

The following resources were used at Leadership School to introduce the 2011-13 Form of Government in the *Book of Order*. Rev. Dr. David Walker and Rev. Dr. Nancy Gladden gave these handouts. As your church seeks to develop a Manual of Operations, your presbytery Mission Coordinator is also available to help you. Also available online is a model Sexual Misconduct policy, please go to www.presbycc.org/forms/sampchsexualmiscpolicy.pdf

Information to Guide the Manual Process

1. Developing your manual is a process which means it doesn't all have to be done yesterday.
"Mission determines the forms and structures needed for the church to do its work. Administration is the process by which a council implements its decisions. Administration enables the church to give effective witness in the world to God's new creation in Jesus Christ and strengthens the church's witness to the mission of the triune God.
Councils higher than the session may provide examples of policies and procedures that may be gathered into advisory handbooks. These examples illumine practices required by the Constitution but left to councils for specific implementation. Such handbooks may also offer information that enhances or secures the ministry of the particular council.
Each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council. G-3.0106
2. Three terms to be aware of:
 - **Council** – formerly called a "governing body", for example a session or a presbytery
 - **Teaching elder** – refers to a minister of word and sacrament
 - **Ruling elder** – refers to an elder elected by the congregation
3. **"by their rule"** – In the Form of Government, this phrase indicates a decision the council or congregation will need to make and include in the manual.
4. Sessional Records Committee of Presbytery
 - Will use old check list through this year
 - Will develop & distribute a new list (this list can help you know what to put in your manual)
5. Additional information required and/or recommended for your manual:
 - Committees/organizations and a description of their ministry responsibilities
 - Policies such as wedding, funeral, cemetery, background checks, financial, etc. **All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy.** G-3.0106 (p.44)
6. Additional resources: www.pcusa.org/resource/sample-bylaws-congregations/
 - Appendix S – Sample Bylaws of the Particular Church
 - Appendix T – Manual of Administrative Operations (a partial listing)
 - a model Sexual Misconduct policy, please go to www.presbycc.org/forms/sampchsexualmiscpolicy.pdf

THE MODEL MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS FOR

SESSIONS/CONGREGATIONS

(The Heavenly Presbyterian Church's Manual)

Introduction:

The attached model manual is designed to assist sessions in their responsibility for the development and/or updating of their own Manual of Administrative Operations. This effort is occasioned by the recent adoption of the new Form of Government by our denomination, which now occupies that section in the new Book of Order (2011-2013). Some of the topical headings in this model might also be present in the Corporate Bylaws of a church.

The intention in presenting the attached model, however, is to distinguish bylaws, which establishes the foundation for the legal entity for a church, from a manual, which describes in more detail how that entity will function month to month, year to year. The manual would likely (hopefully) include a lot of information that would not usually be found in bylaws.

In general, the intention of this new Form of Government is to give sessions and presbyteries more flexibility in determining what works best for their church or their presbytery, within the bounds of our denomination's broad principles and standards. This has the effect of eliminating much of the *regulatory* language from the Book of Order. But at the same time, it now requires sessions and presbyteries to make allowances for what has been left out of the Book of Order by establishing or updating their own manuals to include the definitions and policies which outline how things will work in *our church* or in *our presbytery*.

It is hoped, however, that this attention which is being paid to a church manual will be the occasion of more than simply addressing the changes in the new Form of Government. This is an opportunity for a session/congregation, as it will be for this Presbytery, to step back and take stock: to review our vision/mission/purpose as a church, to take a current look at the manual that may already exist in a church to see if it is as up to date as it should be, to begin to gather policy decisions and statements from previous session actions and include these in the construction of a manual where there hasn't been one until now. Just as a matter of convenience, having all such policy statements and decisions in one place – perhaps gathered in a loose leaf binder – would be a helpful aid in a session meeting and training future leaders.

A final thought about *first things*:

- Shouldn't this whole process of review begin (after prayer, of course) with a review of the *Foundations* section of the new Book of Order?! You will note that these introductory pages place a major emphasis on four essentials in our faith tradition: **Christ** as the Head of the Church, the **Creeds** – especially the Nicene Creed, the **Reformation** – focusing on the Scot's Confession, and the Six **Great Ends of the Church**. It is so important, as we consider the various pieces of our organizational, administrative structure, to keep our minds and hearts focused on the higher purpose that all of this is supposed to be serving.
- If the *why we're here* isn't being well served by the *how we do it*, then the *how we do it* doesn't really matter much.

THE HEAVENLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SAMPLE MANUAL OF ADMINSTRATIVE OPERATIONS

[NOTE: The Session should review this Model Manual, making any desired choices or changes that do not conflict with the Book of Order (BO), before adopting it and sharing it with the congregation: some parts for congregational approval, some parts for congregational information. References shown are from the 2011-2013 Book of Order of the PCUSA.]

I. PURPOSE

(Note: You may state your purpose as you like; generally this statement would not be lengthy.)

The _____ Presbyterian Church is a member church in the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It has been called by God and organized by the Presbytery to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in worship and service to the needy, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. GOVERNANCE

This church's Congregation and Session shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), both its *Book of Confessions* and its *Book of Order*. Subordinate to that Constitution, these bylaws and then the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall provide specific guidance.

III. MEETINGS

The Session shall hold stated meetings _____ [*“monthly” is recommended*]. Special meetings may be called in accord with BO: G-3.0203.

