

as of 07/2009

**STANDING RULES AND INSTRUMENTS
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

STANDING RULES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**STANDING RULES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Chapter I. OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The roll of voting commissioners in each Assembly shall include no others than the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the previous Assembly and such ministers and elders as are commissioned by the respective presbyteries in accordance with the provisions of these *Standing Rules*.
2. The General Assembly's Stated Clerk shall, under ordinary circumstances, inform each presbytery of the representation in the coming Assembly to which it is entitled; such notice to be sent not less than three months prior to the convening of the Assembly.
3. The Stated Clerk shall determine each presbytery's representation by the following procedure:
 - a. All representations shall be based on the statistical reports for the calendar year preceding that in which the most recent regular Assembly was held.
 - b. Figures for the denomination shall be computed for:
 - i. the total number of ministers; and
 - ii. the total number of churches, excluding churches that list no members.
 - c. The total number of commissioners shall be one hundred fifty exclusive of the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the previous Assembly and of those added as provided below to resolve ties.
 - d. The number in c. above shall be divided into two numbers (A and B, rounded to the nearest integers) bearing the same proportion to each other that the numbers in b.i. and b.ii. above bear to each other. The number A shall be the number of ministerial commissioners, unless it exceeds 60% of the number in c. above, in which case the number of ministerial commissioners shall be the integer nearest to 60% of the number in c. above. The balance of the commissioners shall be ruling elders.
 - e. Base figures for each presbytery shall be computed for:
 - i. the total number of ministers on its roll; and
 - ii. the total communicant membership of the churches within its bounds, exclusive of ministers.
 - f. The base figures in e.i. shall be multiplied by the fraction obtained by dividing the number of ministerial commissioners determined in d. above by the total number of ministers found in b.i. above. Each presbytery shall be entitled to ministerial commissioners equal in number to the whole numbers obtained, and such additional commissioners as are apportioned by the method of major fractions (as in h. below).
 - g. The base figure in e.ii. shall be multiplied by the fraction obtained by dividing the number of ruling elder commissioners determined in d. above by the total number of communicant members of the church exclusive of ministers. Each presbytery shall be entitled to ruling elder commissioners equal in number to the whole numbers obtained, and such additional commissioners as are apportioned by the method of major fractions (as in h. below).
 - h. Fractional remainders from the multiplication above shall be arranged in descending order. Beginning with the largest in each group, each of these fractions shall be counted as a whole number until the totals of all such whole numbers (from f. and g.) equal the numbers A and B found in d. above. In the event of ties in the lowest fractions to be so counted as whole numbers the total may be increased by not more than three; if four or more such fractions are tied, none of them shall be counted as whole numbers.
4. If an error in the statistical report of any presbytery is discovered, subsequent to the notification of presbyteries as to their respective representations, and prior to the completion of the roll call of the Assembly, that presbytery's representation shall be adjusted accordingly; provided that, in no case shall such a presbytery be entitled to more than one additional commissioner, and the total number of commissioners shall not exceed one hundred and fifty-five. Adjustments shall be made in the order in which such errors are reported to the Assembly's Stated Clerk. Representations of other presbyteries shall not be changed by such adjustments.
5. Presbyteries shall choose as commissioners only those who are members at the time of their selection. Those chosen shall represent that presbytery even though they may have transferred their membership to another presbytery before the dissolution of the Assembly to which they were commissioned. A minister shall not be chosen to serve in the place of an elder-commissioner, nor an elder in the place of a minister-commissioner.
6. Commissioners chosen for a particular Assembly shall be the commissioners to any adjourned session of that Assembly.
7. Commissioners to a special Assembly shall be chosen for that Assembly in the proportions determined for the immediately preceding regular Assembly.

- 127 8. Election of commissioners and alternates for a regular General Assembly shall be held so that the Stated Clerk
 128 may be notified of the elections no later than ten weeks prior to the General Assembly. The Clerks of the
 129 presbyteries shall certify promptly the election of these commissioners and alternates to the Stated Clerk of
 130 the Assembly in writing, and shall also certify promptly to him, in writing, the withdrawal of
 131 commissioners and the alternates who replace them. Certification of ruling elder commissioners shall
 132 include their full names and addresses.
 133
- 134 9. Any standing or special committee of the Assembly may send not more than three presbyters to sit as
 135 corresponding members of the Assembly in order to present its report. Such corresponding members shall
 136 be entitled to the privilege of the floor in all matters concerning their respective committees, and shall also
 137 be entitled to travel compensation on the same basis as a voting commissioner. If members of such
 138 committees are elected as commissioners to the Assembly the committees should avoid unnecessary
 139 appointment of corresponding members of the Assembly.
 140

141 Chapter II. OF OPENING THE MEETING

- 142
- 143 1. The Moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the assembly stands adjourned, and shall
 144 immediately call the members to order; and, on the appearance of a quorum, the meeting shall be opened
 145 with prayer.
 146
- 147 2. If a quorum be assembled at the time appointed, and the Moderator of the preceding Assembly be absent, the last
 148 Moderator present, being a commissioner, or if there be none, the senior member present, shall be
 149 requested to take his place without delay, until a new election.
 150
- 151 3. If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time
 152 to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble.
 153

