

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

# 2020 Standing Rules

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Presbytery of Southwest Florida

Revised:  
February 8, 2020

These are the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida.

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## STANDING RULES

### ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this Presbytery shall be: THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, INC.

### ARTICLE 2 - MEETINGS

1. **STATED MEETINGS:** Four stated meetings shall be held each year convening on the second SATURDAY in FEBRUARY and SEPTEMBER, and on the second TUESDAY in MAY and NOVEMBER. Meetings shall begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude by 4:00 p.m.
2. **ADJOURNED MEETINGS:** Adjourned meetings of stated meetings may be held as deemed advisable. Matters permissible for consideration shall be those which would have been permissible at the meeting of which this is an adjourned meeting.
3. **CALLED MEETINGS:** Called meetings may be held as deemed necessary as provided in BCO 13-11. Ordinarily, the examination of Teaching Elders from other Presbyteries, or of candidates seeking ordination, shall not be handled in called meetings.
4. **QUORUM:** The quorum for all meetings shall be three Teaching Elders and three Ruling Elders (PCA Book of Church Order 13-4).
5. **DOCKET:** A proposed docket setting forth the order of business shall be prepared by the Stated Clerk for stated meetings and sent to clerks of all church sessions, committee chairmen, and Teaching Elders two weeks before each meeting. A docket shall be adopted by the Presbytery, by majority vote, and may be amended at any time during the meeting by majority vote.
6. **ATTENDANCE:**
  - A. Every Teaching Elder and the representatives of each church session should consider it a solemn duty before God to attend every meeting of presbytery, unless hindered by God's providence. If so hindered a written request for excuse must be delivered to the Stated Clerk prior to the call to order of the meeting. The excuses shall be received by presbytery upon the presumption that the absence is truly unavoidable and within the boundaries of the ordination vows. If a Teaching Elder or the representatives of a session fail to request excuse, or are absent for a second consecutive time from a stated meeting of presbytery the Stated Clerk shall inform the Shepherd-ing committee which shall exercise pastoral oversight.

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- B. Members of Presbytery are expected to arrive on time and to attend all sessions unless specifically excused by Presbytery. Those who must leave for providentially unavoidable reasons will submit a written request for excuse to the Stated Clerk before the meeting is called to order, which will then be treated in the same manner as a request for absence.
  - C. Teaching Elders not engaged in pastoral work or not residing within the bounds of Presbytery will be expected to report to each November stated meeting concerning their location and activities. Teaching Elders who are honorably retired or permanently disabled are exempt from the above requirements, but are encouraged to attend.
7. PLACE OF MEETING: Presbytery, at each annual November stated meeting, may receive invitations from churches to host the coming year's four regular stated meetings. If at any particular November meeting, an invitation for any of these next four coming meetings is not received/accepted, the Stated Clerk and the Administration Committee Chairman shall undertake to secure such invitations. When a church designated to host a future meeting is later unable to do so, the Session shall notify the Stated Clerk as soon as possible. The Stated Clerk and the Administration Committee Chairman shall immediately undertake to secure another invitation.

## ARTICLE 3 - OFFICERS

1. MODERATOR: A Moderator shall be elected from the list of active Ruling and Teaching Elders of the Presbytery, alternately if possible, to preside at all four stated meetings during each calendar year. He shall ordinarily be nominated and elected at the November meeting just prior to his year of service.
2. STATED CLERK: The Presbytery shall elect a Stated Clerk for a term of three years (with eligibility for re-election). His duties shall be those ordinarily expected of this office (BCO 10-4 and 13-10), especially those concerned with preparation of the docket for each stated meeting, the proper recording of proceedings, the printing of these minutes suitable for preservation, as well as other valuable records of the Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall serve as Publicity Clerk and as Historian for the Presbytery. He shall convey by letter the presbytery's appreciation to the host church for the use of its facilities and for the efforts made in providing for our meeting needs. All mail and communications to or from the Presbytery shall ordinarily come to and from the Stated Clerk's Office.
3. RECORDING CLERK: The Presbytery shall elect a Recording Clerk for a period of three years (with eligibility for re-election). His duties shall be to record the minutes of Presbytery under the direction of the Stated Clerk, and to assist the Stated Clerk in putting the minutes in form for printing.
4. TEMPORARY CLERKS: Presbytery shall on the advice of the Stated Clerk elect at each meeting as needed Temporary Clerks to assist the Stated Clerk and the Recording Clerk.

