

## APPENDIX E

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE COMMITTEE ON SESSION RECORDS

#### 1. RULES FOR SESSIONS

1. Each clerk of session shall have a copy of the Bylaws of the Presbytery on hand at each meeting of the session.
2. Every meeting of the session must be carefully recorded, with date, place and time of meeting, name of moderator, names of elders present and of elders absent. Every meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer.
3. The moderator must be a minister of the Presbytery, except as otherwise permitted by the *Book of Order*.
4. The minutes of the proceedings of session must be read, or distributed to all members of the session for review prior to the next session meeting, and their approval recorded.
5. Certificates of transfer of members should ordinarily be granted by formal action of the session, but the session may authorize the moderator or clerk to issue certificates, in the interim between meetings of session, to members who are in good standing, and to report such transfer to the session at its next meeting.
6. On the reception of a member by certificate of transfer, the session is required to communicate that fact to the church that gave the certificate.
7. The session must keep an accurate record, with dates, of baptisms, marriages, and deaths; admissions to membership by profession, certificate (with name of church) or restoration; and dismissions by transfer (with name of church), or erased (with reasons specified).
8. Each session shall promptly report to the Stated Clerk any change in its list of elders or their addresses.
9. The session, by plan of its own adoption, shall regularly send an elder commissioner to each stated meeting of the Presbytery. Any session not represented at the Presbytery for one year shall be subject to censure.
10. The name of the elder commissioner shall be recorded in the minutes, and he or she shall report on the meeting of the Presbytery at the next meeting of the session.
11. The Presbytery apportionment for each church should be paid to the Treasurer in accordance with the payment schedule established by the Presbytery.
12. The Annual Statistical Report must be forwarded to the Stated Clerk at the time due and, with record of its approval by session, must also appear in the minutes of session. The minutes of all congregational meetings called by the session must appear in the session's record.

13. Session minutes must be put into the hands of the Session Records Committee for examination as specified in these Bylaws.
14. Church registers must be put into the hands of the Session Records Committee for examination as specified in these Bylaws.
15. The session of a church seeking a pastor is under the supervision of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, and every session must advise this committee as soon as there is any intimation that the church will begin seeking a pastor. The Presbytery shall appoint a moderator (preferably from the membership of the committee) upon recommendation by this committee after the committee's consultation with the session. The session of a church seeking a pastor must obtain permission from the Presbytery to supply its pulpit and such permission shall not be given for more than four months without renewal. Permission must also be obtained to supply the pulpit in the absence of the interim pastor. Only regularly ordained ministers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can serve as temporary supply, without approval of the Committee on Ministry and special permission of the Presbytery. No candidate for the pulpit shall be considered by the church until he or she has been approved by the Committee on Ministry, in cooperation with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry when necessary.
16. The record of a pastor's installation must be complete in the session's record.
17. A meeting of the congregation for the election of a pastor must be called by the session or some higher governing body. In such an election no person shall be entitled to vote who is not a member of the church.
18. A quorum of the session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and one-third of the elders, except for the reception and dismissal of members, when the quorum shall be the moderator and two members of the session. The session may fix its own quorum at any higher number.
19. Meetings of the congregation for the election of elders must be called by the authority of the session or some higher governing body of the church. If the session refuses to call such a meeting, complaint may be made to the Presbytery. Members only are permitted to vote at an election of elders.
20. An elder-elect cannot act with the session until he or she has been ordained and installed.
21. An elder taking a certificate of transfer and returning it unused is not thereby restored to office. An elder suspended from church privileges, when restored, is not thereby restored to the session.
22. An elder resigns to the session and his or her resignation takes effect when accepted. The granting of a certificate of transfer to an elder or a member terminates all relations to the church (except so far as the session has jurisdiction over conduct until the certificate is used), and such member or elder can neither vote nor hold office.

23. A pastor-elect or stated supply is not ex officio moderator of the session, but may preside on invitation of the session if he or she be a member of the Presbytery with the approval of the moderator appointed by the Presbytery.
24. An act of the session at an informal meeting is not valid, but must be ratified by the session when regularly constituted before it is made a matter of record.
25. Session records, approved by the Presbytery, must not be altered by the session without the Presbytery's advice and consent.
26. Sessions shall receive and approve annually reports from all organizations within the local church or they shall enter a resolution upon their minutes showing that they have in some way examined and approved the program of all organizations within the church, listing these organizations. Sessions shall review annually the minutes of the Board of Trustees and record their approval thereof.
27. Sessions shall review the records of the Board of Deacons at least annually, and shall hold a joint meeting with the Board of Deacons at least annually to confer on matters of common interest.
28. Sessions shall supervise the work of the treasurer(s), and there shall be a complete audit of all books and records relating to finances once each year.

