

**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, the Stated Clerk of the current 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.
8. Election of commissioners and alternates for a regular General Assembly shall be held so that the Stated Clerk may be notified of the elections no later than ten weeks prior to the General Assembly. The clerks of the presbyteries shall certify promptly the election of these commissioners and alternates to the Stated Clerk of the Assembly in writing, and shall also certify promptly to him, in writing, the withdrawal of commissioners and the alternates who replace them. Certification of ruling elder commissioners shall include their full names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.
9. Any Standing or Special committee of the Assembly may send not more than three presbyters to sit as corresponding members of the Assembly in order to present its report. Such corresponding members shall be entitled to the privilege of the floor in all matters concerning their respective committees, and shall also be entitled to travel, room and board compensation on the same basis as a voting commissioner. If members of such committees are elected as commissioners to the Assembly, the committees should avoid unnecessary appointment of corresponding members of the Assembly.

#### Chapter II. OF OPENING THE MEETING

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

#### CHAPTER III. OF OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

##### A. The Moderator

1. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected from among the voting commissioners to the Assembly.
2. It shall be the duty of the Moderator, at all times, to preserve order and to endeavor to conduct all business before the Assembly to a speedy and proper result.
3. He is to propose to the Assembly every subject of deliberation that comes before it.
4. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and direct way of bringing any business to issue.
5. He shall always announce the names of members to whom he gives the privileges of the floor, prevent members from improperly interrupting each other, and require them, in speaking, always to address the chair.
6. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject, and from using personal reflections.
7. He shall silence those who refuse to observe order.
8. He shall, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call for the vote.

9. In all questions he shall give a clear and concise statement of the question being voted upon, and the vote being taken, he shall declare how the question is decided.
10. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to keep notes of the several articles of business which may be assigned for particular days, and to call them up at the time appointed.
11. The Moderator shall speak to points of order in preference to other members; and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members. When in doubt on a point of order, the Moderator may submit the question to the Assembly for decision. The Moderator may appoint a parliamentarian to assist him in arriving at these decisions.
12. The Moderator shall appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the Assembly shall decide otherwise. He shall name a convener of each special committee of the Assembly, whether elected or appointed. Ordinarily the first person appointed, or the person elected with the highest number of votes, shall be named convener.
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 during the Assembly 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 published 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 provide 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.
  - i. To prepare and arrange for the preparation of releases concerning actions of the Assembly and its agencies for the secular and religious news media.
  - j. To have oversight of the General Assembly Operation Fund, including
    - (1) To solicit funds for the General Assembly Operation Fund.
    - (2) To be responsible for the receiving of such funds and the payment of all expenses properly incurred in the execution of the Assembly's business, ordinarily through the Committee on Coordination.
    - (3) To receive from the Committee on Coordination a copy of its annual audit of the General Assembly's funds and report to the General Assembly concerning its reception.
    - (4) To prepare a budget (except for his own remuneration) for submission to the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
  - k. To be in charge of the current records of the church and to keep all official papers in a permanent file available for inspection at the administration building of the denomination.
  - l. To maintain custody of the gavel between Assemblies.
  - m. To perform such other duties as the General Assembly and its committees shall request of him.
  - n. To publish annually a Directory of the Church and, when appropriate, to solicit advertising for it.
  - o. To publish the Book of Church Order as directed by the Assembly.
  - p. The Assembly may elect a Corresponding Clerk to assist the Stated Clerk between Assemblies with correspondence, additional to that prescribed in this section, as is referred to him by the Stated Clerk.
6. The duties of the Assistant Clerk shall be:
- a. To record the daily minutes of the Assembly and prepare them for approval.
  - b. To assist the Stated Clerk as may be determined from time to time.

### C. The Statistician

1. He shall collect and compile statistical reports of the regional churches for the fiscal year ending December 31 and the information required by the Form of Government Chapter XIV, Section 6, and provide them in combined form to the Stated Clerk at least six weeks prior to the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly.
2. He shall prepare, and present to the General Assembly each year, explanation and analyses of the statistical reports for a meaningful understanding of them by the Assembly.
3. He may make such recommendations to the General Assembly in these matters as he deems appropriate.