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5. **TREASURER OF PRESBYTERY:** The Presbytery shall elect for a term of three years (with eligibility for re-election) a Treasurer, whose duties it shall be to receive funds sent to him by churches, other organizations or individuals, to distribute funds to Presbytery approved benevolences as designated by contributors and in the case of budgeted expenses, in accordance with the committee budgets or otherwise approved by Presbytery, and to make periodic reports to Presbytery. When funds received by the Treasurer are not designated for a special purpose, such funds are to remain available only for previously approved budgeted expenses of Presbytery committees or for special purposes as may be designated by Presbytery. The Treasurer of Presbytery shall disburse funds for legitimate and reasonable purposes which have been previously approved by Presbytery.

All requests for reimbursements are to be authorized and submitted by the appropriate committee chairman to the Treasurer of Presbytery. Commission conveners/chairmen should submit all requests for reimbursement to the appropriate committee chairman, who would then submit them to the treasurer. Allowance for automobiles is to be based on a mileage allowance to be determined by Presbytery. If, in the opinion of the Treasurer, any request for disbursement from Presbytery's funds does not appear to be either reasonable or in accordance with the committee budget or appears to be in conflict with Presbytery instructions, the Treasurer will refer the matter to the Committee on Administration for further instructions. All monies intended by local churches to be forwarded to the General Assembly causes should be sent directly to the Presbyterian Church in America and not through Presbytery. At the end of each fiscal year, the Treasurer shall send to each church in the Presbytery, a report indicating the amount contributed by each church in the Presbytery, the total amount received by the Treasurer from all sources, and a statement indicating the disposition of such funds, during the year.

All treasurers handling presbytery funds shall have their books audited annually by an internal audit committee appointed by the Administration Committee. The internal audit committee shall be made up of members of our presbytery and/or of our churches. A copy of the committee's report shall be furnished to the Presbytery at the May meeting. The treasurers shall be bonded in amounts designated by Presbytery, with the Presbytery paying the bonding premiums.

6. **TERMS OF OFFICE:** The above officers shall be nominated and elected at the November stated meetings. Those elected to these offices shall assume their duties at the February meeting, and shall serve until their successors are elected. Vacancies in any of the offices may be filled at any meeting of the Presbytery.

## **ARTICLE 4 - COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS**

The committees of Presbytery shall be: Program, Standing, and Permanent. The Presbytery shall elect special liaisons for Discipleship Ministries and World Missions.

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1. **PROGRAM:** The Program Committee shall consist of the Moderator, the Stated Clerk and Teaching or Ruling Elder of the host church. The Moderator and church representative shall, as needed, assist the Stated Clerk in the preparation of a docket for stated meetings. Committee Chairmen or others wishing to present a special speaker or program at a stated meeting should consult with the Stated Clerk and the Moderator before arranging this, and these officers shall decide on the suitability, advisability, and timing - subject to final approval of Presbytery.
2. **STANDING COMMITTEES:** At stated meetings, the Moderator shall appoint Standing Committees of three members each (naming the chairman of each committee), to consider and report on any matter requiring attention at that meeting of Presbytery, as follows:
  - A. **BILLS AND OVERTURES:** As needed (immediate Past Moderator shall serve as Chairman).
  - B. **JUDICIAL BUSINESS:** As needed.
3. **PERMANENT COMMITTEES:** Members for the Permanent Committees shall be Teaching Elders (TE) of this Presbytery or Ruling Elders (RE) of churches of this Presbytery (sometimes collectively referred to as officers) who are nominated and elected at the November stated meetings for terms of three years, and in three yearly classes. At each November stated meeting a chairman shall be designated for each committee by the Presbytery. That person shall not be slated to rotate off the committee before he has served a full term of one year as chairman. Ruling Elders not currently serving on the session of their church may serve on a presbytery committee if he (1) is a member (associate or regular) of a particular PCA church of this Presbytery; (2) has ordained (RE) status in good standing, with an organized PCA church; and (3) is approved by the session of the church of which he is a member in this Presbytery. Those elected to Permanent Committees shall assume their duties at the February meeting, and serve until their successors are elected.

