

# BYLAWS

## OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ELIZABETH

### ARTICLE I. PURPOSE & STRUCTURE

The structure of the Presbytery of Elizabeth, together with all actions of the Presbytery, is to be in conformity with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The intent of the following Manual of Administrative Operations is to provide adequate and orderly procedures for carrying out the work of the Presbytery.

Where the Book of Order is specific in its description and definition of the functions, duties and procedures of the various governing bodies and staff position responsibilities, no attempt has been made to reproduce these specifics. In determining desired action, the Presbytery should be guided by both the Book of Order and this Manual of Administrative Operations.

The Presbytery of Elizabeth established a structure based on organizing the work of the Presbytery within Program Units. This Manual sets broad parameters for the Presbytery's work through the Program Units. The task of refining their focus is left to the Program Units, in line with the Presbytery's Mission Statement and Goals. Provision is also made for an annual review of priorities as part of a planning and resource allocation process as described. This structure is designed to meet certain basic criteria, as follows:

#### **1. CONNECTEDNESS WITH AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONGREGATIONS**

The structure facilitates a closer partnership with the churches and people of the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall listen to their concerns and hopes, address their needs, demonstrate care for them and provide them with ongoing support. Empowering congregations is the major focus of the structure, with each of the Program Units dealing with some aspect of life in the local church.

Improved communications between the Presbytery and congregations are necessary. Within the Presbytery, Council has the responsibility of promoting a two-way flow of information with and among congregations. All parts of the Presbytery structure are responsible for systematically listening and actively responding to local needs and concerns.

#### **2. FOCUS AND PRIORITIES**

In a world of unlimited needs and limited resources, no organization can be all things to all people. Choices must be made and resources applied where they are most needed and most effective. Presbytery and Council are responsible for setting and implementing priorities to clarify the Presbytery's purposes and strengthen the connection between the local congregation and the Presbytery.

#### **3. WHOLENESS, INTEGRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The structure is designed to emphasize the wholeness of the Presbytery of Elizabeth. The work undertaken by each of the Program Units is carried out on behalf of the Presbytery as a whole. Units themselves consider related concerns, allowing for an overview of issues and for greater coordination and integration of related activities.

Coordination among Program Units is the responsibility of Council. Council reviews and

coordinates the decision-making process, advising both the Presbytery and Program Units when appropriate. The Council also is responsible for ongoing planning and reviews and evaluates the work of Program Units. Presbytery leadership and staff are accountable to Presbytery through the Council. The Council is accountable to the Presbytery

#### **4. EMPHASIS ON LEADERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

The channeling and management of God-given talents is a challenge in every area of church work. The Presbytery will lead in mobilizing and training church volunteers for ministries at every level of church life. Ultimately, rather than competing for scarce human resources, the congregation and the Presbytery are partners in promoting the cross-fertilization of skills which, having been nurtured by one body, are brought to bear in the life of the other.

The Presbytery Nominating Committee is responsible for seeking out new leadership for service in the Presbytery, with a continuing emphasis on inclusiveness to reflect the rich diversity of this particular Presbytery. The Education and Discipleship Unit is responsible for training the laity for ministries in the local church.

#### **5. CAREFUL STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND MONEY**

Limited human and financial resources must be used where they will have the greatest impact. While broadening participation, the Presbytery must also limit time commitments and ensure that participation is meaningful and rewarding.

The structure delegates program responsibility to Program Units, which have both the responsibility and authority to implement matters Presbytery gives to them.

In addition to those administrative responsibilities delegated by the Book of Order to Presbytery staff, staff efforts should concentrate on working with congregations and developing volunteer leadership so that Program Units and other constituent bodies can rely on those volunteer resources.

#### **6. CREATIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY**

The units have the freedom to decide the scope of their work in accord with the goals of the Presbytery. Council and Program Units can make use of time-limited task groups to implement their responsibilities, allowing for a maximum of flexibility and creativity. Organized to accomplish specific tasks, these groups may have built-in expiration dates. Units will conduct annual self-evaluations in consultation with Council.

Increased use of informal "clusters" of congregations (grouped geographically or by common interest or need) to help programs and services achieve maximum impact with relatively limited resources, are also possible within this structure.

Teams may be formed to address particular concerns and interests and fulfill Presbytery goals. Teams are formed from interested people with a passion about a particular issue.

The Program Units are: Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Education and Discipleship Unit, Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, and Outreach and Social Concerns Unit.