154 CHAPTER III. OF OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

155 A. The Moderator

- 156
- 157 1. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected from among the voting commissioners to the
 158 Assembly.
 159
- 160 2. It shall be the duty of the Moderator, at all times, to preserve order and to endeavor to conduct all business
 161 before the Assembly to a speedy and proper result.
 162
- 163 3. He is to propose to the Assembly every subject of deliberation that comes before it.
 164
- 165 4. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and direct way of bringing any business to issue.
 166
- 167 5. He shall always announce the names of members to whom he gives the privileges of the floor, prevent
 168 members from improperly interrupting each other, and require them, in speaking, always to address the
 169 chair.
 170
- 171 6. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject, and from using personal reflections.
 172
- 173 7. He shall silence those who refuse to observe order.
 174
- 175 8. He shall, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call for the vote.
 176
- 177 9. In all questions he shall give a clear and concise statement of the question being voted upon, and the vote
 178 being taken, he shall declare how the question is decided.
 179
- 180 10. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to keep notes of the several articles of business which may be assigned
 181 for particular days, and to call them up at the time appointed.
 182
- 183 11. The Moderator shall speak to points of order in preference to other members; and shall decide questions of
 184 order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members. When in doubt on a point of order, the
 185 Moderator may submit the question to the Assembly for decision.
 186
- 187 12. The Moderator shall appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the Assembly shall decide
 188 otherwise. He shall name a convener of each special committee of the Assembly, whether elected or
 189 appointed. Ordinarily the first person appointed, or the person elected with the highest number of votes,
 190 shall be named convener.
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13. He may call any member to the chair to preside temporarily.
 14. When a vote is taken by ballot the Moderator shall vote with the other members. In other cases, if the Assembly be equally divided, he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the Assembly be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost. The Moderator may also vote to make a tie when the vote is not by ballot.
 15. He shall be the custodian of the gavel and shall, upon the election of the Moderator of the succeeding Assembly, present the gavel to him.
 16. The Moderator shall determine and announce to the assembly, prior to the receiving of any offering at the opening of the General Assembly, the denominational cause to which that offering will be devoted.
- B. The Clerks
1. There shall be a Stated Clerk whose term of office shall be three years.
 2. The Board of Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church will be responsible to fill a vacancy occurring in the office of Stated Clerk between Assemblies to serve until the next Assembly at which time his successor shall be nominated by the Trustees for election by the General Assembly to a term of three years.
 3. There shall be an Assistant Clerk.
 4. The duties of the Stated Clerk during the Assembly shall be:
 - a. To secure an Assistant Clerk. The Assistant Clerk shall receive an honorarium.
 - b. To form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the Moderator.
 - c. To add to the roll the names of additional members of the Assembly when they shall indicate to him their presence in the Assembly.
 - d. To file all papers, with proper endorsements, and deliver them to the committees to which they are referred by the actions of the Assembly.
 - e. To keep a record of the docket as progressively amended.
 - f. To propose assignments of commissioners and of reports, overtures, communications, etc., to advisory committees in accordance with 5.e. below.
 - g. To post each day's Minutes with their corrections, as well as to mark clearly any subsequent corrections brought to his attention after initial posting.
 5. Duties of the Stated Clerk between Assemblies:
 - a. To prepare a transcript of the minutes of the Assembly, and to arrange for their publication and distribution.
 - b. To inform promptly all persons and judicatories of actions of the Assembly which directly affect them.
 - c. To advise Stated Clerks of presbyteries of the obligation of presbyteries to present their records to the Assembly for review.
 - d. To receive reports of Standing and Special Committees, overtures, papers, requests, complaints, appeals, and any other communications intended for the next Assembly, for inclusion in a printed Agenda and presentation to the Assembly. Individuals may bring matters to the Assembly only by way of a presbytery, unless they concern a responsibility assigned the individual by the Assembly.
 - e. (1) To prepare, in consultation with the Moderator of the previous Assembly
 - (a) A proposed docket for the next General Assembly. The Clerk may propose measures for the early resolution of questions affecting the docket or Advisory Committee assignments raised by conflicting matters of business brought to the Assembly.
 - (b) Tentative assignments of reports, overtures, communications, and other matters that are to come before the Assembly to Advisory or other Temporary Committees, and tentative assignments of commissioners to those committees in accordance with the Assembly's *Guidelines for Advisory Committees*.
 - (2) To include a list of commissioners and their committee assignments in the Agenda.
 - (3) To mail a copy of the Agenda to all commissioners, alternates, and fraternal delegates of other churches who plan to attend the Assembly, at least thirty (30) days prior to the convening of the Assembly.
 - (4) To give to each advisory committee a copy of any written communication (per Instrument F.5.a) from the previous corresponding advisory committee.
 - f. To serve as the agent for clearance of the calendar for any individual or committee of the church that may be considering a pre-assembly conference.
 - g. To make such computations for the membership of the next General Assembly and to inform the presbyteries as to the results, as are set forth in Chapter I, Sections 2, 3, and 4.
 - h. To send out reports of special committees as determined by the Assembly.