#### D. The Historian

1. The Historian of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, who is a servant of the denomination and particularly of the General Assembly, shall be elected to his office by the General Assembly for a three-year term.
2. The Historian shall be in charge of the denomination's effort to preserve her history through the collection and organization of historical documents, records, and memorabilia.
3. The Historian's duties shall include the following:
  - a. He shall have oversight and be responsible for the organization of the denominational archives.
  - b. He shall encourage and assist the General Assembly's Committees and agents as well as presbyteries, congregations, and interested individuals in their efforts to deposit materials of historical value to the OPC in the denominational archives.
  - c. He shall oversee the production of materials, which shall promote a greater understanding of Orthodox Presbyterian history. This effort includes:
    - (1). The publication of books and other literature and the production of video and audio media.
    - (2). The management of scholarship programs.
    - (3). The organization of conferences and the church's periodic anniversary celebrations.
    - (4). The maintenance of the portion of the OPC website pertaining to the denomination's history.
  - d. He shall present an annual report of his activities to the General Assembly.
4. The Historian shall be accountable to and assisted by the Committee for the Historian in conducting his work.

#### Chapter IV. OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. At the commencement of the General Assembly the Minutes of the previous Assembly shall be presented and, if necessary, corrected.
2. Election of the Moderator
3. Preliminary report of the Committee on Arrangements
4. Presentation of overtures, communications, complaints, and appeals
5. Set times to convene, recess, and reconvene
6. Adoption of the docket; it may be amended, after adoption, by a two-thirds vote. It shall include orders of the day to insure that all overtures and pending amendments to the standing rules are taken up before the projected terminus of the Assembly.
7. Erection of appropriate Advisory Committees, including membership, and matters committed to them
8. Advisory Committees meet

9. Report of the Stated Clerk
10. Report of the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
11. Report of the Statistician
12. Report of Advisory Committees concerning these reports
13. Election of Stated Clerk (in appropriate years)
14. Appointment of Assistant Clerk
15. Election of Statistician
16. Reports of Standing Committees and related Advisory Committees
17. Election of Historian (in appropriate years)

#### Chapter V. OF REPORTS, OVERTURES, APPEALS, AND COMPLAINTS

1. Reports of Special and Standing Committees to the Assembly shall be prepared in outline form modeled on the Guidelines for Style prepared by the Stated Clerk. A report shall include at the beginning a Synopsis, in outline form, of the contents of the report. Reports of a few paragraphs and less than one page need not necessarily use this format.
2. To receive a report means to bring the matter up for consideration or adoption or both. When a report or paper has been read on the floor it is then in that position, and no motion to receive is necessary. A motion to receive is necessary only if no place has been provided for the matter on the docket and the Assembly desires to consider it at a certain time in the order of business. In this case a motion to receive the report should precede the reading of the report.
3. If a report or paper contains only a statement of fact or opinion for the information of the Assembly, there is no necessity for action upon it. But if the Assembly desires to endorse the statement and thus make itself assume responsibility for it, the proper motion is to adopt it.
4. If a report or paper contains a recommendation, there should be a motion to adopt the recommendation. If there is more than one recommendation, the normal procedure is to consider the recommendations seriatim on motions to adopt them.
5. When a report of a Standing or Special Committee has been brought to the floor, the following order and time allocations shall be followed:
  - a. Presentation of the report of the Committee for up to 15 minutes. Presentation of audio/visuals to supplement a report, not to exceed 15 minutes, and reports from missionaries, chaplains, and the Short-Term Missions Coordinator and the Disaster Response Coordinator, not to exceed 10 minutes each, shall be made at this time. Such audio/visuals shall have been previewed by Advisory Committees for their information in preparing their reports.
  - b. Presentation of the minority report(s) of the Committee for up to 15 minutes each
  - c. Presentation of the report of the Advisory Committee for up to 10 minutes
  - d. Presentation of the minority report(s) of the Advisory Committee for up to 10 minutes each
  - e. Following the presentation of all reports, commissioners may, for up to 30 minutes:
    - (1) Ask questions about the report(s)
    - (2) Discuss portions of the report(s) not related to a recommendation
 During this period, a commissioner shall, after having been recognized, announce whether he is asking a question(s) about the report(s), or discussing a portion(s) of the report not related to a recommendation; discussion of portions of the report(s) related to a recommendation is out of order. A questioner may have up to one minute to ask his question.