## **2. ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

1. Nomination and election of elders and deacons shall be conducted in conformity with the *Book of Order*.
2. Trustees of a particular church (whether or not they are also members of the session of a church with a unicameral form of government) serve as members of the board of directors of the church corporation and shall be chosen at such time and in such manner as may be required by civil law, with two further conditions:
  1. They shall be members of said church and of full legal age.
  2. The provisions of *Book of Order* G-14.0201 relating to the nomination, election, and tenure of elders shall apply with equal force to trustees.
3. All requests for exemption from the provisions of the *Book of Order* concerning tenure of officers (G-14.0201a) shall be filed with the moderator of the Committee on Ministry by October 31 in each year. Such requests must be by action of the congregation in accordance with *Book of Order* G-14.0202a(3), and not by the respective boards of the church.
4. Recommendations on requests for exemption from mandatory rotation of officers will be made by the Committee on Ministry on the basis of the following standards:

1. Unless special conditions warrant, no church with membership exceeding 150 resident active members will be granted an exemption.
2. Unless special conditions warrant, no church will be granted an exemption on the basis of an insufficient number of women available, unless one-third of the membership of each board is composed of women members.
3. Churches with declining memberships should not perpetuate larger official boards than necessary; therefore, unless special conditions warrant, no church will be granted an exemption if more than fifteen percent of its active members serve as members of the session, trustees, or deacons.
4. Unless special conditions warrant, no church will be granted an exemption if there are enough qualified active members available to fill officer classes.
5. Since the *Book of Order* (G-6.0407) provides that a congregation "may elect not to use the Office of Deacon," and (G-7.0401) that "the elders in active service in a church shall, by reason of their office, be the Trustees of the Corporation, unless the corporation shall determine another method for electing its trustees," congregations should give serious consideration to moving toward more centralized administration through the session, when faced with difficulty filling the classes of either the Board of Deacons or the Board of Trustees.

### **3. GUIDELINES FOR THE KEEPING OF MINUTES**

1. Record the date, time, and place of each meeting, the names of the moderator and the elders present, and the names of those excused and absent.
2. Record the opening and closing of each meeting with prayer.
3. Record the reading and approval of the minutes of the last meeting.
4. Record only that which is vital to the transactions of the meeting.
5. The details of discussion, plans which have not been adopted, suggestions which have not been followed, motions that have been lost, should never be recorded except by special order of the session, of which order the records should take note.
6. When a previous action of the session is referred to, the page or pages on which it is recorded should be designated.
7. Avoid erasures, interlineations, footnotes, and blank pages.
8. Do not insert in the records written or printed matter on separate sheets of paper.
9. Record the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the next regular meeting. When the Sacrament has been administered

privately, the record should note the names of officers or members present, or the fact that it was not possible to have officers or members present.

10. Record the baptism of adults and of infants at the next regular meeting.
11. Record the full name of applicants for church membership; in the case of minors, son or daughter of; and in every case whether baptized; and the name of the church transferred from, in the case of persons received by letter.
12. Record the full title of the church to which a certificate of transfer is granted, and the full name of the person transferred with the date of dismissal.
13. Record the name of the elder appointed as a commissioner to the Presbytery; also the exact period for which he or she was appointed commissioner; also, upon the expiration of the term of service as commissioner, the report of his or her attendance and fidelity.
14. The record of each meeting is to be recorded in the minute book promptly, and duly attested by the clerk or moderator.
15. When the session of a church finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the *Form of Government*, the *Rules of Discipline*, and the Manual should be carefully studied by a committee of the session, and if discipline be administered, the minutes of the session must contain such a record of the proceedings, that the Presbytery may know who was disciplined, and why, and how.
16. The annual statistical report must be forwarded to the Stated Clerk at the time due, and with record of its approval by session, must also appear in the minutes of session. The minutes of all congregational meetings called by the session must appear in the session's record.
17. Every session shall keep registers or rolls of persons admitted to or suspended from the Lord's Table; and of the deaths and other removals of church members, but the names of members shall be placed upon or removed from the rolls of the church only by order of the session, and in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Order*. The session shall also keep a complete register of marriages, and of adult and infant baptisms, with the times of the births of the infants baptized.
18. Session records must indicate that the pastor's salary has been reviewed with him or her by the congregation prior to the reception of the annual budget (see *Book of Order* G-10.0102n, G-14.0506b).
19. Session records must indicate that the church is complying with the provisions of Bylaws of the Presbytery, unless the church has been formally exempted by the Presbytery. The clerk of session of each church of the Presbytery shall record in the session minutes that its elders and deacons were ordained to their office with the pastor or moderator using the subscription questions set forth in *Book of Order* G-14.0207. The

minutes shall state the composition of the session with regard to racial/ethnic members, women, men, and age groups, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation. (G-10.0301).