The Congregation shall hold its annual meeting in the church building on the _____ Sunday in _____ [*normally “January” or “September”*]. The business at that meeting shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Financial report for the preceding year
- Budget for the current year adopted by the Session (for information only)
- Any proposed changes in the terms of call for the pastor (s) in accord with BO: G-2.0804
- Nominating committee report for church officers and their election
- Election of members to serve on the current year's nominating committee
- Review of reports from the pastor (s), the Session, and all church organizations (for information only)

(See G-1.0503 for the business that is appropriate for a congregational meeting.)

Special meetings of the Congregation may be called in accord with BO: G-1.05.

IV. NOTICE OF MEETING

Note: The new Book of Order says,

“Reasonable notice as determined by the Session [a minimum of 24 hours is recommended] shall be given of all special Session meetings.”

Notice of Congregational meetings shall be given at regular services of worship on _____

("two" is recommended) successive Sunday(s) prior to each meeting, in accord with BO:G-1.0502. The meeting may be convened following the notice given on the second Sunday.

V. QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

The quorum for Session meetings shall be the moderator and _____ (*"a majority" is recommended*) of elders in active service on the Session.

The quorum for Congregational meetings shall be the moderator and at least _____ (*"ten" is recommended*) percent of its active members.

Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted in any meetings. (*a Robert's Rules principle*)

VI. INCORPORATION

In accord with the laws of the State of North Carolina, the Congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed (BO: G-4.0101), **if such has not already been done**. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the Congregation. (*Note: This might be a good opportunity for the session to see if it can find the incorporation papers, and especially the bylaws, to see if there is a need and what the process is for changing/updating the bylaws.*)

VII. MEMBERSHIP

In accord with BO: G-1.03, the Session shall receive and nurture members of the church. The Session shall create and annually review rolls for all baptized members, active members, and affiliate members in accord with BO: G-1.04 & G-3.0204, also maintaining the required registers. (*Note: We no longer keep an inactive roll.*)

All members shall carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the sacraments, and living in *covenant life with God and each other* (BO: G-1.0101). (*Note: What is the session's policy regarding instructions for new members?*)

VIII. WORSHIP

The Session shall ensure that services of worship of God are regularly and reverently held in accord with BO: Directory for Worship and G-3.0201.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated (*how often or on what occasions*) as well as at other special times, as the Session may decide in accord with BO: W-2.4009.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in accord with the principles of BO: Directory for Worship. (*Note: Does the session have a policy/procedure for visiting with the parents before the baptism?*)

IX. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accord with BO: G-2.0401, the Congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

- There shall be _____ (*"five," "seven," or "nine" are recommended, depending on the size of the Congregation*) members
- _____ (*"one," "two," or "three" are recommended, to match the above choices*) of the members shall be elders designated by the Session, at least one of whom shall be currently serving on the Session, and who shall serve as chair of the committee.
- _____ of the members shall be designed by the deacons, if any.

- _____ of the members, who are not elders currently on the Session or deacons currently in service, shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected at the annual meeting of the Congregation. *Note: This number must always be the majority of the committee.*)
- Members of the committee shall be elected annually, and no one shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- The pastor (or moderator of the Session) shall be a member ex-officio, but without vote.
- The committee will ordinarily bring to the annual meeting of the Congregation nominations only for the number of positions to be filled, but if more nominations than positions to be filled are desired, or if there are additional nominations from the floor, election should be by secret ballot.
- The floor shall be open for additional nominations at the annual meeting.
- Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just and inclusive in accord with BO: F-1.0403, and G-3.0103, .0104 & 2.0401.

X. SESSION

The Congregation shall elect _____ (*no specific number is required, but ideally the total number would be divisible by 3*) elders distributed into three equal classes (as near as may be), one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. (*Note: For smaller congregations, elders might be elected for shorter terms, for instance two years, forming two equal classes (as near as may be).*)

If necessary, the nominating committee shall nominate a successor for a vacancy, to be elected by the Congregation for the unexpired portion of the vacated position's term.

No elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years.*

An elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session, for a period of at least one year.

(Note: These term restrictions may be waived by the Presbytery for specific situations BO: G-2.0404).

Those elected as elder shall be prepared and examined by the Session in accord with BO: G-2.0402. (*Note: does the session have procedures for these examinations?*)

XI. DEACONS

If, in accord with BO:G-2.02, the Congregation determines to have deacons, either individually commissioned or organized as a board, it shall also determine how they are elected and their terms of service, and other matters, similar to provisions for elders (as near as may be).

XII. RECORDS

The Session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accord with BO: G-3.0107 & 3.0204, and shall submit any requested records to Presbytery in accord with BO: G-3.0108.

XIII. FINANCES

It is the responsibility of the session to prepare and adopt a budget to support the congregation's mission, and determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences. This includes authorizing offerings and

accounting for the proceeds of such offerings and their disbursements, providing full information to the congregation concerning its decisions in such matters. (G-3.0205: a,b,c)

The session shall elect the treasurer for a period of _____(*suggested annually*).

XIV. MISC. POLICIES

(To be included in the manual as attachments)

- Wedding/Reception Policies:
- Funeral Policies:
- Policies Regarding The Use of The Church Building & Grounds by Non-Church Related Groups and Organizations
- Van Policy
- Cemetery Policies (if applicable)
- Background Checks
- Personnel Policies
- Sexual Misconduct Policy (required)

XV. COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

(To be included with a description of their ministry responsibilities)

The Session, in accord with BO: G-3.0201, shall establish, discharge, and review the actions of any committee or other organization within the Congregation.

Adopted by the Session on: ____/____/____ [*date*]

Appropriate parts adopted by the congregation on: ____/____/____ [*date*]

Updated/Revised: ____/____/____ [*date*]

Approval of Revision by Session ____/____/____ [*date*]

Approval of Revision by congregation (if needed) ____/____/____ [*date*]