- f. Debate and action on all pending recommendations in the following order:
    - (1) Procedural recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee or its minority(s)
    - (2) Recommendation(s) of the Committee
    - (3) Recommendation(s) of the minority(s) of the Committee
    - (4) Recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee
    - (5) Recommendation(s) of the minority(s) of the Advisory Committee
  - g. Recommendations under f.(1) above shall not have the effect of preventing a recommendation of the Committee or of the minority of the Committee from being considered.
6. When an overture has been brought to the floor, the following order and time allocations shall be followed:
    - a. Presentation of the overture by the presbytery's representatives for up to 30 minutes
    - b. Presentation of the report of the Advisory Committee for up to 15 minutes
    - c. Presentation of the minority report(s) of the Advisory Committee for up to 10 minutes each
    - d. Following the presentation of the overture and all reports, commissioners may, for up to 30 minutes, ask questions about the overture and the report(s)
    - e. Debate and action on all pending recommendations in the following order:
      - (1) Procedural recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee or its minority(s)
      - (2) Petition(s) of the overture, which shall be the main motion(s). With regard to such, the Advisory Committee (or minority(s) thereof) may report its advice regarding whether the overture, either as a whole or in part, should be adopted or denied, or the Advisory Committee (or minority(s) thereof) may propose an amendment(s) or substitute(s) to the main motion(s).
      - (3) Other recommendation(s) of the Advisory Committee
      - (4) Other recommendation(s) of the minority(s) of the Advisory Committee
  7. It is in some cases advisable, after a report or paper has been received, to refer the matter to a Special Committee of the Assembly which is to report at a later time in the Assembly. In that event all consideration of the matter is postponed until the Special Committee reports.
  8. All reports of Committees, and other papers read on the floor of the Assembly, shall be recorded in the Minutes as read. If the matters presented in such reports or papers are to become the action of the Assembly, any difference between the original form of the paper as read on the floor and the final action of the Assembly shall be recorded as amendments to the motion to adopt the report or paper.
  9. If a paper is not read on the floor of the Assembly, it may, on motion, be recorded in the Minutes, provided that it has been presented to the commissioners in writing at least two weeks prior to the Assembly, or if ordered by the Assembly.
  10. Reports of Standing Committees that are to be included in the agenda shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk eight weeks prior to the Assembly, except the report of the Standing Committee on Appeals and Complaints, which shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk six weeks prior to the General Assembly; reports of Special Committees, in order to be in the agenda, shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk ten weeks prior to the Assembly.
  11. Each Standing or Special Committee that depends upon the General Assembly Operation Fund for its expenses shall include in its reports to the Assembly an estimate of its expenses for the ensuing year.
  12. Any proposal recommending the erection of a new Standing or Special Committee shall include an estimated budget for that committee, if it is to draw upon the General Assembly Operation Fund for its expenses.
  13. Appeals and complaints, together with the basic relevant records and papers, shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk, in quadruplicate, or in a digital form acceptable to the Stated Clerk, eight weeks prior to the Assembly.

#### Chapter VI. OF SPECIAL ORDERS DURING A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

##### A. NEW PROPOSALS/QUESTIONS.



1. Commissioners who come to the Assembly prepared with proposals or questions relating to a matter assigned to an Advisory Committee shall present such proposals and/or questions to such Advisory Committee.
  2. Any motion offered in the course of the Assembly which is not germane to a pending recommendation, but is related to the current docketed item, shall be referred to an Advisory Committee. If sufficiently novel as to be, in the judgment of the Moderator, new business, it may return to the floor only with the Advisory Committee's recommendation, or a minority thereof, and only under Unfinished Advisory Committee Business. Should the Assembly subsequently not act affirmatively on the matter, all reference to it shall be expunged from the Minutes and from the report of the Advisory Committee (unless specifically required).
  3. Only matters unrelated to docketed items may be proposed under Miscellaneous Business.
- B. MINUTES. The Minutes of the Assembly shall be approved, without being read to the Assembly, in the following manner:
1. The printed Minutes of previous sessions normally shall be distributed by the mid-morning recess, beginning with the first full day of business. After the lunch recess, at the call of the Moderator, the Minutes shall be presented for approval.
  2. On the final day of the Assembly
    - a. Copies of the Minutes of the previous day shall be distributed to the commissioners at the earliest possible time. At an appropriate time the Moderator shall call for the approval of the Minutes and, if necessary, require the Clerk to read them to the Assembly.
    - b. Later, at a convenient time, the Moderator shall call for the reading of the Minutes of that day by the Clerk for approval, following which the Assembly shall vote on approval of the Minutes as a whole.
- C. PRESBYTERIAL RECORDS and STANDING COMMITTEE RECORDS. The Committee to Examine Presbyterial Records and the Committee to Examine Standing Committee Records shall prepare reports for distribution prior to the noon recess on the third full day of business. Interested parties shall present reactions to these reports to the appropriate Committee no later than the recess for dinner the same day, and the Committees shall resolve any matters brought to their attention insofar as possible. The final reports shall be presented for adoption the following morning as the first orders of the day without being read to the Assembly (suspending Standing Rule, Chapter V, Section 7), by vote on the reports as a whole, unless the Committee deems it necessary to bring a weighty matter to the floor separately, or unless the Assembly determines to divide the question.
- D. EXCEPTIONS.
1. The above A. and Standing Rule VII.1. do not apply when the Assembly is sitting in judicial capacity.
  2. When, in the judgment of the Moderator, timely completion of the business of the Assembly comes into question, he may propose further restrictions on time for debate and/or length of speeches.
- E. REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE ASSEMBLY. This paragraph applies to all requests to address the Assembly on behalf of institutions, ministries, or vendors that are not committees erected by the Assembly pursuant to Chapter X.
1. All such requests to address the Assembly shall be made in writing (on official letterhead stationery) and received by the Stated Clerk not later than ten days before the opening of the Assembly.
  2. No such request shall be printed in either the Minutes or the Agenda materials of the Assembly.
  3. At the conclusion of presenting other communications to the Assembly (see Standing Rule IV.4), the Stated Clerk shall read to the Assembly a list of the institutions, ministries, or vendors that have requested permission to address the Assembly. The Moderator shall then seek general consent to grant each such request seriatim.
  4. If there is an objection to granting such request of one or more particular institutions, ministries or vendors, then those requests to which objection is raised shall be referred to a temporary committee of three former Moderators and/or Stated Clerks of the Assembly appointed by the Moderator, which shall bring back, at the call of the Moderator, a recommendation regarding the granting of each request