20. All proceedings of the particular church shall be reported to, and reviewed by, the session and by its order incorporated with its record.
21. Churches which persist in making the same errors in the keeping of session records consistently over a period of three years shall be cited by the Presbytery for their failure to keep their records in a satisfactory manner.

4. **DOCKET OF SESSION MEETINGS** The docket of business for session meetings should be prepared by the clerk and moderator in consultation. The following form is suggested, and contains the more important items of business likely to come before a session, except those connected with judicial cases. It can be modified to suit specific needs:

1. Opening prayer
2. Calling of roll
3. Reading and approval of minutes
4. Communications from the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly
5. Reports of permanent committees
6. Reports of special committees
7. Report of pastor
8. Report of clerk
9. Report of treasurer
10. Examination and reception of members
11. Dismissal of members
12. Arrangements for the Lord's Supper when necessary
13. Report to the Presbytery when in order
14. Report of commissioner to the Presbytery
15. Unfinished business
16. Miscellaneous business
17. Adjournment
18. Prayer and Benediction

5. **SUGGESTED FORM FOR RECORDING SESSION MINUTES** The Committee on Session Records, believing that it would simplify its work if clerks of sessions would use the following as a suggested form in the recording of the various kinds of actions and reports, recommended that the Presbytery approve this for distribution to all sessions.

1. The session of the .....Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, held a stated (special) meeting on Tuesday evening, May ..,

- 19., at eight o'clock, in the Session Room (or other designated place) of the church located at....., Philadelphia, Pa.
2. The meeting was opened with prayer by the moderator, the Rev. Dr. John Jones.
  3. The following persons were present: the moderator, the Rev. Dr. John Jones; Elders James Adams, Dorothy Black, etc.
  4. Excuses for absence were received and sustained on behalf of Elders George Clark, Ruth Dobbs, etc.
  5. The following elders were absent: Henry Evans, etc.
  6. The minutes of the previous stated meeting(s) of April 6, 19., (and March 7, 19.) were read and approved (or of special meeting(s)).
  7. The clerk presented the following communications received since the previous meeting:
    1. (itemized)
    2. (itemized)
    3. (itemized)
    4. (itemized)

The session VOTED to refer communications I, ii, and iii, to the Standing Committee on the General Mission of the Church for consideration and report, with recommendations, to the next stated meeting of the session. The clerk was directed to acknowledge communication iv, and to advise the writer that the session cannot grant the request contained therein.
  8. The report of the Standing Committee on Worship was presented through its moderator, Elder Samuel Wood. The report was received and approved, and its recommendation adopted, as follows: (insert) (and similarly for all standing committees)
  9. The report of the Temporary Committee on a possible new name for the church was presented through the moderator, Elder Norman Pike. The report was received and approved, and the session VOTED to submit the recommendation to a special meeting of the congregation. The session, therefore, directed the Clerk to insert the following notice in the church calendar for Sundays, May 17 and 24, 19., and requested the moderator to emphasize the importance of this meeting from the pulpit in this way: A special meeting of the congregation (ecclesiastical) of the ..... Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is called for Wednesday evening, May 27, 19., for the purpose of hearing a report from the session with reference to a possible new name for the church, and to take action thereon. The meeting will be held in the Church School Auditorium at 8:00 PM.
  10. The pastor, the Rev. Dr. John Jones, presented the following report which was received and ordered spread upon the minutes:
    1. Baptisms