The Examination, the Shepherding, the Candidates for Ministry and the Mission to North America committees shall be composed of nine members, three per class. The Shepherding Committee shall also serve as the Sessional Records Committee. The Administration committee shall be composed of the Stated Clerk, the Treasurer, the chairmen of all Permanent Committees, and the special presbytery liaisons, with a chairman being the retiring Moderator, together with the current Moderator and a Stewardship Subcommittee chairman. As far as possible, Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders should have equal representation on these committees. The Stewardship Subcommittee shall be composed of a chairman and the members of the Administration Committee. Vacancies in any Permanent Committees may be filled at any meeting.

The Permanent Committees shall be docketed to report to each stated meeting of Presbytery. The Examination Committee and Candidates for Ministry Committee shall always be docketed before the other Permanent Committees, which shall report on a rotating basis. Whenever any permanent committee is requested by a particular church or churches, to

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meet prior to a normally scheduled committee meeting time (i.e.: Shepherding/Candidates to facilitate getting men to the field, etc.), it shall be the responsibility of such local church or churches to provide reimbursement for the cost of such special meeting (transportation and meals). A quorum for all committee meetings is three, with at least one teaching and one ruling elder.

- A. **ADMINISTRATION:** This committee is charged with supervising a directory to be distributed annually, receiving and coordinating committee budgets, preparation of Presbytery budget for submission to the November stated meeting, acting as a Presbytery nominating committee, sitting as a legal committee, when required, and planning and disseminating stewardship information through a Stewardship Chairman. This committee shall be composed of the Stated Clerk, the Treasurer, the chairmen or the committee's designee of all Permanent Committees, and the special presbytery liaisons, with a chairman elected from and by the Presbytery and who is generally the retiring moderator, together with the current Moderator and a Stewardship Subcommittee chairman (also elected by the Presbytery). Nominations for all committees for consideration by the Presbytery at the November Stated Meeting shall be reported by the Chairman of the Administration Committee to the Stated Clerk two weeks prior to the November Stated meeting.

**STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN:** The duties of the Stewardship Chairman are:

- i. Seek, through the session of the local church, to have a Stewardship Chairman for that church and encourage the Session to appoint a Deacon to this position.
  - ii. Contact and inform the Diaconates of each member church when emergencies arise in our member churches, and report such emergencies to the Presbytery at its stated meetings.
  - iii. To make known the Presbytery and General Assembly causes to each local congregation.
  - iv. To assist each local church Stewardship Committee to develop and implement meaningful stewardship programs. For example: the use of General Assembly Stewardship Speakers Bureau, Stewardship printed materials and films, etc.
- B. **MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA:** This committee is charged with leading the Presbytery in evangelism and the development of new congregations within the Presbytery. Teaching Elders of new church developments are under its oversight. Members of Mission works prior to particularization are also under the oversight of this committee. These responsibilities shall be executed through the following activities:

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- i. Making recommendations for strategic target areas for church planting.
- ii. Prosecuting calls to evangelists/organizing pastors to develop new churches.
- iii. Stimulating the churches of Presbytery to develop daughter churches.
- iv. Making recommendations of financial aid in the establishment of mission churches having need.
- v. Providing guidance and advice to mission churches, and organizing pastors, towards the following prerequisites that qualify a mission church to begin the process of particularization:
  - a. Minimum of 30 petitioners.
  - b. 75% of the mission church's budget needs to be supplied by the congregation, not other churches or networks.
  - c. 1 Teaching Elder and 2 Ruling Elders, sufficient to constitute a quorum for the session of the new particular church.
- vi. Developing and coordinating programs to be used by the churches of Presbytery to promote evangelism and church vitality.

## C. SHEPHERDING:

- i. **General Directions.** The Shepherding Committee is charged to provide, upon request, general pastoral care and advice to its churches and Teaching Elders, and, from time to time, make recommendations to Presbytery consistent with this charge, the Constitution and the orderly administration and improvement of the church.
- ii. **Assistance.** The committee shall provide advice and counsel to any Teaching Elder upon his request. Likewise, the committee shall provide advice and counsel to a Session upon its request. The committee shall assist Teaching Elders without call and in their case may make recommendations to Presbytery consistent with BCO 13-2 and 34-10 when appropriate. In addition, the committee may take the liberty in contacting Teaching Elders within the bounds of Presbytery for the purpose of prayer and encouragement.
- iii. **Report of Teaching Elders without Call and Teaching Elders Serving Out of Bounds.** Each Teaching Elder without call or serving out of bounds shall report annually on his activities, opportunities for ministry, and the pursuit of his call. This report need not be lengthy, and shall be submitted in writing to the committee on a standard form at least two weeks before the November meeting of Presbytery. Reports of Teaching Elders laboring under the direct

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jurisdiction of the PCA (GA Agency, Committee staff, Presbytery evangelists, MTW missionaries, etc.) shall be presented to Presbytery only at the direction of Presbytery.