## **ARTICLE II. COUNCIL**

The Council of Elizabeth Presbytery shall be established in conformity with the provision of the Book of Order G-11.0103v for the purpose of enabling Presbytery to carry out its responsibilities **"to establish and superintend the agencies necessary for its work.... (and) providing for the regular review of the functional relationship between Presbytery's structure and its mission."**

### **A. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF COUNCIL**

The purpose of the Council is to enable the Presbytery to carry out its responsibilities by:

1. Strengthening the particular churches, agencies and ministries of the Presbytery;
2. Coordinating the decision-making process, advising the Presbytery, Program Units, and other committees when appropriate;
3. Reviewing and evaluating the work of Program Units, and the Presbytery leadership and staff;
4. Serving as a corporate instrument of witness and ministry for Jesus Christ;
5. Facilitating Presbytery's partnership with the sessions, Synod and General Assembly.

### **B. ELECTION & FUNCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The nomination, election, terms, committees and functions of the Council leadership and members shall be as specified in the Standing Rules of the Presbytery and within the limits of the Book of Order. Reference: Standing Rules Sections A, C, G, H, J, K

### **C. COMMITTEES AND TEAMS REPORTING TO COUNCIL**

#### **1. Financial Development Committee**

This Committee shall:

- a. Be responsible to Council for overseeing the financial system of the Presbytery.
- b. Monitor income and expenditures, develop the budget, determine short and long term financial plans, oversee Presbytery investments, and provide for the auditing of the financial records.
- c. Work with all Program Units in analyzing and recommending funding for programs and consider other requests for Presbytery support.
- d. Interpret to congregations the financial needs of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly.
- e. This Committee shall report to Council.

#### **2. Communications Team**

This Team shall:

- a. Promote the relationship between Presbytery and its congregations through two-way flow of information.
- b. Be responsible for public relations and production of print, audio and video materials.
- c. This Team shall report to Council.

#### **3. Personnel Committee**

This Committee shall:

- a. Monitor all matters pertaining to Presbytery employed lay and ordained staff.
- b. Perform those tasks required of the committee by the Standing Rules,

Section H. Personnel. This Committee shall report to Council.  
Reference: Standing Rules Sections A, I, L

## **ARTICLE III. BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Trustees shall:

1. Fulfill the legal requirements of the State of New Jersey, thereby constituting the legal corporation to hold property of the Presbytery.
2. Advise the Presbytery of its responsibilities in carrying out all the provisions of the Book of Order, Chapter VIII, The Church and its Property (G-8.000-8.0701).
3. Meet at least quarterly and report all proceedings to the council and Presbytery for review and action as required by civil law.
4. Consist of six members elected by Presbytery for three-year terms. The President of the Trustees will be a member of council. The President of the Board of Trustees will be elected by Presbytery.

Reference: See Bylaws & Procedure Papers

## **ARTICLE IV. PROGRAM UNITS**

There are Program Units which report through the Council to the Presbytery. Membership of these Units will consist of the persons elected by the Presbytery. Each of the Program Units will determine the scope of its work in accord with the goals of the Presbytery, the responsibilities listed below, and in support of the life and mission of the congregations. Each Unit may create time-limited task groups not necessarily limited to members of its Unit. The chairperson of each Unit is a member of the Council of Presbytery.

### **A. EVANGELISM & CHURCH VITALITY UNIT**

This unit shall:

1. Support and challenge congregations to call women and men to faith in Christ, and commitment to Christ through the church.
2. Be responsible for all phases of planning and carrying through new church development.
3. Support congregations in the strengthening of their current ministries, mission, and education, and assist them in developing new initiatives.
  - a. Facilitate connections among congregations.

### **B. EDUCATION & DISCIPLESHIP UNIT**

This unit shall:

1. Encourage, develop and train laity for ministry in and through the local congregation.
2. Equip and support employed and volunteer lay church staff in their responsibilities and ministries.

### **C. OUTREACH AND SOCIAL CONCERNS UNIT**

This Unit shall:

1. Support and participate with congregations in developing programs of compassion, healing and service.
2. Interpret the mission work of the Presbyterian Church (USA), including projects proposed and/or undertaken by congregations, Presbytery, Synod or General

Assembly.

3. Analyze requests for the funding of mission programs.
4. Be responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of ongoing mission programs of the Presbytery.
5. Provide analysis of select social justice issues and make recommendations through the Council to the Presbytery.
6. Advocate to congregations, government, corporate policy makers, and the public at large, positions taken by the Presbytery with regard to the causes of those involved in struggles for peace, justice and human rights.
7. The General Assembly mandated Self-Development of People Committee shall report through this unit.

#### **D. COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

This unit is provided for in the Book of Order (G-9.0902a, G-11.0500, 14.0530).

