referral

General communications containing information but not requiring action

Committee Reports:

The report of the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ was presented.

Amendment: (Proposed amendments which fail need not be recorded unless the presbytery so directs)

On motion, the report was adopted (as amended) (by a vote of \_\_\_ to \_\_\_, if some part of the report affects a standing rule and thus requires a 2/3 majority) and filed as Appendix \_\_\_\_.

After committee reports are concluded, other scheduled business may be prepared for, such as elections or nominations to the congregation.

A slate of nominees was presented by the committee on Nominations. Opportunity was given for other nominations. There being none, the slate was elected by acclamation. OR Nominations were also made from the floor.

Those elected (or nominated) were:

(Listing the boards or committees and the people elected alphabetically makes it easier to find a name; for example:

Committee on Christian Education

Mr. Joe Brown, Class of 1995

Mrs. Jill McInnes, Class of 1996

Mrs. Mary Smith, Class of 1994 (filling unexpired term of John Green)

Other (New) Business

(Record carefully the motions made and adopted. Your notes may contain motions which eventually fail. These need to be recorded only on instruction of the body.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at (time) with prayer by \_\_\_\_\_.

An adjourned meeting is scheduled for (date, time, place) OR The next regular meeting will be on (date, time, place).

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Session Clerk

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Moderator

**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR REVIEW OF SESSION MINUTES**

	Yes	No
1. Records are carefully and neatly kept.	_____	_____
2. Indication of meetings frequently enough to attend to church business.	_____	_____
3. Complete data on place, date, hour, names of those present and presence of quorum	_____	_____
4. Indication of prayer at beginning and ending of all meetings.	_____	_____
5. Indication that minutes were read and approved.	_____	_____
6. Complete motions and actions.	_____	_____
7. Election of delegates to presbytery and synod indicated.	_____	_____
8. Report of delegates to presbytery and synod.	_____	_____
9. Injunctions of higher judicatories carried out.	_____	_____
10. Review of minutes of General Assembly.	_____	_____
11. Review of minutes of Diaconate.	_____	_____
12. Minutes signed by Moderator and Clerk.	_____	_____
13. Officer election, ordination, and installation.	_____	_____
14. Statistical report for year entered into record or attached as appendix.	_____	_____
15. Minutes sent to presbytery for review on schedule.	_____	_____
16. Minutes of congregational meetings included.	_____	_____
17. Indication that regular financial reports are given and attached as appendix.	_____	_____
18. Indication of baptisms, reception of members, marriages, deaths.	_____	_____

**APPENDIX C**  
**Sample Checklist for Review of Session Records**

Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Moderator \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfactory compliance on these items.

Indicates failure to comply with procedure indicated.

**SESSION MINUTES AND RECORDS**

1.  Minutes of session in order and signed.
2.  Duly constituted; quorum, opened and closed with prayer.
3.  Read and approved previous minutes, recorded approval.
4.  Communications read, referred or acted upon.
5.  Inclusion of committee reports with action taken.
6.  Reference to previous actions include dates of actions.
7.  Election and reports of presbytery and synod delegates.
8.  Membership and session rolls in order.
9.  Purpose and procedure of called meetings.
10.  Budget and treasurer's report accepted and approved.

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

11.  Calling congregational meeting and purpose of meeting.
12.  Nominating committee report to congregation with tenures.
13.  Minutes of meeting recorded and approved by session.

**GENERAL REVIEW AND CONTROL**

14.  Elders and deacons properly ordained and installed.
15.  Reflects session's spiritual oversight of congregation.
16.  "...proceedings have been correct."
17.  Reports from church school, CPW, trustees, etc.
18.  Historical records given to archives.
19.  Directives of presbytery have been followed.
20.  Directives of synod and general assembly have been obeyed.
21.  Worship and sacraments provided regularly.
22.  Evangelism planned and conducted by the session.
23.  Christian education and Bible study maintained regularly.
24.  Visitation of the sick, care of families and bereaved.
25.  Special attention to special needs of community.
26.  Outreach for new members, help for the poor and needy.
27.  Indicates the last time minutes approved by presbytery.
28.  Paid presbyterial, synodic and denominational asking.