- 258 i. To prepare and arrange for the preparation of releases concerning actions of the Assembly and its
 259 agencies for the secular and religious press.
- 260 j. To have oversight of the General Assembly Operation Fund, including
 261 (1) To solicit funds for the General Assembly Operation Fund.
 262 (2) To be responsible for the receiving of such funds and the payment of all expenses properly
 263 incurred in the execution of the Assembly's business.
 264 (3) To receive from the Committee on Coordination a copy of its annual audit of the General
 265 Assembly's funds and report to the General Assembly concerning it.
 266 (4) To prepare a budget (except for his own remuneration) for submission to the Trustees of The
 267 Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- 268 k. To request annually of all calling bodies (congregations, committees) the submission of the forms of
 269 the Committee on Pensions for reporting all calls issued (prior to presentation of the call to the presbytery);
 270 and to request annually of all presbyteries the submission of the proper forms of the Committee on
 271 Pensions immediately upon the reception of a minister.
- 272 l. To be in charge of the current records of the church and to keep all official papers in a permanent file
 273 available for inspection at the administration building of the denomination.
- 274 m. To perform such other duties as the General Assembly and its committees shall request of him.
- 275 n. To publish annually a Directory of the Church and to solicit advertising for it.
- 276 o. To publish the Book of Church Order, and when amendments have been adopted, to make available
 277 substitute pages to accommodate the amendments in a form compatible with the format of the book.
- 278 p. The Assembly may elect a Corresponding Clerk to assist the Stated Clerk between Assemblies with
 279 correspondence, additional to that prescribed in this section, as is referred to him by the Stated Clerk.
- 280
- 281 6. The duties of the Assistant Clerk shall be:
 282 a. To record the daily minutes of the Assembly and prepare them for approval.
 283 b. To assist the Stated Clerk as may be determined from time to time.
- 284
- 285 C. The Statistician
 286
- 287 1. He shall collect and compile statistical reports of the regional churches for the fiscal year ending December
 288 31 and the information required by the Form of Government Chapter XIV, Section 6, and provide them in
 289 combined form to the Stated Clerk at least six weeks prior to the General Assembly, for presentation to the
 290 Assembly.
- 291
- 292 2. He shall prepare, and present to the General Assembly each year, explanation and analyses of the statistical
 293 reports for a meaningful understanding of them by the Assembly.
- 294
- 295 3. He may make such recommendations to the General Assembly in these matters as he deems appropriate.
- 296
- 297 D. The Historian
 298
- 299 1. The Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, who is a servant of the denomination and particularly
 300 of the General Assembly, shall be elected to his office by the General Assembly for a three-year term.
- 301
- 302 2. The Historian shall be in charge of the denomination's effort to preserve her history through the collection
 303 and organization of historical documents, records, and memorabilia.
- 304
- 305 3. The Historian's duties shall include the following:
 306 a. He shall have oversight and be responsible for the organization of the denominational archives.
 307 b. He shall encourage and assist the General Assembly's Committees and agents as well as presbyteries,
 308 congregations, and interested individuals in their efforts to deposit materials of historical value to the OPC
 309 in the denominational archives.
 310 c. He shall oversee the production of materials, which shall promote a greater understanding of
 311 Orthodox Presbyterian history. This effort includes:
 312 (1). The publication of books and other literature and the production of video and audiotapes.
 313 (2). The management of scholarship programs.
 314 (3). The organization of conferences and the church's periodic anniversary celebrations.
 315 (4). The maintenance of the portion of the OPC web site pertaining to the denomination's history.
 316 d. He shall present an annual report of his activities to the General Assembly.
- 317
- 318 4. The Historian shall be accountable to and assisted by the Committee for the Historian in conducting his
 319 work.

Chapter IV. THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

320

321

- 322 1. At the commencement of the General Assembly the minutes of the previous Assembly shall be presented and, if
 323 necessary, corrected.
 324
 325 2. Election of the Moderator
 326
 327 3. Report of the Committee on Arrangements
 328
 329 4. Presentation of overtures, communications, complaints, and appeals
 330
 331 5. Set times to convene, recess, and reconvene
 332
 333 6. Adoption of the docket; it may be amended, after adoption, by a two-thirds vote. It shall include orders of the
 334 day to insure that all overtures and pending amendments to the standing rules are taken up before the
 335 projected terminus of the Assembly.
 336
 337 7. Erection of appropriate Advisory Committees, including membership, matters committed to them
 338
 339 8. Advisory Committees meet
 340
 341 9. Report of the Stated Clerk
 342
 343 10. Report of the Trustees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 344
 345 11. Report of the Statistician
 346
 347 12. Report of Advisory Committees concerning these reports
 348
 349 13. Election of Stated Clerk (in appropriate years)
 350
 351 14. Appointment of Assistant Clerk
 352
 353 15. Election of Statistician
 354
 355 16. Reports of Standing Committees and related Advisory Committees
 356
 357 17. Election of Historian (in appropriate years)
 358

Chapter V. OF REPORTS, APPEALS, AND COMPLAINTS

- 359
 360
 361 1. Reports of Special and Standing Committees to the Assembly shall be prepared in outline form modeled on the
 362 Guidelines for Style prepared by the Stated Clerk. A report shall include at the beginning a Synopsis, in
 363 outline form, of the contents of the report. Reports of a few paragraphs and less than one page need not
 364 necessarily use this format.
 365
 366 2. To receive a report means to bring the matter up for consideration or adoption or both. When a report or paper
 367 has been read on the floor it is then in that position, and no motion to receive is necessary. A motion to
 368 receive is necessary only if no place has been provided for the matter on the docket and the Assembly
 369 desires to consider it at a certain time in the order of business. In this case a motion to receive the report
 370 should precede the reading of the report.
 371
 372 3. If a report or paper contains only a statement of fact or opinion for the information of the Assembly, there is no
 373 necessity for action upon it. But if the Assembly desires to endorse the statement and thus make itself
 374 assume responsibility for it, the proper motion is to adopt it.
 375
 376 4. If a report or paper contains a recommendation, there should be a motion to adopt the recommendation. If there
 377 is more than one recommendation, the normal procedure is to consider the recommendations *seriatim* on
 378 motions to adopt them.
 379
 380 5. When a report of a Standing or Special Committee has been brought to the floor, the following order and time
 381 allocations shall be followed:
 382 a. Presentation of the report of the Committee for up to 15 minutes Presentation of audio/visuals to
 383 supplement a report, not to exceed 15 minutes, and reports from missionaries and chaplains, not to exceed
 384 10 minutes each, shall be made at this time. Such audio/visuals shall have been previewed by advisory
 385 committees for their information in preparing their reports.
 386 b. Presentation of the minority report(s) of the Committee for up to 15 minutes each