This Committee shall:

1. Facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, and Presbytery.
2. Handle matters related to times of transition and pastoral vacancies in the life of the congregation, including the training and resourcing of search committees, and the processing of calls.
3. Include in its membership a specially trained conflict management team to assist pastors and congregations in times of stress.
4. Act on Presbytery's behalf, as allowed in G-11.0502h, to:
  - a. Approve covenants and calls;
  - b. Receive ministers for membership in the Presbytery;
  - c. Appoint installation and ordination commissions;

The Committee on Ministry may act on Presbytery's behalf between stated Presbytery meetings only when it is necessary in order to facilitate changes for both ministers and of churches when, in the judgment of COM, delaying action until the next Sated Meeting is not appropriate. Any actions taken shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

5. Provide pastoral care and support for all ordained ministers of the Presbytery including those who are retired.
6. Make available opportunities for counseling, continuing education, and spiritual development of candidates and ministers.
7. Encourage pastors in the use of continuing education time and funds specified in the terms of their call.
8. Assist congregations in undertaking mission studies and the gathering of data.
9. Provide for the review of Session records.

#### **E. COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

This unit shall:

1. Be responsible for all constitutional requirements related to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (G-9.0902a, 14.0400).
2. Provide pastoral care and support for candidates under care.  
Reference: Standing Rules Section A, M

## **ARTICLE V. PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

There shall be at all times within the structure of the Presbytery a Permanent Judicial Commission whose membership, election, powers and procedures shall be in complete conformity with the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order (D. 4.0100-4.0500).

The membership of the Permanent Judicial Commission within the Presbytery shall consist of not less than seven members with not more than one of its elder members from any one of its constituent churches.

The Commission shall organize biennially to elect a Moderator and Clerk. They shall meet at the call of the Stated Clerk.

## **ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION**

This Committee is provided for in the Book of Order (G-9.0105, G-11.0302).

This Committee shall:

1. Consult with the Nominating Committee and advise it of any need for nominations in particular categories needing increased representation.
2. Serve as an advocate for representation and as a resource.
3. Review the performance of its own governing body in these matters and report annually to it and to the Synod with recommendations for any needed corrective action.
4. Inform the Presbytery in November of each year of its progress toward the representation of the categories listed in G-4.0403. The report shall include the racial, ethnic composition, different ages, male and female membership and the number of persons with disabilities in our churches and in the units and committees of Presbytery.
5. Advise Presbytery on the employment of personnel in accordance with the principles of participation and representation and in conformity with a church wide plan for equal employment.
6. Report to Presbytery after consultation with Council.

## **ARTICLE VII. NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

This Committee is provided for in the Book of Order (G-9.0800).

This Committee shall:

1. Nominate persons to fill all vacancies on continuing committees (except the nominating committee), councils, boards, and other bodies that require election by the Presbytery or synod.
2. Consult, at least annually, with the Committee on Representation.

## **ARTICLE VIII. BILLS AND OVERTURES COMMITTEE**

This Committee shall:

1. Assist any group or person to write overtures to the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly.

2. Review overtures to Synod and General Assembly referred by other governing bodies to this Presbytery for its concurrence and present such recommendations to the Presbytery.
3. Review the Book of Order amendments sent by the most recent General Assembly to the presbyteries for their votes and devise a process for their review and vote by Presbytery.

## **ARTICLE IX. WORSHIP AND THEOLOGY TEAM**

This Team shall:

1. Develop themes to be reflected in worship and other Presbytery experiences;
2. Provide opportunities for educating our congregations about the rich diversities in worship experience that are possible
3. Encourage Presbytery-wide events that incorporate these themes and this rich diversity;
4. Provide regular opportunities for the Presbytery to engage in theological reflection;
5. Provide worship experiences that honor the Lordship of Jesus and remind of us Christ's presence throughout Presbytery meetings and events; and
6. Celebrate and encourage our rich diversity in people, churches, ministries and points of view.

## **ARTICLE X. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

Duties and responsibilities beyond those listed below are specified in the Standing Rules and/or the Position Descriptions in the Staff Section.

### **A. MODERATOR**

The Moderator shall:

1. Perform the duties as prescribed in the Book of Order G-9.0200 - G-9.0202.
2. Perform such administrative duties as may be assigned by the Presbytery and/or Council
3. Appoint Administrative Commissions except in those cases where Presbytery decides otherwise.

### **B. VICE-MODERATOR**

The Vice-Moderator shall:

1. Assist the Moderator whenever called upon.
2. In the event of the resignation or death of the Moderator or upon the Moderator's removal from membership in the governing body, the Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator during the unexpired term of the deceased or removed member and shall be eligible to serve a full term as elected Moderator.
3. Oversee Worship and Theology Team (WATT) – Bylaws Article IX

### **C. CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chair shall:

1. Be a member of Council.
2. Preside at all meetings of Council.
3. Have the authority to call special meetings of the Council and must call a special meeting of the Council on the request of three members of the Council.

## **D. VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL**

The Vice-Chair shall:

1. Be a member of the Council.
2. Act as the Chair upon the request or absence of the Chair, or if the Chair is vacant.
3. Assist the Chair whenever called upon.
4. Lead strategic planning activities on behalf of the Presbytery and Council.

