

Sample Bylaws of the Particular Church
(Consult with Presbytery G-1.0201)

I. Statement of Purpose or Mission

The Presbyterian Church of _____ has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. Relation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The _____ Presbyterian Church is a member church of the Presbytery of _____ in the Synod of _____ of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

III. Governance of the Church

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. Consistent with that *Constitution*, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. *Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

IV. Meetings of the Church

There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation on the _____ Sunday in January, at which at least the following business shall be presented: annual reports from organizations and the session (information only), financial report for the preceding year, budget for the current year (information only), changes in the terms of call for the pastor(s), nominating committee report for church officers (G-1.0501), electing members to serve on the nominating committee.

Special meetings may be called by the session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call. (G-1.0501)

V. Notice of Meetings

Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given, including notice given at regular services of worship prior to the meeting. *Own rule of minimum notification specified.* (G-1.0502)

VI. Moderator

The pastor shall moderate the meetings. If there are co-pastors, they shall alternately preside at meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. When this is not expedient, and when both the pastor or the moderator concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside. (G-1.0504)

VII. Secretary

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary.

VIII Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting recorded by the secretary shall be attested by the moderator and the secretary, recorded in the minute book of the session. (G-1.0505)

IX. Quorum for the Meeting

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and _____ members, but under no circumstances shall it be fewer than _____ of the active members of the congregation. Consistent with the laws of the state of _____, a quorum shall be _____ active members on corporate matters. The secretary shall determine that a quorum is present. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. (G-1.0501). Consistent with the laws of the state of _____, voting is restricted to active members age _____ or above. Voting by proxy is not allowed. Consistent with the laws of the state of _____

(Note: Churches in applicable states would fill in.)

X. Incorporation

In accordance with the laws of the state of _____, the congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation. (G-1.0503).

(Note: There will be variations from state to state on provisions for incorporation. Since the pastor or moderator is not a member of the corporation, consistent with Article VI, a member of the session shall be invited to moderate the meeting when corporate matters appear on the agenda. The elders serving on the session shall serve at the same time as trustees.)

XI. Nominating Committee (See G-2.0401)

The congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

(congregation will need to determine process for election of a nominating committee)

- (1) There shall be _____ active members on the nominating committee.(at least three)
- (2) One of the members shall be ruling elder who is currently serving on the session.
- (3) The pastor shall be a member ex officio and without vote.
- (4) Full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation.
- (5) A majority of all active members present and voting shall be required to elect.

XII. Elders

The congregation shall elect _____ elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year 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 reelection to the session for a period of at least one year.

The session, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect an elder to serve as clerk and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. At that same meeting of the session, the session shall annually elect a treasurer. A quorum for the session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and one third of the elders.

XIII. Deacons

The congregation shall elect _____ deacons divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. No deacon shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A deacon having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the board of deacons for a period of at least one year.

The board of deacons, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect a moderator and a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work.

The pastor shall be an advisory member of the board of deacons. A quorum for the board of deacons shall be one third of the members, including the moderator.

XIV. Vacancies

Vacancies on the session or the board of deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the session may determine.

XV. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of _____ and the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* by a two-thirds vote of the voters present, providing that the proposed changes in printed form shall have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.

Manual of Administrative Operation

In the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly, a manual of administrative operation is required (G-3.0106). Such a manual is desirable for your church. Below is a partial listing of materials to include in the manual.

- (1) *Originating Documents*
 - (a) organizing covenant,
 - (b) list of charter members,
 - (c) articles of incorporation,
 - (d) bylaws,
 - (e) mission statement.
- (2) *Nominating, Electing, and Ordaining/Installing*
 - (a) description of the work of the church officer nominating committee,
 - (b) elements in the examination by the session of those elected,
 - (c) procedure on the day for ordination/installation.
- (3) *Membership*
 - (a) procedures for contact and invitation for membership,
 - (b) procedures for removing names from the roll.
- (4) *Committees and Organizations*
 - (a) job description of the work of each committee and organization,
 - (b) description of annual sequence of the work required for each committee and organization,
 - (c) time, place, and frequency of meetings of each committee and organization,
 - (d) expectations of persons serving on committees and organizations.
- (5) *Contact with the Presbytery*
 - (a) description of the procedure and report from the triennial visit,
 - (b) catalogue of resource library,
 - (c) directory of committee membership,
 - (d) list of presbytery commissioners,
 - (e) form to nominate persons to serve on presbytery committees.
- (6) *Personnel*
 - (a) position description for each church staff position—paid or volunteer,
 - (b) personnel policies,
 - (c) forms used in hiring, including disclosure forms for prior charges or conviction in sexual misconduct and sexual abuse,
 - (d) description of performance review and compensation review procedure.
- (7) *Finances*
 - (a) church budget,

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- (b) description of procedure for stewardship and pledging,
- (c) procedures for counting the offering.

(8) *Calendar*

church calendar of events during the year.

(9) *Annual Meeting*

description of preparation for the annual meeting with copy of last meeting.

(10) *Worship and Sacraments*

- (a) instructions for ushers,
- (b) instructions for greeters,
- (c) instructions for those serving communion,
- (d) instructions for those preparing communion,
- (e) procedure for elder assisting in baptism.