1. infants, with name of parents, dates of birth
2. adults, with full names and, in the case of married females, their full maiden names for historical accuracy
2. Administration of the Lord's Supper
  1. date and time
  2. administration to sick and shut-ins names
  3. name of accompanying elder
3. Weddings
  1. place, date and time, names of contracting parties
4. Funerals
  1. place, date and time, name of the deceased
11. The clerk, Elder Edwin Food, presented the following report which was received and ordered spread upon the minutes:
  1. (Specify)
  2. (Specify)
  3. (Specify)
12. The report of the Board of Trustees, containing the financial statement for the month of April 19.., and the accumulated statement from January 1 to April 30, 19.., was presented in writing through the clerk. The report was received, approved, and ordered spread upon the minutes, as follows in condensed form: Receipts, April 19.. Disbursements, April 19.. Receipts, January 1 to April 30, 19.. Disbursements, January 1 to April 30, 19.. Cash balance (or deficit) at April 30, 19..
13. The report of the Benevolence Treasurer, Elder Thomas Smith, was presented in writing, showing receipts and disbursements for the month of April 19.., and the accumulated report from January 1 to April 30, 19... The report was received, approved, and ordered spread upon the minutes, as follows in condensed form: Receipts, April 19.. Disbursements, April 19.. Receipts, January 1 to April 30, 19.. Disbursements, January 1 to April 30, 19.. Cash balance, at April 30, 19..
14. The moderator, the Rev. Dr. John Jones, presented the following persons for examination by the session for membership in the.....Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, PA, on profession of faith (and baptism), and after due examination, the session VOTED to receive the following persons: John Smith, Mary Williams Smith (Mrs. John), Robert Smith (son of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith).
15. The moderator, the Rev. Dr. John Jones, presented the following persons who had certificates of transfer from other Evangelical churches to this church. After due examination, the session VOTED to receive these persons by certificate of transfer. Henry Brown (from the First Presbyterian Church of Exville, PA), Edna Barrett Brown (Mrs. Henry) (from the First Presbyterian Church of Exville, PA).

16. The moderator, the Rev. Dr. John Jones, presented the following person for examination by the session to be received on reaffirmation of faith. After due examination, the session VOTED to receive into the membership of this church on reaffirmation of faith: Gordon Young (formerly associated with the Lutheran Church).
17. The clerk reported that since the last stated meeting of the session, certificates of transfer had been granted at their request to the following persons: Emily Atkins to the First Presbyterian Church, Sharpsville, PA; Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Haines (Margaret Abbott Haines) to the Methodist Church, Hillsburg, Michigan.
18. The clerk reported that, after one year of absence, he had been unable, after due and diligent search, to ascertain the place of residence of Andrew Black. The session VOTED to delete his name from the roll of active communicant members in accordance with the provisions of *Book of Order* G-10.0302b(6).
19. The clerk reported that Jane Smith Adamson (Mrs. William) had removed her residence beyond the bounds of this congregation, and even though advised, had neglected to have her membership transferred. The session VOTED to transfer her name to the roll of inactive members, in accordance with the provision of *Book of Order* G-10.0302a(3), and requested the clerk so to notify her.
20. The session VOTED that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of June at eleven o'clock in the morning, and that the following elders shall assist in the distribution of the elements: Elders AB, CD, EF, etc. The session VOTED that Elder GH shall accompany the pastor in connection with the administration of the sacrament to the sick and shut-ins.
21. The session VOTED that the following arrangements be made for the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday morning, June 21, 19.., at eleven o'clock; that Elder IJ be requested to assist the pastor in this service.
22. The commissioner of the session to the previous meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Elder Ernest Jackson, presented an oral report concerning the need for counselors at Kirkwood Camp. The moderator was requested to emphasize this matter from the pulpit on the coming Sunday.
23. Elder Richard Roe was elected as the elder commissioner at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia appointed for Tuesday, May 12, 19..
24. The session entered upon the consideration of the following items not concluded at the previous meeting:
  1. (action taken)
  2. (deferred to the next stated meeting)

25. Elder KL requested the session to consider whether or not it is desirable to require new members to attend a specific number of classes of instruction prior to their reception into membership. The session referred the matter to its Standing Committee on Evangelism for consideration and report with recommendations at the September meeting of the session.
26. The session received the report of Elder William Smith that he had carefully read the minutes of the Board of Trustees submitted to the session, and recommends that they be approved (with the following exceptions):
  1. (itemized)
  2. (itemized)
27. The session received program reports and financial statements from the Board of Deacons, Church School Association, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men, and Presbyterian Youth. The session VOTED to approve these reports and present them to the congregation at its annual meeting. (Note: All organizations must so report, and be named.)
28. There being no further business, the session adjourned to meet at a stated meeting on the first Tuesday evening of June 19., in the Session Room of the church, at eight o'clock, and the meeting was closed with prayer by Elders John Doe and Richard Roe. (signed) Clerk Approved.....