## **E. STATED CLERK**

The Stated Clerk shall:

1. Be the ecclesiastical officer of the Presbytery under the provisions of the Book of Order G-9.0200, G-9.0201 and 9.0203.
2. Carry out the work of the office under the authority of and as defined by the Book of Order.
3. Be an ex-officio member of Council **without vote**.
4. Be the parliamentarian of Presbytery, the interpreter of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the official correspondent for the Presbytery.
5. Maintain a roll of baptized persons for Fellowships and New Church Developments of the Presbytery

## **F. TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall:

1. Be the financial officer of the Presbytery.
2. Be an ex-officio member of Council without vote.

Reference: Standing Rules Sections A, B, C D, F, and I

## **G. PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION**

The President of the Corporation shall:

1. Be the President of the Trustees of the Presbytery.
2. Be a member of Council with vote.

Reference: Standing Rules Sections A, B, C D, F, and I

# **OTHER POSITIONS**

## **H. PRESBYTERY ATTORNEY**

An attorney for the Presbytery may be appointed by the Council for a five-year term of office.

Reference: Standing Rules Section G

## **I. LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE PRESBYTERY**

Legal Counsel may be engaged when a specific need warrants.

Reference: Standing Rules Section G

# **ARTICLE XI. MIDDLE GOVERNING BODY STAFF**

The Presbytery may call and elect such Staff as it deems necessary in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order G-9.0701 - 9.0702.

Current position descriptions shall be in the Appendix of the Manual of Administrative Operations.

The Staff is accountable to the Presbytery through its Council for the implementation of Presbytery decisions and matters of strategy, program, and resources. For this purpose the Executive Presbyter shall be member ex-officio without vote of Council and assigned units,

committees, and task groups of the Presbytery.

Duties and responsibilities beyond those listed below are specified in the Standing Rules and/or Position Descriptions in the Staff Section.

### **A. EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER**

The Presbytery shall call and elect an Executive Presbyter, as provided for in the Manual and according to the provisions of the Book of Order.

The Executive Presbyter shall:

1. Be accountable to Presbytery through the Council.
2. Be responsible for the programmatic work of Presbytery.
3. Be head of staff to whom other staff and office persons shall be accountable.
4. Coordinate the work of the Executive's office with that of the Stated Clerk of Presbytery.
5. Be responsible for staff services to Council and all units, committees, teams and task groups of Presbytery.

### **B. ADMINISTRATOR**

The Presbytery may call and elect an Administrator, as provided for in this Manual and according to the provisions of the Book of Order. The Administrator, if any, shall be the chief administrator of the Presbytery accountable to Presbytery through the Council.

## **ARTICLE XII. MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY**

### **A. STATED MEETINGS**

1. Stated Meetings shall be the official meetings of the Presbytery at which the regular business of the Presbytery shall be transacted.
2. The schedule of Stated Meetings shall be:

January	4th Saturday	9:00 a.m.
March	4th Tuesday	5:30 p.m.
May	4th Tuesday	5:30 p.m.
June	4th Tuesday	5:30 p.m.
September	4th Tuesday	4:00 p.m.
November	3rd Tuesday	5:30 p.m.

Council may change dates and times with thirty days advance notice

### **B. ADJOURNED MEETINGS**

The Presbytery may hold adjourned meetings, which are continuations of the immediately preceding stated or special meeting, upon motion passed at that preceding meeting.

### **C. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings of the Presbytery may be held in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order, G-11.0201 when deemed necessary.

### **D. POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS**

A meeting of the Presbytery may be postponed or canceled by order of the Moderator of the Presbytery after consultation with the Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk.

### **E. QUORUMS**

A quorum of the Presbytery shall be any three minister members and the elder members present, provided that at least three churches are represented by elders (G-11.0202).

## **ARTICLE XIII. MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY**

The Presbytery shall be in conformity with the Book of Order G-11.0101(a) (elders), G-11.0401(a) (ministers), and G-11.0405 (ministers of another denomination).

Each year, the Stated Clerk shall review the number of resident ministers and eligible entitled to vote and report to the May Presbytery meeting. If an imbalance exists, an appropriate number of churches will be invited to each elect an additional elder commissioner for the year (June-May) in order to restore the balance. The churches will be asked in the order of the Presbytery Directory until the appropriate number of churches are so invited. In subsequent years, the invitations shall begin with the next church listed in the directory. Reference Book of Order G.11.0101(b).

## **ARTICLE XIV. RULES OF ORDER**

The rules contained in the latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised" shall be the rules of this Presbytery in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with these by-laws and any special rules of order that the Presbytery may adopt.

## **ARTICLE XV. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these by-laws may be made if the proposed amendments are:

1. Presented in writing to members and commissioners at one meeting of the Presbytery; and,
2. Mailed to members and commissioners in the call to a subsequent meeting; and,
3. Adopted by a two-thirds vote at that subsequent meeting.