- 387 c. Presentation of the report of the Advisory Committee for up to 10 minutes
 388 d. Presentation of the minority report(s) of the Advisory Committee for up to 10 minutes each
 389 e. Following the presentation of all reports, commissioners may, for up to 30 minutes:
 390 (1) Ask questions about the report(s)
 391 (2) Discuss portions of the report(s) not related to a recommendation
 392 During this period, a commissioner shall, after having been recognized, announce whether he is asking a
 393 question(s) about the report(s), or discussing a portion(s) of the report not related to a recommendation;
 394 discussion of portions of the report(s) related to a recommendation is out of order. A questioner may have
 395 up to one minute to ask his question.
 396 f. Debate and action on all pending recommendations in the following order:
 397 (1) Procedural recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee or its minority(s)
 398 (2) Recommendation(s) of the Committee
 399 (3) Recommendation(s) of the minority(s) of the Committee
 400 (4) Recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee
 401 (5) Recommendation(s) of the minority(s) of the Advisory Committee
 402 g. Recommendations under f.(1) above shall not have the effect of preventing a recommendation of the
 403 Committee or of the minority of the Committee from being considered.
 404
 405 6. It is in some cases advisable, after a report or paper has been received, to refer the matter to a special committee
 406 of the Assembly which is to report at a later time in the Assembly. In that event all consideration of the
 407 matter is postponed until the special committee reports.
 408
 409 7. All reports of committees, and other papers read on the floor of the Assembly, shall be recorded in the minutes
 410 as read. If the matters presented in such reports or papers are to become the action of the Assembly, any
 411 difference between the original form of the paper as read on the floor and the final action of the Assembly
 412 shall be recorded as amendments to the motion to adopt the report or paper.
 413
 414 8. If a paper is not read on the floor of the Assembly, it may, on motion, be recorded in the minutes, provided that
 415 it has been presented to the commissioners in writing at least two weeks prior to the Assembly, or if
 416 ordered by the Assembly.
 417
 418 9. Reports of Standing Committees that are to be included in the printed agenda shall be in the hands of the Stated
 419 Clerk two months prior to the Assembly; reports of Special Committees, in order to be in the printed
 420 agenda, shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk two and one half months prior to the Assembly.
 421
 422 10. Each Standing or Special Committee that depends upon the General Assembly Operation Fund for its expenses
 423 shall include in its reports to the Assembly an estimate of its expenses for the ensuing year.
 424
 425 11. Any proposal recommending the erection of a new standing or special committee shall include an estimated
 426 budget for that committee, if it is to draw upon the General Assembly Operation Fund for its expenses.
 427
 428 12. Appeals and complaints, together with the basic relevant records and papers, shall be in the hands of the Stated
 429 Clerk, in quadruplicate, six weeks prior to the Assembly.
 430
 431

Chapter VI. OF SPECIAL ORDERS DURING A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 432
 433
 434 A. NEW PROPOSALS/QUESTIONS.
 435 1. Commissioners who come to the Assembly prepared with proposals or questions relating to a matter
 436 assigned to an Advisory Committee, shall present such proposals and/or questions to such Advisory
 437 Committee.
 438 2. Any motion offered in the course of the Assembly which is not germane to a pending recommendation, but
 439 is related to the current docketed item, shall be referred to an Advisory Committee. If sufficiently novel as
 440 to be, in the judgment of the Moderator, new business, it may return to the floor only with the Advisory
 441 Committee's recommendation, or a minority thereof, and only under Unfinished Advisory Committee
 442 Business. Should the Assembly subsequently not act affirmatively on the matter, all reference to it shall be
 443 expunged from the Minutes and from the report of the Advisory Committee (unless specifically required).
 444 3. Only matters unrelated to docketed items may be proposed under Miscellaneous Business.
 445
 446 B. MINUTES. The Minutes of the Assembly shall be approved, without being read to the Assembly, in the
 447 following manner:
 448 1. The printed Minutes of previous sessions normally shall be distributed by the mid-morning recess,
 449 beginning with the first full day of business. After the lunch recess, at the call of the Moderator, the
 450 Minutes shall be presented for approval.
 451 2. On the final day of the Assembly

