

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PART I

Introductory Information

**From the Book of Order (PCUSA) and
the Manual of Operations (PNC)**

Pages 2-9

From the Book of Order

Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

G-3.0301

The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

In light of this charge, the presbytery has responsibility and power to:

- a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, merging, dismissing, and dissolving congregations in consultation with their members; overseeing congregations without pastors; establishing pastoral relationships and dissolving them; guiding the preparation of those preparing to become *teaching elders*; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration to the end that the church's witness to the love and grace of God may be heard in the world.
- b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at its meetings at least annually and for fellowship groups, new church developments, and other non-congregational entities meeting within its bounds; authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord's Supper when it deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament; and exercising pastoral care for the congregations and members of presbytery in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the presbytery may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.
- c. nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include ordaining, receiving, dismissing, installing, removing, and disciplining its members who are teaching elders; commissioning ruling elders to limited pastoral service; promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in

developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church; taking jurisdiction over the members of dissolved congregations and granting transfers of their membership to other congregations; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders and Congregations

Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to *teaching elders*, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.

Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture and oversee the process of preparing to become a *teaching elder*.

To facilitate the presbytery's oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of teaching elder members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.

The Presbytery of New Covenant delegates responsibility and authority to fulfill the functions above that relate to congregations, teaching elders and church professionals to the Committee on Ministry, as follows.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Ref: Bylaws, Article X (10.01)

(functions in bold italics added when Lay Pastor Subcommittee moved to Committee on Preparation for Ministry, January, 2011)

FUNCTIONS:

- Provide for the responsibilities delineated in *Book of Order*.
- Establish *liaison groups* in consultation with the five (5) subcommittees, to assist with the work of the Committee on Ministry. Specific responsibilities will be given to *liaison groups*, such as:
 - triennial visits
 - working with Pastor Nominating Committees ***and with churches seeking to commission ruling elders to serve as pastors or in validated ministries***
 - responding to areas of conflict
 - addressing other issues and concerns
- Shall recommend to the presbytery the formation of an Administrative Commission according to the *Book of Order*.
- Annually prepare and propose a budget for the Committee on Ministry
- Administer the Committee on Ministry budget
- Record minutes of all meetings and maintain accurate records of the work of the Committee on Ministry which shall be available in the Presbyterian Center

MEMBERSHIP:

The Committee on Ministry shall be composed of a chairperson, vice chairperson, the chairpersons and vice chairpersons and members of its ***five*** subcommittees

(Administration, Care of Congregation, Care of Church Professionals, Contracts and Examinations). **Members of the subcommittee on Examinations shall not be counted toward a quorum.**¹

1. Amendment in bold – by vote of General Council, 6/15/09, reported to pby, 11/09.

The presbytery shall elect the chairperson and vice chairperson of Committee on Ministry and the chairpersons and vice chairpersons of its subcommittees, with each individual eligible for re-election twice.

QUORUM:

One third of those elected and serving on the committee (not including members of Examinations sub-committee) shall constitute a quorum.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly.

LINKAGES:

The Committee on Ministry reports directly to the presbytery and is accountable to the Ministries Division Steering Committee on matters of budget and program.

SUBCOMMITTEES OF COM:**Moderators' Council**

Although not a committee, prior to every meeting of COM, the chairpersons of all of the sub-committees meet to discuss matters of mutual concern.

1. Care of Church Professionals

(All *teaching elders*-active & retired, certified Christian educators, and commissioned *ruling elders*)

FUNCTIONS:

- **Spiritual Development** - develop opportunities for spiritual development
- **Pastoral Care** - provide for pastoral care concerns of all church professionals and their families
- **Fellowship** - develop opportunities and networks for fellowship and support
- **Counseling** - assist professionals to securing appropriate career and personal counseling
- **Recognition/Celebration** - provide for service of recognition of lay employees who have completed the certification process, recognize professionals upon their retirement, annually remember those professionals who have died, and provide for appropriate celebrations in the lives of professionals

- **Communication/Interpretation** - develop a process to welcome persons entering the presbytery and a process when they leave the presbytery: and be open to communication at all times
- **Continuing Education** - emphasize the purpose of continuing education for all and encourage lay employees to seek certification in their area of employment
- **Nurture** -- *provide ongoing nurture of commissioned ruling elders, including 6-month consultations*
- **Accountability** - provide oversight for those professionals who have been temporarily excluded from exercising their office

