

The Presbytery of the Pines

Manual of Operations

INTRODUCTION

The Manual of Operations has three parts:

Part One: Standing Rules

Part Two: Presbytery Organization

Part Three: Policies and Programs

Part One identifies, describes and relates the units and groups by which the Presbytery seeks to fulfill its responsibilities, along with the officers, staff and their respective duties.

Part Two describes the presbytery structure along with operational practices related to this structure.

Part Three lists the various polices and programs within the function of the presbytery.

PART ONE: STANDING RULES

1. NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Presbytery of the Pines, Inc. (the Presbytery), a presbytery of the Synod of the Sun, and of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2. PRESBYTERY MISSION

Led by the Holy Spirit, the Presbytery of the Pines fosters relational connections among its congregations to encourage, equip and enable them to fulfill God's call as disciples of Jesus Christ.

3. BOUNDRIES

The geographical area of this governing body shall include the following counties in Arkansas: Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Cleveland, Columbia, Dallas, Drew, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Lincoln, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Sevier, Union; and the following parishes in Louisiana: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Webster, West Carroll, Winn.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF PRESBYTERY

The membership of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) shall be determined by the Book of Order.

Membership of Presbytery shall consist of all member Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and one Ruling Elder commissioner from every church. A church with membership over 500 and less than 1000 members shall have one additional Ruling Elder commissioner. An additional Ruling Elder commissioner shall be added at each additional 500-member increment.

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) or Ruling Elders in other councils of this church or in any other Christian church who are serving in temporary pastoral relationships with the presbytery shall be enrolled with voice and vote.

Presbyters (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament/Teaching Elders or Ruling Elders) in good standing in other councils of this church or in any other Christian church, who are present at any meeting of the presbytery, may be invited to sit as corresponding members, with voice but with no vote.

Ruling Elders serving as elected moderators of committees shall be enrolled as members of the Presbytery for their term of office with full voice and voting privileges. Such persons may also serve as Ruling Elder commissioners if selected by their Session.

5. COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Presbytery's composition and responsibilities are specified in the Book of Order. Presbytery grants the full authority and commission power of Presbytery to the Committee on Ministry in the following areas with the provision that such actions be reported to Presbytery at the next stated meeting.

- a. Appoint persons to moderate Sessions of those churches that are without a pastor. The Moderator shall be a Minister of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) or Ruling Elder who is accountable to the COM.
- b. Approve various temporary supply relationships for those churches that are without a pastor.
- c. Dissolve pastoral relationships in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, and to dismiss the minister to another presbytery, and to so report to the Presbytery.
- d. Take such action as is necessary with respect to calls issued to ministers of this Presbytery from churches or agencies of another presbytery.
- e. Grant permission for a minister or candidate to move to a church prior to full reception by Presbytery, provided that the examination of the minister or candidate was unanimously sustained, by those present and voting, as satisfactory by the COM, and so report these actions to Presbytery.
- f. To establish ordination and installation commissions as needed between stated meetings of the Presbytery.

6. MEETINGS AND QUORUM

The Presbytery shall hold three stated meetings each year, shall meet at the direction of the Synod, and may call special meetings in accordance with its own rules. The dates for the Stated Meetings for the following year shall be announced at the last meeting of the previous year. At least one stated meeting shall include the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Attendance at all meetings shall be required of Ruling Elder commissioners and Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders). Those Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) who are honorably retired or in service outside the geographical bounds of the Presbytery shall be excused from regular attendance.

Excuse for absence from meetings shall be requested through the Stated Clerk.

The Moderator shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of three Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and three Ruling Elders, the Ruling Elders being of different churches. Should the Moderator be unable to act, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both Moderator and Stated Clerk are unable to act, any five Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and five Ruling Elders, the Ruling Elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting.

The quorum of the presbytery shall be 10 percent of the eligible Ruling Elder commissioners and Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders).

Any new business for a Stated Meeting of the presbytery must be submitted to the Stated Clerk 45 days prior to said meeting and distributed to the presbytery 30 days prior to the stated meeting at which the business is to be introduced. While it is hoped that all ordinary business being presented at a presbytery meeting will meet this 45-day rule, the Stated Clerk has the authority to waive this time restriction if deemed necessary.

7. OFFICERS

The Officers of the Presbytery shall be the Moderator and Stated Clerk as set forth in the Book of Order.

