

# By-Laws of the Presbytery of Florida, Inc.



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# ***BY-LAWS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA***

## *ARTICLE I: THE PRESBYTERY*

The name of this governing body is the Presbytery of Florida, Inc.

The Presbytery of Florida, Inc. shall consist of all congregations governed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which are located in the counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Calhoun, Liberty, Gulf, Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Holmes, and Franklin, all in the State of Florida.

The Presbytery of Florida, Inc. is a presbytery of the Synod of South Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbytery was incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida in 1986.

## *ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVE*

"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." (Book of Order, G-3.0301)

## *ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP*

The membership of the council (presbytery) shall consist of all congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) located within the geographical bounds defined by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and all Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of the Presbytery or actively serving in one or more churches in the presbytery.

1. In addition, each elder elected moderator or other officer of the presbytery, each elder elected as a member of the Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) of the presbytery, and each elder elected as general presbyter or associate presbyter (when applicable), and exempt staff (when applicable) shall be enrolled as a member of presbytery for the term of his or her office, whether or not commissioned by his or her session.
2. Commissioner Representation  
Each congregation within the presbytery shall be entitled to one elder commissioner. Congregations with membership over 500 shall be entitled to two elder commissioners.
3. In determining the parity, those retired ministers who are serving on presbytery ministries, on the pulpit supply list or otherwise actively engaged in the activities of the presbytery will be considered "active members" for the purposes of parity.
4. When the number of resident Ministers of Word and Sacrament entitled to vote in the presbytery is greater than the number of elders so entitled, the presbytery shall have a mechanism in place to create parity annually by paying special attention to the concerns of Book of Order (G-3.0103).

## *ARTICLE IV: GOVERNMENT*

1. The government of the Presbytery of Florida shall conform to the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the rules of parliamentary order for the guidance of the Presbytery of Florida in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the presbytery may adopt.
3. A Manual of Operations (Manual) shall be adopted which establishes the organizational structure of the presbytery for its ministry and mission.
4. Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs) (G-2.1001) assigned to temporary pastoral relations with a particular congregation shall be seated with voice and vote at all presbytery meetings.
5. Certified Christian Educators/Certified Associate Christian Educators and all other persons employed as Christian educators by churches in the Presbytery of Florida who have at least a B.A. in Christian Education or in a related field, and/or five or more years paid church related Christian Education experience currently employed within a Presbyterian congregation(s) within the bounds of the Presbytery of Florida shall be seated with voice at all presbytery meetings. Any of the above who are elders shall be seated with voice and vote at all presbytery meetings (G-2.1103).
6. Persons in Certified Church Service (G-2.1102) employed by the presbytery or by any of its member congregations, and past moderators of presbytery may be seated with privileges of the floor at all meetings of the presbytery.
7. The Presbyterian Women Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, and Youth Council members shall have voice on the floor of presbytery.
8. Floor privileges do not include the right to vote or to make motions. Visitors may be accorded the privilege of the floor when the council (presbytery) so desires.

#### *ARTICLE V: OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY*

1. The officers of presbytery shall be a moderator, a vice moderator, a stated clerk, and a treasurer. No one individual shall be elected to serve in more than one office at the same time.
2. A moderator shall be elected at each fall meeting of the presbytery for a term of one year. The installation shall occur at the winter meeting of the presbytery. The moderator shall perform such duties as are prescribed by the *Book of Order* and such other duties applicable to the office by the bylaws and Manual of Operations, but he/she may delegate these duties to another person temporarily. Upon completion of the term as moderator, he/she shall serve as chair of the Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC).
3. The vice moderator shall be elected at each summer meeting of the presbytery. The vice moderator shall serve as the individual who performs the duties of the moderator should the moderator be unable to fulfill his/her duties. The vice moderator shall attend the OGA moderator training.
4. The stated clerk (or co-stated clerks) or assistant clerk, as needed, shall be elected for three-year terms by the presbytery upon nomination by the Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) at the fall

meeting of presbytery. The term of office begins January 1st. See Manual of Operations for specific job responsibilities.

5. The treasurer shall be elected for a three-year term by the presbytery upon nomination by the Ministry Coordinating Council (MCC) at the fall meeting of presbytery. The term of office begins January 1st. See Manual of Operations for specific job responsibilities.

#### *Assistants to the Officers*

1. Assistant treasurer(s). In the exercise of his/her responsibilities the treasurer may recommend, for appointment by the MCC, one or more persons to serve as assistant treasurer(s) with authority to sign checks and other instruments for the withdrawal or transfer of funds within such limits and on such accounts as the treasurer may specify. The assistant treasurer(s) shall be bonded in the same manner as the treasurer.
2. A parliamentarian shall assist the moderator in the orderly conduct of the business of the council (presbytery). The parliamentarian is appointed by the moderator upon recommendation of the stated clerk.