**MEMBERSHIP ROLLS**

29.  Active and inactive membership roll up-to-date.
30.  Recorded baptisms, marriages, dismissals, funerals.
31.  Roll of active elders, deacons and trustees with tenure.

COMMENTS ON ITEMS NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Number \_\_\_\_\_

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_





## Functions of Judicatories

### **The session has the responsibility to:**

- ▶ Call a pastor, subject to the approval of presbytery.
- ▶ Admonish or suspend members found guilty in a disciplinary hearing, subject to appeal to presbytery.
- ▶ Elect representatives to report from higher church judicatories.
- ▶ Observe and carry out injunctions of the higher judicatories.
- ▶ Submit accurate record of its proceedings to presbytery, at least annually.

### **The presbytery has the responsibility to:**

- ▶ Approve ministers to serve as pastors, establish the pastoral relation and dissolve it.
- ▶ Review session records and discipline sessions for whatever they may have done contrary to order.
- ▶ Examine and decide appeals, protests and referrals brought before it.
- ▶ See that the injunctions of the higher judicatories are obeyed.
- ▶ Visit particular churches, inquire into their condition and redress the evils that may have arisen in them.
- ▶ Settle differences regarding church property and its use.
- ▶ Approve location of new churches, relocation of existing churches and proposals and plans of churches considering building or adding to church facilities.
- ▶ Unite, divide and dissolve churches; form and receive new churches.
- ▶ Take oversight of churches without services of a minister, appointing a minister to moderate the session.
- ▶ Formulate budgets and assign shares to churches.
- ▶ Elect representatives to higher judicatories.
- ▶ Propose measures to the synod or the General Assembly as may be for the good of the church or society in general.
- ▶ Submit full and accurate records of proceedings to the synod for review.

### **The synod has the responsibility to:**

- ▶ Examine and decide appeals, protests and referrals sent up from presbyteries.
- ▶ Review records of presbyteries and redress whatever may have been done contrary to order.
- ▶ Organize, divide or dissolve presbyteries.
- ▶ Formulate budgets and assign shares to presbyteries.
- ▶ Settle differences regarding church property and its use, upon appeal.
- ▶ Propose measures to the General assembly as may be of common advantage to the entire church.
- ▶ Submit full and accurate records of proceedings to the General Assembly.

### **The General Assembly has responsibility to:**

- ▶ Receive and decide appeals, protests and referrals brought before it.
- ▶ Give counsel concerning the government of the church in all cases submitted.
- ▶ Review records of the synods.
- ▶ Formulate budgets and assign shares to the presbyteries.
- ▶ Promote the prosperity and enlargement of the church; create, divide or dissolve synods.
- ▶ Oversee the affairs of the whole church.

(For a more complete listing see Constitution, Sections 4.1-4.7; 5.6-5.7; 8.5-8.6; and 9.4.)

## Serving as Representatives to Higher Judicatories

A delegate to presbytery	A delegate to synod	A commissioner to General Assembly
▶ is an elder currently serving on the session	▶ is an elder currently serving on the session	▶ is an elder currently serving on the session when the General Assembly meets
▶ is elected as a delegate by the session	▶ is elected as a delegate by the session	▶ is elected as a commissioner by the presbytery
▶ is expected to be present for the duration of the presbytery meeting	▶ is expected to be present for the duration of the synod meeting	▶ is expected to be present for for the duration of the General Assembly meeting
▶ is expected to serve on committees as needed	▶ is expected to serve on committees as needed	▶ is expected to serve on committees as needed
▶ may be asked to assist in worship and serving of Holy Communion as needed	▶ may be asked to assist in worship and serving of Holy Communion as needed	▶ may be asked to assist in worship and serving of Holy Communion as needed
▶ is expected to represent the session by voting on issues before the presbytery*	▶ is expected to represent the presbytery by voting on issues before the synod*	▶ is expected to represent the presbytery by voting on issues before the General Assembly*
▶ is expected to report to the session the decisions of the presbytery	▶ is expected to report to the presbytery the decisions of the synod	▶ is expected to report to the presbytery the decisions of the General Assembly
▶ cannot be a candidate or licentiate		

\*A judicatory after having elected one of its members to represent it at a higher judicatory shall not instruct that member how to vote on the issues; however, counseling representatives is always in order. (*Rules of Order, section 11.6*)

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