MODERATOR

Ordinarily, the nominee will be the incumbent Moderator-elect. The term of office for the Moderator shall be one year. Election shall take place at the last stated meeting of the year, with the Moderator assuming office upon installation at the first stated meeting of the new year. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to preside over all the meetings of the Presbytery and to be the Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery Leadership Council (PLC). The Moderator shall see that all business is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order and Manual of Operations. The Moderator shall have power to appoint the members and moderators of any committee whose appointment is not otherwise provided for. The Moderator shall be a voting member of those presbytery entities assigned to the Moderator.

MODERATOR-ELECT

At the last stated meeting of the year, a Moderator-elect shall be elected by Presbytery. The Moderator-elect shall also serve on the Presbytery Leadership Council. The Moderator-elect shall be responsible for the arrangements for worship at Presbytery meetings and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Moderator.

IMMEDIATE PAST MODERATOR

Immediately upon end of term, the Moderator shall become the Immediate Past Moderator. The Immediate Past Moderator serves as the Moderator of the Presbytery Leadership Council. In the event the Past Moderator is unable to serve as Moderator of the Presbytery Leadership Council, the Presbytery Leadership Council shall have the power to select its own Moderator from among its members. The Immediate Past Moderator shall serve as Presbytery Moderator if the current Moderator is unable to serve.

STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Presbytery for a term of three years. The Recruitment and Representation Committee shall nominate a candidate for election as Stated Clerk during

the final year of the term at the last stated meeting of Presbytery, with the election to follow. The newly elected Stated Clerk shall assume the duties of that office on February 1 following the election, in order to give the previous Stated Clerk time to complete the annual reports. An annual performance review of the Stated Clerk shall be conducted by the Presbytery Leadership Council.

The Stated Clerk shall serve as recording clerk and parliamentarian of the Presbytery and the Board of Trustees of the Corporation. The Stated Clerk shall be a member of the Presbytery Leadership Council and serve as its secretary.

The Stated Clerk, if a Ruling Elder, shall be enrolled as a member of Presbytery for the duration of service.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The presbytery may utilize the administrative staff services of a presbytery executive and other staff as needed, as authorized by the Book of Order. The presbytery executive shall be nominated to Presbytery by the Presbytery Leadership Council, in consultation with the Synod of the Sun. All administrative staff shall be accountable to the Presbytery through the Presbytery Leadership Council.

GENERAL PRESBYTER

Presbytery shall elect a General Presbyter for an indefinite term. The General Presbyter is the chief administrative and programmatic officer of the Presbytery. The General Presbyter shall be evaluated annually by the Presbytery Leadership Council.

TREASURER

Presbytery shall elect a Treasurer who shall review monthly and annual financial reports, understand the posting and accounting procedures employed by the Presbytery office, and oversee internal budget control and review. If not a member of Presbytery, the Treasurer shall have the privilege of the floor. The Treasurer shall be bonded by the Presbytery. The Treasurer shall be a resident of Louisiana.

The Treasurer shall be recommended by the Presbytery Leadership Council to be nominated by the Recruitment and Representation Committee and elected for a term of one year, renewable.

9. INCORPORATION

The Presbytery is incorporated as a non-profit corporation in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in compliance with the laws of the States of Arkansas and Louisiana, and in conformity with appropriate sections of the Federal Internal Revenue Code. The Treasurer shall be the registered agent of the corporation in Louisiana. The Moderator shall appoint a registered agent for Arkansas, who must be a resident of Arkansas. The last stated meeting of the Presbytery each year shall be the Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

10. TRUSTEES

The trustees, acting as the duly elected officers of the Corporation, the Presbytery of the Pines, Inc., shall, on behalf of the Corporation, receive, hold, encumber manage and transfer property and facilitate the management of civil affairs of Presbytery in such a manner as may be directed by Presbytery from time to time, and according to the Constitution of the Church.

The Board of Trustees of the Presbytery shall be composed of the Moderator of the Presbytery, Moderator of the Presbytery Leadership Council, the Stated Clerk, the Presbytery Treasurer and two additional trustees from the Presbytery Leadership Council. A quorum shall consist of four members present. The signature of the Stated Clerk and any two other trustees shall be sufficient for signing legal documents.

The Moderator of Presbytery shall serve as Moderator of the trustees. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall serve as the secretary of the trustees.

11. POLICIES

All policies and other forms of guidance shall be included in part three of this Manual of Operations.

12. AMENDMENTS

This Manual of Administrative Operations may be amended at any stated meeting of the Presbytery. Any amendments to this manual must be submitted to the Stated Clerk 45 days prior to and distributed to the presbytery 30 days prior to the stated meeting at which the amendment is to be introduced.