#### *ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS*

1. The Presbytery of Florida shall hold stated meetings at least four times each year, (a Winter meeting, Spring meeting, Summer meeting, and Fall meeting) giving strong consideration to evenly distributing meeting locations throughout the geographic bounds of the presbytery, shall meet at the direction of synod, and may call special meetings in accordance with the Manual of Operations Section VII and G-3.0304.
2. A quorum of the presbytery shall be ten ministers of Word and Sacrament and ten elders, representing at least ten member congregations.
3. For conducting urgent or time-sensitive business between meetings, the Presbytery of Florida authorizes its ministries and commissions to conduct meetings by means of conference telephone, video, or by any means of communication by which all persons participating in the meeting are able to hear one another, and such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. The notice of electronic meeting must be sent a reasonable amount of time prior to the meeting and must provide instructions for participation in the meeting.

#### *ARTICLE VII: MINISTRY COORDINATING COUNCIL (MCC)*

The Ministry Coordinating Council shall be granted commission authority by the presbytery and have general supervision of the affairs of the presbytery between its stated sessions. It shall perform such duties as are specified in the bylaws and Manual of Operations. The MCC will be composed of the current moderator, past moderator (serving as chair of the MCC), vice moderator, moderators or vice-moderators of the presbytery ministries. The stated clerk, general presbyter, and treasurer shall each serve as ex officio members, who shall have voice without vote.

### *ARTICLE VIII: TRUSTEES*

The members of the Ministry Coordinating Council who are Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elders shall serve as the Trustees of the Presbytery of Florida, Inc. The Board of Trustees shall have such powers as given in the Articles of Incorporation. Each Trustee, Director, and Officer of the Corporation now serving and hereafter serving as such may be indemnified by the Corporation by reason of the fact that he/she is or was a director, trustee, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a trustee, director, officer, employee, or agent of another Corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against all claims and liabilities to the full extent provided by the laws of the State of Florida as amended from time to time.

### *ARTICLE IX: STANDING MINISTRIES*

The presbytery shall establish such standing ministries as are necessary to advance its mission and purpose. These standing ministries shall be named, and composition and manner of selection described, along with their responsibilities, in the Manual of Operations.

### *ARTICLE X: SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS*

Special committees and commissions shall be appointed in accordance with the following provisions:

**Investigating Committees:** When an accusation against an individual under the authority of the Presbytery of Florida is received by the stated clerk, the stated clerk will notify the presbytery moderator who, in consultation with the stated clerk and the general presbyter, shall appoint an investigating committee (Book of Order, Rules of Discipline D-10.0200) (or Book of Order, Church Discipline D-3.0102). If the moderator is unable or unwilling to make appointments, the vice moderator shall designate the committee. Names of the investigating committee shall be given to the presbytery at its next meeting.

**Committee of Counsel:** When the stated clerk receives a complaint (Rules of Discipline D-6.0102; D-6.0202) (or Church Discipline D-4.0202), the stated clerk shall notify the presbytery moderator who, in consultation with the stated clerk and general presbyter, shall appoint three members to serve as a committee of counsel (Rules of Discipline D-6.0302) (or Church Discipline D-4.0204). If the moderator is unable or unwilling to make the appointments, the vice moderator shall appoint the committee. Names of the members of the Committee of Counsel shall be given to the presbytery at its next meeting.

**Administrative Commission:** If the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the presbytery deems it wise for an administrative commission to be appointed, they shall, after consultation with the moderator, stated clerk, and general presbyter, recommend such a commission for the presbytery's approval. The purpose and power of such a commission shall also be recommended to the presbytery. (G-3.0109; G-3.0109b). From time to time a particular ministry may be given commission authority.

### *ARTICLE XI: JUDICIAL PROCESS*

There shall be a permanent judicial commission of the presbytery which shall fulfill the requirements of the Book of Order (Rules of Discipline D-5.0000) (or Church Discipline D-3.0101). The commission shall consist of nine members in three classes serving six-year terms, elected by the presbytery upon recommendation by the nominating committee in alternate years as provided in Book of Order (D-5.0102). The moderator, stated clerk, or any member of the staff of the presbytery or the staff of any of its



entities shall not serve on the permanent judicial commission. (Rules of Discipline D-5.0105) (or Church Discipline D-3.0203b).

*ARTICLE XII: STAFF*

Presbytery may employ staff as is required by the mission of the body in accordance with the principles of unity in diversity (F-1.0403), (G-3.0110)

*ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS*

1. Amendments to the bylaws will be made by the presbytery in a regular stated meeting or a special meeting. The amendments shall be distributed in writing ten (10) days prior to the meeting. Approval shall require a two-thirds vote.
2. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the stated clerk for counsel and review and posted on the presbytery website.
3. No rule or policy shall be adopted that is contrary to these bylaws or the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

*ARTICLE XIV: SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER*

1. Special rules of order will be provided for in the Manual of Operations.
2. To suspend a special rule of order shall require a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at that time, and such suspension shall apply for that particular meeting only.