- iv. **Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation.** The committee is authorized to act as a commission of Presbytery to dissolve pastoral relations where the request is uncontested and otherwise conforms to the requirements of BCO 23-1. The committee may dissolve the pastoral relation only after communicating with the Teaching Elder, and the church Session. Provided that the Teaching Elder remains in good standing, the committee in such cases may also act as a commission to transfer the membership of the Teaching Elder to another Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America, or to another denomination with which the General Assembly has fraternal relations at the time of the transfer. At its own discretion, the committee may decline to act as such a commission and in such event shall make an appropriate report and recommendation to Presbytery regarding the dissolution and transfer.
- v. **Churches without a Teaching Elder.** The committee shall provide assistance in seeking a Teaching Elder at the request of the Session or local pulpit search committee. Whenever a pulpit becomes vacant, the committee shall be notified of the name and contact information of the chairman of the pulpit search committee. The committee shall insist that the requirements of BCO 19-1, 22-5 and 22-6 be observed.
- vi. **Sessional Records.** The committee shall review the records of church Sessions as follows:
  - a. Each church Session, prior to the Stated Meeting assigned to it by the Stated Clerk, is to deliver a copy of its unexamined court records to the committee. All efforts should be made to see that no more than one-third (1/3) of the total roll of churches in Presbytery be examined at each Stated Meeting.
  - b. Each church Session whose records are scheduled for examination shall mail (or otherwise deliver) a copy of their unexamined records to the Chairman of the committee no later than six weeks prior to the upcoming Stated Meeting.
  - c. The committee shall examine the records in accordance with BCO Chapter 40 and shall classify exceptions as notations, exceptions of form or exceptions of substance. The committee will consult the RAO guidelines on examining Presbytery minutes in defining these terms. Exceptions of substance should be limited to serious irregularities, gross errors, corrupt practices and heretical opinions.
  - d. Notations and exceptions of form shall normally be sent to the Clerk of

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Session by the Committee without being read before Presbytery or recorded in its minutes. In determining whether there is an exception of substance, the committee shall consult with the Session whose records are being reviewed. If after consultation, the committee concludes there is an exception of substance, the same shall be reported to Presbytery as recommendations to be voted upon. The Sessional Records shall be approved without exception; or with exception of form and/or substance.

- e. Sessions shall advise the Presbytery by the following Stated Meeting through the committee that they have disposed of the exception of substance in one of the following manners: the Session agrees with the exception of substance, corrects its record or action if possible, and promises to try to be more careful in the future; or, the Session respectfully disagrees with the exception of substance, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery for action. The committee will bring a recommendation regarding accepting the disposition as satisfactory.
- f. The committee shall report to Presbytery regarding any Sessional Records that have not been submitted for review as scheduled.
- g. The committee shall provide help for any Clerk of Session seeking guidance in preparing Sessional Records for the yearly Presbytery review.
- vii. **Limitation on Jurisdiction.** Notwithstanding anything set forth in this section, no provision hereof shall be construed to permit the committee to interfere with the jurisdiction of any Session or the jurisdiction of Presbytery as expressed in BCO 11-4.

## D. EXAMINATION COMMITTEE:

The Committee shall be charged with the examination of those candidates who wish to be licensed, ordained and/or in any manner admitted into presbytery membership.

- i. All those seeking to be examined by the committee shall supply to the committee in a timely manner (as determined by the committee) a paper stating their beliefs concerning the following subjects:
  - a. The Inspiration and Canonicity of Scripture.
  - b. The Doctrine of the Trinity.
  - c. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
  - d. The candidate's view of the continuation of the sign gifts.
  - e. The Five Points of Calvinism (with attention to the extent of the atone-

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ment).

- f. The Doctrine of the Church (including the proper recipients of the sacraments).
- g. The Role of Women in the Church (including the issue of their ordination to church office).
- h. The Doctrine of Creation (including the candidates view of Genesis One).

The written statement may be on a form provided by the Committee, and shall as well set out with specificity any and all exceptions to the Westminster Standards or the Book of Church Order he holds.

A copy of this paper shall be provided to Presbytery together with the report of the committee.