13. STANDING RULES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA

VIRTUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

- a. All committees of the Presbytery shall have the option to use the "Zoom" virtual format. The Presbytery office has an account and meetings can be coordinated with Presbytery staff. Presbytery staff can send out the invitations for a scheduled meeting to committee members and "host" the meeting. Moderators can also use personal Zoom accounts or accounts held by the local congregations.
- b. The Moderator of the committee or commission shall determine the day and time of the virtual meeting in consultation with committee members and Presbytery staff.
- c. Because of the personal energy levels required by a virtual meeting, these meetings should be limited to one hour in length.
- d. The virtual meeting shall follow the general guidelines found in the Presbytery Manual of Operations or specific Committee Manual of Operations.
- e. Voting can be by voice vote or visual cues allowed by the virtual platform.
- f. In addition to actions taken by the virtual meeting, action can also be taken by email when the Moderator of the committee or commission deems this to be appropriate.

The protocol for email action shall be as follows:

- a. The Moderator shall communicate the request or motion to the members of the committee or commission requiring action.
- b. If this is a procedural action, the Moderator can ask if there is any opposition to approval. If there is no response in a 48 hour period (two days), the motion is approved.
- c. If the Moderator determines that a vote is required or requested by a member of the committee or commission, there shall be a 48 hour period to vote by email. With a simple majority the motion is approved.
- d. If there is not enough votes received in a 48 period for a majority vote, the motion returns to a virtual meeting.

- e. If any member requests discussion of a motion, the motion returns to a virtual meeting.
- f. All actions approved by email shall be recorded in the minutes of the next virtual meeting of the committee or commission.

EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETINGS OF CONGREGATIONS

Extra-Ordinary Meetings of the Congregation shall occur utilizing the various forms of virtual and technological media available to congregations.

Extra-Ordinary Meetings of the Congregation are allowed when it proves to be extremely difficult or is inadvisable for a congregation to hold a physical gathering of the members of a church. The Session is authorized to call such a meeting with the approval of the Session Moderator.

Such meetings shall be limited to the following items of business proper to Congregational Meetings. (G-1.0503)

Such meetings, in fact, will be understood as a process that allows a congregation to consider and vote on these aforementioned actions in a timely manner.

Authorized Extra-Ordinary Meetings of the Congregation are as follows:

Congregational Meeting by means of an electronic virtual platform.

This type of meeting shall conform to requirements found in the Book of Order (G-1.0501), the Bylaws or Manual of Operations of the Congregation and the parliamentary procedure in Roberts Rules of Order.

Voting could occur as follows:

- a. Voice vote.
- b. Division of the House: this would be specific to the virtual platform or could be a roll-call vote of members present.
- c. Blind vote: This could be accomplished by mail or email with a 7 day return limit. These would be received by the Clerk of Session and the results of the vote reported to the congregation and to the Session.

The Session shall ratify the congregational action and record this action in the Session minutes.

Congregational Meeting by mail, email or every-member canvas by telephone.

- a. The Session shall call for a congregational vote on a date that conforms to advance notification as required by the Congregational Bylaws or Manual of Operation. This communication to the congregation shall include the motion to be considered.

In the case of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), the communication shall include the report of the PNC and other documents pertinent to a call.

This communication shall also provide means by which members of the congregation can respond to the PNC or Session with questions and concerns.

- b. On the date of the vote the following can occur:
 - 1. A mail ballot will be sent with a 7 day return limit.
 - 2. An email ballot will be sent with a 3 day return limit.
 - 3. The Session can carry out an every-member canvas by telephone which will occur within a specific 7 day period.

If only mail or email voting is utilized, the number of responses shall conform to the quorum requirement established in the Bylaws or Manual of Operations of the congregation. If the responses do not meet the quorum requirement the motion fails.

It should also be understood that a congregational vote could include all three of the above options.

- c. The Clerk of Session shall receive the mail and email votes and the results of the every-member canvas. The Clerk of Session, acting as the Clerk for the congregational meeting, shall report the results to the congregation and to the Session.
- d. Session shall ratify the congregational action and record this action in the Session minutes.