- 452 a. Copies of the Minutes of the previous day shall be distributed to the commissioners at the earliest
 453 possible time. At an appropriate time the Moderator shall call for the approval of the Minutes and, if
 454 necessary, require the Clerk to read them to the Assembly.
 455 b. Later, at a convenient time, the Moderator shall call for the reading of the Minutes of that day by the
 456 Clerk for approval, following which the Assembly shall vote on approval of the Minutes as a whole.
 457
- 458 C. PRESBYTERIAL RECORDS and STANDING COMMITTEE RECORDS. The Committee to Examine
 459 Presbyterial Records and the Committee to Examine Standing Committee Records shall prepare reports for
 460 distribution prior to the noon recess on the third full day of business. Interested parties shall present
 461 reactions to these reports to the appropriate Committee no later than the recess for dinner the same day, and
 462 the Committees shall resolve any matters brought to their attention insofar as possible. The final reports
 463 shall be presented for adoption the following morning as the first orders of the day without being read to
 464 the Assembly (suspending Standing Rule, Chapter V, Section 7), by vote on the reports as a whole, unless
 465 the Committee deems it necessary to bring a weighty matter to the floor separately, or unless the Assembly
 466 determines to divide the question.
 467
- 468 D. EXCEPTIONS.
 469 1. The above A. and Standing Rule VII.1. do not apply when the Assembly is sitting in judicial capacity.
 470 2. When, in the judgment of the Moderator, timely completion of the business of the Assembly comes into
 471 question, he may propose further restrictions on time for debate and/or length of speeches.
 472
- 473 E. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE ASSEMBLY. This paragraph applies to all requests to address the assembly
 474 on behalf of institutions, ministries, or vendors that are not committees erected by the assembly pursuant to
 475 Chapter X.
 476 1. All such requests to address the assembly shall be made in writing (on official letterhead stationery) and
 477 received by the stated clerk not later than ten days before the opening of the assembly.
 478 2. No such request shall be printed in either the Minutes or the Agenda materials of the assembly.
 479 3. At the conclusion of presenting other communications to the assembly (see Standing Rule IV.4), the stated
 480 clerk shall read to the assembly a list of the institutions, ministries, or vendors that have requested
 481 permission to address the assembly. The moderator shall then seek general consent to grant each such
 482 request *seriatim*.
 483 4. If there is an objection to granting such request of one or more particular institutions, ministries or vendors,
 484 then those requests to which objection is raised shall be referred to a temporary committee of three former
 485 moderators and/or stated clerks of the assembly appointed by the moderator, which shall bring back, at the
 486 call of the moderator, a recommendation regarding the granting of each request referred to it; the debate on
 487 each such recommendation shall be limited to one one-minute speech in favor of, and one one-minute
 488 speech opposed to, the granting of each request so referred.
 489 5. All presentations for which permission to address the assembly is granted shall be at the call of the
 490 moderator and shall not exceed five minutes.
 491
- 492 F. REQUESTS TO SET UP DISPLAYS OR EXHIBITS AT THE ASSEMBLY. This paragraph applies to all
 493 requests to set up displays or exhibits at the assembly on behalf of institutions, ministries, or vendors that
 494 are not committees erected by the assembly pursuant to Chapter X.
 495 1. All such requests to set up displays or exhibits shall be made in writing (on official letterhead stationery)
 496 and received by the stated clerk not later than thirty days before the opening of the assembly.
 497 2. The Committee on Arrangements shall determine the boundaries of the meeting hall of the assembly within
 498 which only committees of the assembly may set up displays or exhibits.
 499 3. To the extent that the assembly has control at the meeting facility over displays or exhibits beyond the
 500 bounds of the meeting hall, the Committee on Arrangements shall allocate space for displays and exhibits
 501 in the following priority based upon whose work is being presented:
 502 a. Committees erected by the assembly;
 503 b. Other judicatories of the OPC;
 504 c. Seminaries from which the Committee on Christian Education is currently actively recruiting interns;
 505 d. Individual members of the OPC;
 506 e. Other institutions, ministries, or vendors whose work is not hostile to the Reformed faith as expressed
 507 in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.
 508

Chapter VII. OF DEBATE

- 509
 510
 511 1. Each commissioner shall be limited to two speeches per motion. During debate on recommendations arising
 512 under a docketed item, a commissioner's first speech shall be limited to 10 minutes and his second to five.
 513
 514 2. No member, in the course of debate, shall be allowed to indulge in personal reflections.
 515

- 516 3. If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the Moderator's
 517 chair shall ordinarily speak first. In the discussion of all matters where the sentiment of the Assembly is
 518 divided, it is proper that the floor should be occupied alternately by those representing the different sides of
 519 the question.
 520
- 521 4. When more than three members of the Assembly shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require
 522 all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking.
 523
- 524 5. Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator, and shall treat his fellow members, and
 525 especially the Moderator, with decorum and respect.
 526
- 527 6. No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or
 528 misrepresentations.
 529
- 530 7. Only properly accredited representatives from corresponding bodies of other denominations shall be seated as
 531 corresponding members in the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
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Chapter VIII. OF DECORUM

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- 536 1. Without express permission, no member of the Assembly, while business is going on, shall engage in private
 537 conversation; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator.
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- 539 2. It is indispensable that members of the Assembly maintain gravity and dignity while judicially convened; that
 540 they attend closely in their speeches to the subject under consideration, and avoid prolix and desultory
 541 harangues; and when they deviate from the subject it is the privilege of any member, and the duty of the
 542 Moderator, to call them to order.
 543
- 544 3. If any member act, in any respect, in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty
 545 of the Moderator, to call him to order.
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- 547 4. If any member consider himself aggrieved by a decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to
 548 the Assembly, and the question on the appeal shall be taken without debate.
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- 550 5. No member shall withdraw permanently from the Assembly without giving notice to the Moderator.
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Chapter IX. OF VOTING