- ii. The committee shall conduct all examinations in accordance with the applicable stipulations of the Book of Church Order.
- iii. If the committee determines that it cannot recommend a man to presbytery for a floor exam, the man himself, or the body calling him, may request that the committee present the man without its recommendations. The committee shall always accede to such a request, and report to the presbytery its reasons for not making recommendations.
- iv. In the case of a man being called to a particular work, the Committee shall determine whether the call generally conforms to the requirements of the Constitution, shall review its material terms, and make an appropriate recommendation to Presbytery regarding the same.
- v. The Committee shall lead the floor exam before presbytery according to the following time constraints:
  - a. In each area of exam stipulated by the BCO, the committee designated examiner will be given up to five minutes to examine the candidate.
  - b. The candidate then may be examined for up to fifteen minutes from the floor in each area.
  - c. The time limit can be extended by a simple majority of Presbytery.
- vi. The committee shall consult with the candidate and those issuing the call before they nominate to Presbytery the commission to ordain and/or install the

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one who is approved by Presbytery.

- vii. Before a particular church or presbytery committee issues a call to a licentiate to be ordained as a Teaching Elder, his name shall be submitted to the committee for consideration. A particular church or presbytery committee may prosecute the call before Presbytery, even though this committee disapproves.
- viii. Call Package Review. The committee shall review call packages as follows:
  - a. Every Call Package is to be presented to the Presbytery by way of the Examination Committee and must utilize the Recommended Form of Call to a PCA Pastor and reflect interaction with these Guidelines by breaking out, as per BCO 20-1, separate, specific and sufficient amounts for Salary, Housing Allowance, Retirement Savings (stated as a percentage of Salary plus Housing Allowance), Health, Life, and Long-Term Disability Insurance Benefits, Moving Expenses, and Vacation Benefits.
  - b. The Recommended Process is as follows:
    - 1. The calling body will fill out the “Recommended Form of Call to a PCA Minister” worksheet and submit it to the Examination Committee at least one month prior to the Presbytery meeting at which the call will be considered.
    - 2. The Examination Committee will appoint one person to interface directly with the church and the candidate regarding the proposed Call Package.
    - 3. As deemed necessary, the appointed Examination Committee member will meet (face-to-face, by phone, or virtually) with the appropriate representatives of the calling body (usually the Session, Personnel Committee, or MNA Committee in the case of a church plant) to go over the call, using the “PCA Call Package Guidelines Evaluation and Review Worksheet” to guide the conversation.
    - 4. As deemed necessary, the appointed Examination Committee member will meet (face-to-face, by phone, or virtually) with the TE candidate to go over the call, using the “PCA Call Package Guidelines and Evaluation and Review Worksheet” to guide the conversation, and to ensure that the terms presented appear sufficient to meet the financial needs of the candidate.
    - 5. The Examination Committee will add its endorsement as to whether the call is adequate or deficient before the call is presented to the Presbytery for approval.

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- c. Every church or calling body in the Presbytery of Southwest Florida shall complete the “Recommended Form of Call to a PCA Minister” Worksheet for each pastor in the church/calling body and submit it to the Examination Committee. Worksheets on each individual TE shall be updated as changes are made.

## E. CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY COMMITTEE:

The Candidates for Ministry (CFM) shall hear the testimony of those who desire to come under the care of the Presbytery as candidates for the Gospel ministry, and if the way be clear, shall present the candidates to the Presbytery when it meets. The CFM Committee shall counsel and encourage the candidates throughout the period of their preparation. The Committee shall encourage the churches within the Presbytery to offer the candidates opportunities for internship that they may test their gifts of ministry.

Each candidate who wishes to be taken under care SW Florida Presbytery will meet with the CFM Committee and make himself available for an interview regarding Christian Experience and Call to Ministry.

- i. Examinations Liaison: One member of the CFM Committee will serve as liaison between the candidate and the Examination Committee. This member shall assist the candidate as he prepares for examination before the Examination Committee and the floor of Presbytery and report to the Examination Committee indicating the readiness of the man to be examined.
- ii. Internship Liaison: One member of the CFM Committee will serve as liaison between the candidate and the church in which he serves. This committee member will oversee the candidate’s internship as he works in conjunction with the church in which the candidate is serving. This Committee member will receive quarterly progress reports from the church assigned oversight of the candidate. This Committee member will also submit a report to the Examination Committee regarding the candidate’s internship, when the candidate seeks to be examined for licensure and/or ordination.