GUIDANCE FOR VIRTUAL STATED MEETINGS OR CALLED MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

1. As regards substantive and complex issues, and conflict resolution, the preference of the Presbytery of the Pines would be to meet in a face-to-face, traditional meeting of Presbytery. This is the preference even if it means a minimum attendance.
2. Virtual meetings of the Presbytery of the Pines would seek to be limited to the following business:
 - a. Procedural Matters. These involve actions that require a timely response. Examples of these would be reports of actions of the PLC and COM taken under commission powers; welcoming new ministers to the Presbytery; Welcoming and approving candidates and inquirers for ministry; electing persons to committees or Presbytery office; Budget approval and other actions of this nature.
 - b. Information. This would be reports and news from committees; Board of Pension reports; Information from Synod or General Assembly; and reports or communication from other institutions related to the Presbytery.
 - c. Worship and Celebration of Mission. This could include reports from congregations on success of local mission and projects. It could also include invitations to cooperative mission with other congregations, the Synod or the General Assembly.
3. The meeting of Presbytery will be held using the “zoom” virtual media platform.
4. The meeting will conform to Roberts Rules of Order, and the Presbytery Manual of Operations, with exceptions found in the standing rules of virtual meetings.
5. Standing Rules:
 - a. Attendance in the meeting will be recorded through the “Participants” function of the “zoom” software. At the beginning of the meeting the Clerk will declare a quorum.

- b. At the beginning of the meeting all participants will be “muted.” Those wishing to speak must raise the “virtual hand” to be recognized by the Clerk. The Clerk will report to the Moderator and the Moderator will invite the individual to speak, if appropriate. The individual who wishes to speak must identify themselves. If a list of individuals is reported, the Clerk will report and present them individually to the Moderator.
 - c. Voting will occur using the non-verbal “yes” or “no” function found in the “Participants” section of the zoom software. The State Clerk will coordinate the voting and report the results to the Moderator. The voting will be confirmed by the Stated Clerk and one other person acting as “host” and controlling the software.
 - d. The Stated Clerk, Associate Stated Clerk or technical assistant will act as “host” and coordinate the muting and unmuting of participants.
 - e. All participants must have their name displayed. Time and instruction will be given before the meeting on how to “change name” in the software. Participants without a name displayed will not be recognized to speak.
 - f. Attendance and participation by telephone call will not be allowed. Participation using Zoom software on a smart phone is allowed.
 - g. Amendments or substitute motions will be presented verbatim and then in written form through the “chat” function. The Clerk will copy the amendment or substitute motion to the main screen for consideration.
 - h. The Clerk will coordinate those wishing to speak in favor or against a motion. Debate will be limited to equal numbers of those speaking for or against. When the list of those speaking for or against reaches an end and there are no more requests on one side or the other, the debate will end, and the motion will be moved to a vote.
 - i. Reports of committees, commissions or a task force will not require a second to recommendations or motions. Motions that do require a second will be achieved by raising the “virtual hand.”
 - j. Recommendations to “receive as information” will not be necessary. All reports will automatically be received and entered into the minutes as information.
 - k. If a technical difficulty causes a loss of connection with the Moderator or any presenter, the Clerk will moderate the meeting until connection is restored.
 - l. The Presbytery meeting will be recorded.
 - m. The Presbytery business will attempt to stay within a 3 hour limit.
 - n. No new business will be received at the time of the meeting unless it is business accepted by the Moderator and Stated Clerk as necessary to the life of the Presbytery.
 - o. Requests to speak, debate, calling the question and other actions by Elder commissioners and Minister members will be coordinated by the Stated Clerk using the “virtual hand” function.
 - p. If time and resources permit, business of the Presbytery will be presented during the meeting using the Power Point format.
 - q. The Moderator can use the shortened form regarding a motion and ask if there is no opposition to a motion. Opposition will be indicated by raising the “virtual hand”; which will lead to an immediate vote.
6. Pre-registration will be required for the meeting of Presbytery. Pre-registration for a Stated Meeting will begin 30 days before the date of the meeting. For a Called Meeting, pre-registration will begin 24 hours before the meeting. An “invitation” and link to the meeting will be sent to only those pre-registered for the meeting. This will be done by email. Alternative Elder Commissioners can be substituted at the last minute and can use the same “invitation.”

7. The Packet for a Stated Meeting of Presbytery will be available on the Presbytery website two weeks prior to the meeting. Minutes of the prior meeting of Presbytery will be available on the website at least 30 days before the next meeting.
8. If it becomes apparent that an issue has arisen in a virtual meeting that is complex or deals with conflict resolution, it would be appropriate for a motion to be considered to table the issue for a Called Meeting of Presbytery in which the issue could be considered in a face-to-face context. It would also be appropriate for the PLC or COM to include in their report a recommendation that a specific issue be considered by a Called Meeting of Presbytery.