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- 554 1. Members ought not, without weighty reasons, to decline voting, as this practice might leave the decision of
 555 important questions to a small proportion of the Assembly.
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- 557 2. When the Moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there
 558 has evidently been a mistake; in which case the mistake shall be rectified, and the Moderator shall
 559 recommence taking the vote. The Moderator shall determine when all the ballots have been collected, and
 560 thereupon announce the closing of the poll. Should the hour for adjournment or recess arrive during the
 561 voting, it shall be postponed to finish the vote, unless the majority shall vote to adjourn; in which case the
 562 voting shall, on the reassembling of the Assembly, take precedence of all other business till it is finished.
 563
- 564 3. The yeas and nays on any question shall not be recorded, unless one third of the members present request a roll-
 565 call vote. If division is called for on any vote, it shall be by a rising vote without a count. If on such a
 566 rising vote the Moderator is unable to decide, or a quorum rise to second a call for "tellers," then the vote
 567 shall be taken by rising, and the count made by tellers, who shall pass through the aisles and report to the
 568 Moderator the number voting on each side.
 569
- 570 4. When available, electronic voting may replace other means of voting with appropriate adjustments to conform as
 571 closely as possible with the rules given above.
 572
- 573 45. In all elections a majority of the ballots cast shall be requisite.
 574
- 575 5. In elections when the number of nominees exceed the number of persons to be elected, if after the first balloting
 576 the required number of persons is not elected, the name of the person or persons receiving the lowest
 577 number of votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees on each succeeding ballot, provided that the
 578 resultant number of remaining nominees be never less than one more than the number of persons to be
 579 elected. If the Moderator deem it wise in view of a long list of nominees for a particular office, and there is
 580 no objection from the floor, he may declare that a larger number be dropped on the first ballot.

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Chapter X. OF COMMITTEES

1. There shall be three kinds of committees which serve the General Assembly, namely, Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Temporary Committees. The names of committees of the General Assembly shall be changed only by action of the Assembly.
2. Standing Committees shall be continuing or permanent committees. Each shall carry out its duties as defined by and in accord with its bylaws/policies, and shall report to the Assembly annually. Each shall be composed of three classes, the term of each class being three years, members being chosen by ballot at the General Assembly. Vacancies which occur between General Assemblies shall be filled by the next succeeding General Assembly.
 - a. There shall be twelve Standing Committees, namely
 - the Committee on Appeals and Complaints
 - the Committee on Christian Education
 - the Committee on Coordination.
 - the Committee on Diaconal Ministries
 - the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations
 - the Committee on Foreign Missions
 - the Committee on General Assembly Arrangements
 - the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension
 - the Committee on Pensions
 - the Trustees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 - the Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel
 - the Committee for the Historian
 - b. The Committee on Appeals and Complaints shall consist of three members who are ministers or ruling elders from different presbyteries, one member in each class. An alternate, minister or ruling elder, shall also be elected each year from a fourth distinct presbytery. The Committee shall act in advance of or during a General Assembly to receive appeals and complaints, to advise whether appeals and complaints are in order and properly before the Assembly, to gather, summarize, and/or index the relevant documents and data, and to recommend the whole order of the proceedings, but not the disposition of the appeals or complaints. In order to provide continuity in the process at the Assembly, Commissioners who are members of this committee shall ordinarily be assigned to serve on the Assembly's Advisory Committee on Appeals and Complaints, but may not vote in that Advisory Committee on recommendations of the Committee on Appeals and Complaints.
 - c. The Committees on Home Missions and Church Extension, Foreign Missions, and Christian Education shall each consist of fifteen members, three ministers and two ruling elders being in each class. There shall be a subcommittee of six members within the Committee on Christian Education which shall include at least two teaching elders and two ruling elders and shall be responsible for performing the following functions in the area of ministerial training:
 - (1) Assist the churches in seeking out men with apparent gifts for the gospel ministry and in pressing upon them its urgent claims.
 - (2) Consider means of strengthening the preparation of men for the gospel ministry.
 - (3) Consult with representatives of seminaries or other educational institutions regarding the training of men for the ministry.
 - (4) Recommend to presbyteries ways in which gifts of men under their care may be developed and proved, and work with presbyteries in establishing suitable programs to this end.
 - (5) Develop means for the continuing education and development of ministers.
 - d. Election to the Committee on Christian Education shall be divided so as to include an election of two members who shall serve on a subcommittee dealing with ministerial training, followed by an election of the remaining three members to the general membership of the committee. Not more than two members of this subcommittee shall be officially associated with any one institution offering theological education as a member of the teaching or administrative staffs or the governing board.
 - e. The Committee on Diaconal Ministries shall consist of nine male members, with one minister being in each class, two deacons being in one class, and one ruling elder and one deacon being in each of the two remaining classes. Preferably each of the deacons would be from a different presbytery.
 - f. The Committee on Pensions shall consist of nine male members, each class including at least one minister and at least one ruling elder.
 - g. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations shall consist of nine members, ministers and/or elders, arranged in three classes of three members each.

The mandate of the Committee shall be:

 - (1) Make recommendations to the General Assembly on all matters relevant to the relationship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to other churches and to ecumenical bodies both in the United States and abroad, including the establishment of official relationships, in accordance with the Assembly's policy on Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