The Committee will seek a minimum of once-a-quarter, in-person meetings with each candidate and his spouse, when geographically possible, in order to counsel and encourage the candidates as they seek to confirm their calls to ministry. When a candidate is away at school or in a circumstance where face-to-face meetings are prohibited, assigned members of the Committee will make contact with those candidates in order to counsel and encourage the candidates as they seek to confirm their calls to ministry. This level of care will be provided to each candidate as long as he remains under the care of SW Florida Presbytery or until he has become ordained.

The CFM Committee will meet quarterly to hear from the candidates under the care

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of Presbytery and to discuss how the CFM Committee can further serve each candidate under its care.

## F. REFORMED UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

- i. This Committee is charged to fully participate in behalf of the Presbytery in the Florida Joint Committee of RUF. Each Presbytery in Florida is an equal member of the Joint Committee and responsible to participate in its work in the following areas:
  - a. To determine the needs of campus ministry within the boundaries of the Presbyteries and to inform the Presbyteries, and to determine priorities of new ministries.
  - b. To prepare local campus ministries' budgets and the overall budget for approval.
  - c. To inform the churches and people of the Presbyteries, of campus ministries-its purpose, progress, and needs.
  - d. To organize new ministries on campuses and to seek out and train qualified staff for these ministries.
  - e. To initiate the call for campus ministers by Presbyteries.
  - f. To advise and supervise the campus ministry being carried out within its bounds.
- ii. This Committee's membership shall be no less than three or more than five members (TE or RE), elected for three year terms.
- iii. This Committee shall report directly to the Presbytery concerning the work of the Joint Committee and to present any appropriate matters to the Presbytery.

G. COMMITTEE EXPENSES: Committees of Presbytery shall prepare a budget for their committee and submit it to the Committee on Administration by October 15 of each year. Such requests should cover funds which are expected to be required for the work of the committee and the related expenses of the committee members. The Committee of Administration will summarize such requests and submit them to Presbytery at the November meeting of each year. The treasurer of the Presbytery shall disburse legitimate and reasonable expenses of the committee's travel allowance on a mileage basis at a rate to be determined by Presbytery annually.

4. SPECIAL PRESBYTERY LIAISONS: Each liaison will be either a Teaching Elder or a Ruling Elder elected for a three year term by the Presbytery at its November stated meeting.

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- A. Discipleship Ministries Liaison: This person will promote the education ministry of the church on the Presbytery level. This work may include the promotion of teacher training, of workshops, and of instruction in the methods and principles of Discipleship Ministries. This will include Presbytery level ministries for women, men, youth and children. These ministries, however organized, must report to and consult with the Discipleship Ministries Liaison prior to the planning, scheduling and conducting of any Presbytery-wide meetings, camps, retreats or elections.
- B. Mission To the World Liaison: This person will lead the Presbytery in the development of its resources for the proclamation of the Gospel in foreign countries of the world and keep the presbytery informed about the foreign works with which it is directly involved.

## ARTICLE 5 - COMMISSIONS

1. COMMISSIONS: A commission of the Presbytery shall consist of at least three Teaching Elders and three Ruling Elders, with two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elders constituting a quorum. The Presbytery may clothe a commission with powers, judiciary and authoritative to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain a Minister of the Gospel. Any Teaching Elder or Ruling Elder named "to Preside and Propound the Constitutional Questions" in a commission appointed to Ordain and Install a Minister, is to be recognized as the Chairman of the Commission. In other particulars, such as the election of a secretary, the Commission shall effect its own organization. No one may be appointed to be member of a Commission who is not eligible to vote as a member of the Presbytery. The necessary expenses of members of a commission to ordain and to install a new minister should, if possible, be paid by the church or churches for which the service is performed; otherwise, it shall be paid by the Presbytery.

## ARTICLE 6 - CALLING OF PASTORS; SUPPLIES

1. Churches are not to finalize calls to Teaching Elders to become pastors, or Sessions to invite Teaching Elders to become stated supply or interim supply, without first consulting with the Shepherding Committee.
2. Requests for change in terms of pastoral calls shall ordinarily be presented to the Shepherding Committee.
3. A call may be extended to a Teaching Elder, but the Teaching Elder may not move onto the field without approval of the Shepherding Committee and Examination Committee.