## **6. RULES FOR KEEPING CHURCH REGISTERS**

1. Be certain that the name of the church is inscribed on the outside of the register or on its first page.
2. Roll of Pastors: All pastors, associate pastors, or stated supplies are to be listed chronologically showing ordination date, installation date and termination date for each. Assistant pastors may be included, if the church so desires. Do not include the name of a student or temporary supply. Do not add stated supplies or assistant pastors until they have served for six months.
3. Roll of Elders: List ordination date, installation date, and subsequent re-elections until continuous service ends. When re-elected after inactivity, enter on a new line again noting his or her ordination date and the new installation date. Enter the date of termination of service under "Record of Service."
4. Roll of Deacons: List ordination date, installation date, and subsequent re-elections until continuous service ends. When re-elected after inactivity, enter on new line again noting his or her ordination date and the new installation date. Enter the date of termination of service under "Record of Service."
5. Roll of Trustees: Enter date of election and any subsequent re-election on same line. After a period of inactivity enter the name on a new line, and enter the date on which the term ends for each trustee.

6. Roll of Active Members: Enter each member in consecutive chronological order. Enter the member's full name. Married women should be entered: Mary Clay Smith (Mrs. Charles J. or widow of Charles J.). When a woman changes her name by marriage, after entry here, note the fact under "Remarks" and enter her new name and her present number in the alphabetical index. If a member is transferred to another church, give the name of the church and the date of transfer. Disciplinary action of any kind must show the section of the Rules of Discipline under which action was taken, and the date of the action of the session. This must be noted in every individual case.
7. Alphabetical Roll: It is most helpful for registers to contain a list arranged chronologically by date of reception and alphabetically according to the first letter of their last name.
8. Non-Resident Members: It is for the session to determine what are the "bounds of the congregation." In this connection, *Book of Order* G-10.0302a(2)(c) indicates the inability of a person to maintain regular attendance because of moving out of the community as one test that the member has moved "beyond the bounds." When the session determines that a member has moved "beyond the bounds", it shall notify that member that it is his or her responsibility to transfer his or her membership to the church in whose bounds he or she is living. It is also necessary for the church of which he or she is a member to notify the church within whose bounds he or she is now living of this change of residence. If, after reasonable time, the member has not requested a certificate of transfer, he or she may be again notified of his or her responsibility to transfer and his or her name placed upon the roll of inactive members. (See *Book of Order* G-10.0302a(3).)
9. Roll of Affiliate Members: Members who establish temporary local residence within the bounds of a church may have their names placed upon the roll of affiliated members in accordance with the provision of the *Book of Order* G-10.0302a(4). Affiliate members enjoy all the privileges of full membership except the right to vote and hold office.
10. Roll of Inactive Members: Names shall be placed upon this roll by action of session. The chronological number, full name, and date of session action shall be entered. The notation as to the specific chapter and paragraph of the *Book of Order* which applies shall be noted in the chronological roll under "remarks" on the line on which the member's name is recorded. The session is required to make diligent effort to discover the cause of a member's non-participation and to restore the member to activity in the church's work and worship before transferring a name from the active to the inactive roll. Any member whose name is so transferred shall be notified of such action. Inactive members are not

entitled to vote in meetings of the congregation or corporation or to hold office.

11. Roll of Infants (Church Members or Baptized): The full name of the child shall be entered together with the names of the parents, the date of birth of the child, the place of birth (city and state), the date of baptism, the place of baptism, and the name of the officiating minister. The date of removal of the name from this roll shall be indicated showing whether removal is by certificate to another church; admission to full communion; or by death. The names of children who have been baptized and whose parents transfer their membership to the church are to be added to this list. Should the certificate of transfer for the parents not show the date of birth and baptism of the child, this information may be added to the register if the parents can present a Baptismal Certificate for the child. If it is not possible to enter the information based upon the official certificate of transfer or a certificate presented by the parents, the dismissing church must be asked for the information before it can be entered into the register.
12. Record of Adult Baptisms: It is essential to indicate the age of the person receiving adult baptism inasmuch as adult baptism may not be administered except in connection with reception into membership. The full name of the person at the time of baptism, parents' names, and the date of birth of the baptized adult are to be recorded.
13. Register of Marriages: It is necessary to show the full name of the man and woman, their addresses at the time of the marriage, the date and place of the marriage, and the number of the certificate issued by the state permitting the marriage to be performed. It is not required in Pennsylvania that the names of witnesses be recorded.
14. Register of Deaths: The age of the deceased member shall be noted, the name of the deceased, the place of residence at the time of death, the date of death, and the place of burial. This roll may include the names of those who are not members in the congregation. Such names must be identified in some manner.