- 646 (2) Maintain and nurture those relationships established by the General Assembly.
 647 (3) Endeavor to put into practice the Assembly's *Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church*.
 648 (4) Appoint fraternal delegates to the major assemblies of churches with which the Orthodox
 649 Presbyterian Church has an official relationship.
 650 (5) Appoint representatives to the annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed
 651 Council (NAPARC).
 652 (6) Report to each General Assembly on its work and on the churches with which the Orthodox
 653 Presbyterian Church has an official relationship.
- 654 h. The Committee on General Assembly Arrangements shall consist of three members, one member in each
 655 class. If the full Committee is not present during the Assembly, temporary members will be assigned by
 656 the Assembly. The Committee shall
 657 (1) Report to the General Assembly the funds that are available for the travel expenses of the
 658 commissioners to that Assembly.
 659 (2) Recommend to each General Assembly a date and place for the next General Assembly.
 660 (3) Be responsible for arrangements before and during the meetings of the General Assembly that will
 661 enable the work of the Assembly. In order to facilitate the exercise of this responsibility, presbyteries and
 662 committees authorized to send commissioners or corresponding members are requested to elect such
 663 persons and to communicate their selection, including name, address, and telephone number, to the
 664 Committee and the Stated Clerk by March 1.
 665 (4) It shall recommend to the Assembly the granting of excuses and the method of reimbursement of the
 666 Commissioners' expenses.
 667 (5) Members of this Committee will be exempt from serving on temporary or advisory committees.
- 668 i. The Committee on Coordination shall consist of nine voting members, ministers and ruling elders. Three
 669 members shall be elected by the Committees on Christian Education, Foreign Missions, and Home
 670 Missions and Church Extension, one from the membership of each committee; and six members shall be
 671 elected by the General Assembly, in three classes consisting of one minister and one ruling elder in each
 672 class, who shall be neither members nor employees of these three program committees. The General
 673 Secretaries of the three program committees shall be *ex officio* members (without vote) of the Committee
 674 on Coordination.
- 675 j. The Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel shall consist of four members arranged in one class of
 676 two members and two classes of one member each. The mandate of the committee shall be:
 677 (1) Represent the General Assembly on the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains
 678 and Military Personnel (PRJC). The PRJC shall serve as the agent of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 679 for the endorsement of men for military and other chaplaincies.
 680 (2) Inform the General Assembly on the policies, decisions and actions of the PRJC and make
 681 appropriate recommendations
 682 (3) Inform the General Assembly on other OPC Chaplain ministries such as hospitals and prisons, and
 683 where appropriate bring recommendations
 684 (4) Inform OPC Chaplains of PRJC and/or General Assembly actions which affect them
 685 (5) Maintain a current roster of OPC active duty, reserve, retired, and other chaplains.
- 686 k. The Committee for the Historian shall consist of four male members of the OPC, including at least one
 687 Minister and one Ruling Elder among the four, elected in three classes of two, one, and one, respectively.
 688 The Historian shall be an *ex officio* member of the Committee. The function of the Committee shall be to
 689 give advice, assistance, and oversight to the Historian in carrying out the responsibilities of his office; only
 690 members who are presbyters may vote on matters of oversight. The duties of the Committee for the
 691 Historian shall be:
 692 (1). To prepare a budget and control expenditures of funds provided by the General Assembly for the
 693 work of the Historian
 694 (2). To raise capital needed for publication work
 695 (3). To promote and distribute the literature and tapes published and produced by the Committee
 696 (4). To provide accountability and encouragement to the Historian in the exercise of his duties
 697 (5). To provide an annual report to the General Assembly
 698 (6). To submit to the General Assembly a nomination for the office of Historian in the appropriate years
- 700 3. Special Committees shall be those erected to serve until the next General Assembly. They shall be elected or
 701 appointed as determined by the General Assembly, and may be continued by succeeding General
 702 Assemblies if they so decide. When these committees terminate their work they shall deliver to the Stated
 703 Clerk whatever records they wish to be preserved for the Assembly's archives.
- 704 a. Alternate members of special committees may be named by the Assembly to fill subsequent vacancies that
 705 occur between Assemblies. Alternates shall not automatically fill vacancies that become known during the
 706 course of an Assembly.
- 707 b. (1) Newly-erected committees shall, within six weeks after the close of the General Assembly at which
 708 they were erected, establish a date for their first meeting, which shall be no later, and preferably earlier,
 709 than the third week of September of that year unless an earlier date is specified.
 710 (2) When the date of the meeting has been established the convener shall notify the Stated Clerk. If the
 711 Clerk has not received such notification within two months after the close of the Assembly, he shall seek to

- 712 confer with the convener of the committee, and if necessary, after consultation with the Moderator of the
 713 previous General Assembly, he shall convene a meeting within the required time.
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- 715 4. Temporary and Advisory Committees
- 716 a. Temporary Committees shall include the following:
- 717 (1) To Examine Presbyterial Records, composed of twelve members with each member from a different
 718 presbytery. The committee shall conduct an examination of presbyterial records in accordance with the
 719 Assembly's *Rules for Examining Presbyterial Minutes*. Presbyterial minutes shall be kept according to the
 720 Assembly's *Rules for Keeping Presbyterial Minutes*.
 721 (2) To Examine Standing Committee Records, composed of eight members, none of whom shall be a
 722 member of a standing committee. The Committee shall conduct an examination of the minutes of each
 723 standing committee in accordance with the Assembly's *Rules for Examining Standing Committee Records*.
 724 Minutes of standing committees shall be kept according to the Assembly's *Rules for Keeping Standing*
 725 *Committee Records*.
 726 ~~(3) Arrangements, composed of three members, including as many members of the Standing Committee~~
 727 ~~as are commissioners to the Assembly. It shall recommend to the Assembly the method of reimbursement~~
 728 ~~of commissioners' expenses. Members of this Committee shall be exempt from serving on other temporary~~
 729 ~~or advisory committees.~~
- 730 b. Advisory Committees
- 731 (1) All reports, overtures, communications, complaints, and other matters brought to the Assembly in
 732 accordance with its *Standing Rules* and the Constitution of the Church, except such matters as those for
 733 which review is unnecessary or inappropriate, shall be referred to Advisory Committees. Their function is
 734 to review the matters referred to them, in order to assist the Assembly to understand them as fully as
 735 possible and to advise the Assembly concerning them, especially concerning recommendations contained
 736 in them. One of these committees shall be assigned the responsibility to review current and proposed
 737 expenditures from the General Assembly Operation Fund and to report to the General Assembly
 738 concerning them. These committees shall be erected and shall function in accordance with the Assembly's
 739 guidelines for them. (see Instrument F)
 740 (2) Membership of these committees shall be proposed to the Assembly by the Stated Clerk of the
 741 previous Assembly.
 742 (3) A copy of any written communication from the advisory committee (per Instrument F.5.a) to the
 743 body under review shall be provided to the Stated Clerk.
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- 745 5. A time of recess shall be provided in the docket during which the Temporary Committees may do the work
 746 assigned.
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- 748 6. All recommendations coming from committees that involve General Assembly Operation Fund budgetary
 749 requests for the following year shall be committed to the advisory committee responsible for reviewing the
 750 General Assembly Operation Fund.
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Chapter XI. OF THE TRUSTEES