## ARTICLE 7 - PREPARATION FOR MEETINGS

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1. All overtures, and all reports of permanent and special committees which are to be presented at a meeting of Presbytery, shall normally be furnished to the Stated Clerk at least two weeks prior to such meeting.
2. All overtures, committee reports, together with the proposed docket shall be sent (in a form and manner determined by the Stated Clerk) at least one week prior to the meeting of Presbytery to the Teaching Elder of each church and other Teaching Elders of the Presbytery, and to the Clerk of Session of each church.
3. Sufficient copies of all communications from the church courts and agencies which require action to be taken by the Presbytery are to be obtained by the Stated Clerk and sent to the Teaching Elder of each church and other Teaching Elders of the Presbytery, and to the Clerk of Session of each church, at least one week prior to the meeting of Presbytery.
4. If a Session desires the counsel of Presbytery in any matter of doctrine or polity, yet the matter is not before the lower court in such a manner as to make it the subject of a reference (BCO 41-1), it shall request Presbytery to consider the matter at a stated meeting or at a called meeting provided it meets the requirements hereinafter set forth. This request shall be in writing and shall set forth specifically the question or questions to be answered, giving some indication as to why the Session is seeking such counsel. The request shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, and copies sent to each Session and Teaching Elder in the Presbytery at the same time. It shall be the prerogative of the Presbytery to determine whether to appoint an ad hoc committee to consider the matter. Every effort shall be made to give answer for the Presbytery before adjournment of the day's meeting.

## ARTICLE 8 - SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

1. **LORD'S SUPPER:** The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at the opening of the February meeting of the Presbytery after a sermon by the retiring Moderator or someone appointed by him. The retiring Moderator shall be responsible for the conduct of this Communion Service – appointing Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to assist in this as he judges suitable.
2. **MEMORIALS:** At the February stated meeting, Ruling Elders who have died during the past year shall be memorialized, and a special page of the minutes devoted to their memory; with the name of the Elder, his church, and the date of his death being given. When a Teaching Elder dies, he shall be memorialized at the next convenient stated meeting following his death, and a page in the minutes set apart for a brief account of his life and work. Memorials at the February stated meeting shall ordinarily be observed in connection with the Communion Service; the Moderator or Stated Clerk shall arrange for someone to present to the Presbytery a proper memorial paper.

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## ARTICLE 9 - THE COVENANT

1. Each Teaching Elder received into the Presbytery and each candidate examined for ordination shall, upon the Presbytery's vote to receive the Teaching Elder, or upon the Presbytery's vote to approve the examination of the candidate and his ordination, subscribe his name to the vows prescribed in the Book of Church Order, section 13-7.
2. The subscriptions shall be kept by the Stated Clerk as part of the records of Presbytery in a book readily available.

## ARTICLE 10 - EXPENSES OF PRESBYTERY

1. Necessary funds for the current expenses of the Presbytery shall be provided by a solicited gift from each member church in the amount voted by Presbytery when it voted to receive the budget. Normally, the asking will be a per capita amount based on membership reported to the last General Assembly.

## ARTICLE 11 - OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

1. The officers of the corporation shall be: PRESIDENT, SECRETARY / REGISTERED AGENT, TREASURER, and such other officers as may be provided in the by-laws.
2. The chairman of the Administration Committee of the Presbytery shall be the president of the corporation, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall be the secretary/registered agent of the corporation, and the Treasurer of the Presbytery shall be the treasurer of the corporation.

## ARTICLE 12 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. Leave of absence from the Presbytery or permission to labor outside its bounds, when given by the Presbytery, shall be on a six months basis, except that in the case of missionaries serving outside the United States, or of military chaplains, this permission shall be granted for the duration of their service.
2. Missionaries or chaplains, however, shall be expected to communicate with Presbytery at least once a year, as set out in these Standing Rules.
3. Missionaries serving in foreign lands shall be regarded as having evangelistic authority for use in such service.

# Presbytery of Southwest Florida

2020 Standing Rules

Revised: February 8, 2020

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## **ARTICLE 13 - RULES OF ORDER**

1. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority governing the Presbytery in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, or any Standing Rules which Presbytery may adopt.

## **ARTICLE 14 - SUSPENSION OF RULES: AMENDMENTS**

1. The Standing Rules may be suspended upon motion, by affirmative vote of three-fourths of the representatives present and voting.
2. The Standing Rules may be amended by an affirmative vote of three fourths of the representatives present and voting, at two successive stated meetings of Presbytery.