MEMBERSHIP:

The Care of Church Professionals Committee shall be composed of nine (9) members divided into three (3) equal classes. All members serve in the Committee on Ministry plenary.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly

2. Care of Congregations

FUNCTIONS:

- **Congregational Visitation and Communication** - provide for a triennial visit for each session and be open to communication at all times with *ruling elders* who are members of session
- **Congregational/Pastoral Relations** - shall counsel with churches regarding ***options for pastoral leadership: installed or commissioned, permanent or temporary***; dissolving pastoral relationships, the interim period, electing a pastor nominating committee, the process of calling/***commissioning*** a pastor(s) for all types of positions, and provide a list of qualified persons to fill a vacant pulpit
- **Congregational Harmony** - provide procedures for promoting the peace and harmony of the congregations, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between *teaching elders* and congregations

MEMBERSHIP:

The Care of Congregations Committee shall be composed of twelve (12) members divided into three (3) equal classes. All members serve in the Committee on Ministry plenary.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly

3. Administration

FUNCTIONS:

- **Professional** - annually review the terms of call and any changes for *teaching elders*, and review the annual report for every *teaching elder* performing work which is not under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or higher *council*.
- **Call/Employment Process** - find in order calls issued by churches, approve and present calls for services of *teaching elders*, approve the examination of *teaching elders* transferring from other presbyteries, dissolve pastoral relationships where the congregation and pastor concur, grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the presbytery, and dismiss *teaching elders* to other presbyteries, provided that all such actions are reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.
- **Compensation and Benefits** - provide guidance and resources to churches concerning equitable compensation, personnel policies and fair employment practices for all church professionals, and establish minimum compensation requirements for all pastoral calls, and guidelines for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators
- **Conflict Resolution** - exercise wise discretion in determining when to take cognizance of information concerning difficulties within a church.
- **Relationship with other Councils and Church Boards**
- Sends delegates to the annual Board of Pensions event for training and information.
- **Commissions** - recommends to presbytery the appointment of administrative commissions to ordain *teaching elders*, and/or install them in permanent pastoral relations; ***assist churches with the commissioning services for commissioned ruling elders.***

MEMBERSHIP:

The Administration Committee shall be composed of twelve (12) members divided into three (3) equal classes. All members serve in the Committee on Ministry plenary.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly

4. Contracts

(Commissioned Ruling Elders, Stated Supply, Temporary Supply, Designated Supply, Interim Pastorates, Certified Christian Educators)

FUNCTIONS:

- to work with Care of Congregations **subcommittee of COM** and the Lay Pastor **subcommittee of CPM** to assess the needs of congregations where Commissioned Ruling Elders are being considered. This involves recommending to the presbytery the authority to be granted in each commission: 1) Performing Christian marriage, 2) the Lord's Supper, 3) Baptisms, 4) Moderating the Session, or 5) Attend Presbytery meetings with voice and/or vote. Commissions can be for any number of the listed functions.
- to oversee contracts for stated supply, temporary supply, and interim pastors, reviewing these documents for length of term and compensation.
- to hold churches accountable for compensation and benefits that is proportionate to the Presbytery's Guidelines for Minimum Terms of Call.
- to consult with the local session of the church where a renewal of a pastoral contract is being considered.

MEMBERSHIP:

The Contracts Committee shall be composed of nine (9) members divided into three (3) equal classes. All members serve in the Committee on Ministry plenary.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly.

5. Examinations

FUNCTION:

- To conduct examinations of each *teaching elder* or candidate entering the presbytery on his or her Christian faith, view of theology, the sacraments, government of the church and English Bible as needed.
- To conduct examinations of each person being considered for a commission as commissioned ruling elder in one of the churches of the presbytery.

MEMBERSHIP:

The Examinations Committee shall be composed of twelve (12) members divided into three (3) classes. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall serve in the Committee on Ministry plenary.

MEETINGS: Ordinarily monthly, however, additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.

(LAY PASTOR SUBCOMMITTEE MOVED TO CPM, JANUARY 2011)