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- 754 1. There shall be a corporation known as The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Board of Trustees of the
 755 corporation shall be composed of six members divided into three equal classes, each class being elected for
 756 a term of three years. Each class shall be composed of one minister and one ruling elder or deacon chosen
 757 by ballot at the annual General Assembly. Vacancies which occur between General Assemblies shall be
 758 filled at the next succeeding annual General Assembly.
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- 760 2. The duties of the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be to:
- 761 a. Perform responsibilities for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church required of them by their corporate
 762 charter.
 763 b. Nominate a person to the General Assembly for election as Stated Clerk in appropriate years,
 764 normally one year ahead of the expiration of his term of office.
 765 c. Review the performance of the Stated Clerk and recommend his remuneration to each Assembly
 766 through the General Assembly Operation Fund budget.
 767 d. Provide advice and direction to the Stated Clerk in the carrying out of his duties between assemblies.
 768 e. Propose to the General Assembly a budget for the General Assembly Operation Fund, and suggest a
 769 per capita contribution for payment of assembly expenses.
 770 f. Review on a regular basis General Assembly Operation Fund receipts and expenditures and authorize
 771 any over-expenditures.
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- 773 3. The Trustees are to be regarded as a Standing Committee of the General Assembly and shall submit their records
 774 to the Assembly each year for examination by the Committee to Examine Standing Committee Records.
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Chapter XII. OF FINANCES

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1. The funds of each Standing Committee and Special Committee, except for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries and the Committee on Pensions (which shall be administered separately by its own officers), shall be administered through the Committee on Coordination.
 2. The finances of the three program committees (Committee on Christian Education, Committee on Foreign Missions, and the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension) shall be administered in accord with Instrument E.
 3. The following General Assembly funds shall be established:
 - a. The General Assembly Operation Fund (GAOF) which shall finance the office of the Stated Clerk, and the work of the General Assembly other than that of the three program committees and the Committees on Diaconal Ministries and on Pensions.
 - b. The General Assembly Travel Fund (GATF) which shall finance the expenses of commissioners incurred in attending General Assemblies (which may include travel, food, and lodging).
 4. The finances of the GAOF shall be administered in accord with III.B.5.j. and Instrument H.
 5. Travel compensation to commissioners to the General Assembly shall be administered by the Committee on Arrangements under the following provision and/or as additionally approved by the Assembly from time to time:
 - a. Ordinarily, travel compensation shall not be given to commissioners to the General Assembly unless (1) they attend every business session of the Assembly, or (2) they submit written requests to be excused from a portion of the business sessions of the Assembly necessitated by circumstances beyond their control, to the Committee on Arrangements, no later than the formation of the roll, or upon their arrival, whichever occurs last, and such requests are granted. The Committee shall present its recommendations on the requests at the next session of the Assembly. Men who are allowed to leave by later Assembly action shall receive not more than half the amount they would otherwise be entitled to, except those who are excused because of unforeseen emergency.
 - b. Commissioners who incur a loss of regular income in order to attend the General Assembly shall be given full travel compensation if they are in attendance on any five full days of Assembly business. Men in this category who attend for less than five full days shall lose travel compensation at the rate of 25% per day.

807 Chapter XIII. OF SEPARATE INSTRUMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY

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- The following provisions shall stand as separate instruments of the Assembly and shall be amended by majority of any Assembly.
- a. Rules for Keeping Presbyterian Minutes
 - b. Rules for Examining Presbyterian Minutes
 - c. Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records
 - d. Rules for Examining Standing Committee Records
 - e. Coordinating the ~~Programs of Witness and Edification~~ [Worldwide Outreach of the Church](#)
 - f. Guidelines for Advisory Committees
 - g. Constitution of the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel
 - h. Guidelines for the General Assembly Operation Funds

821 Chapter XIV. QUALIFICATIONS

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1. All cases that may arise which are not provided for in the foregoing Rules shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.
 2. These rules, except this chapter, may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly upon motion duly made; they may be amended by a majority vote of the Assembly, the amendment having been proposed to it by a preceding Assembly.

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831 NOTES (Revised 1985):

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- a. It is unwise to "move to suspend the *Standing Rules*" without specifying the particular rule governing the situation. A general suspension of the Rules could result in chaos. If a commissioner desiring a suspension does not know the number of the Rule involved, he should request the Clerks to supply it.
 - b. To secure the inclusion of a report in the Minutes without its being read to the Assembly or having been presented to the commissioners in writing at least two weeks prior to the Assembly, one should "move to suspend Standing Rule Chapter V, Section 8, and to include ...(the report by name)...in the Minutes without its being read to the Assembly."

- 842 c. To permit a commissioner to receive full travel money in a case not provided for in the Rules, one should
843 "move to suspend Standing Rule Chapter XII and to grant full travel compensation to _____." It is
844 not necessary to suspend this Rule, however, in cases of "unforeseen emergency"; a simple motion to grant
845 the compensation is all that is needed.