referred to it; the debate on each such recommendation shall be limited to one one-minute speech in favor of, and one one-minute speech opposed to, the granting of each request so referred.

5. All presentations for which permission to address the Assembly is granted shall be at the call of the Moderator and shall not exceed five minutes.
- F. REQUESTS TO SET UP DISPLAYS OR EXHIBITS AT THE ASSEMBLY. This paragraph applies to all requests to set up displays or exhibits at the Assembly on behalf of institutions, ministries, or vendors that are not committees erected by the Assembly pursuant to Chapter X.
1. All such requests to set up displays or exhibits shall be made in writing (on official letterhead stationery) and received by the Stated Clerk not later than thirty days before the opening of the Assembly.
  2. The Committee on Arrangements shall determine the boundaries of the meeting hall of the Assembly within which only committees of the Assembly may set up displays or exhibits.
  3. To the extent that the Assembly has control at the meeting facility over displays or exhibits beyond the bounds of the meeting hall, the Committee on Arrangements shall allocate space for displays and exhibits in the following priority based upon whose work is being presented:
    - a. Committees erected by the Assembly;
    - b. Other judicatories of the OPC;
    - c. Seminaries from which the Committee on Christian Education is currently actively recruiting interns;
    - d. Individual members of the OPC;
    - e. Other institutions, ministries, or vendors whose work is not hostile to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

#### Chapter VII. OF DEBATE

1. Each commissioner shall be limited to two speeches per motion. During debate on recommendations arising under a docketed item, a commissioner's first speech shall be limited to 10 minutes and his second to five.
2. No member, in the course of debate, shall be allowed to indulge in personal reflections.
3. If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the Moderator's chair shall ordinarily speak first. In the discussion of all matters where the sentiment of the Assembly is divided, it is proper that the floor should be occupied alternately by those representing the different sides of the question.
4. When more than three members of the Assembly shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking.
5. Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator, and shall treat his fellow members, and especially the Moderator, with decorum and respect.
6. No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.
7. Only properly accredited representatives from corresponding bodies of other denominations shall be seated as corresponding members in the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

#### Chapter VIII. OF DECORUM

1. Without express permission, no member of the Assembly, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator.
2. It is indispensable that members of the Assembly maintain gravity and dignity while judicially convened; that they attend closely in their speeches to the subject under consideration, and avoid prolix and desultory

harangues; and when they deviate from the subject it is the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call them to order.

3. If any member act, in any respect, in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call him to order.
4. If any member consider himself aggrieved by a decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the Assembly, and the question on the appeal shall be taken without debate.
5. No member shall withdraw permanently from the Assembly without giving notice to the Moderator.

#### Chapter IX. OF VOTING

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

#### 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 Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, unless he is elected a member of the Committee, shall be an ex officio member of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations without vote.
- 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.
  - (2) Maintain and nurture those relationships established by the General Assembly.
  - (3) Endeavor to put into practice the Assembly's Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church.
  - (4) Appoint fraternal delegates to the major assemblies of churches with which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has an official relationship.

- (5) Appoint representatives to the annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).
  - (6) Report to each General Assembly on its work and on the churches with which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has an official relationship.
- h. The Committee on General Assembly Arrangements shall consist of four elected members in three classes of two, one, and one, respectively. A fifth, alternate member shall be elected for a term of one year. In addition, the Stated Clerk shall be a sixth member, ex officio. If three elected members are not present during the Assembly, temporary members will be assigned by the Assembly. The Committee shall
- (1) Report to the General Assembly the funds that are available for the travel expenses of the commissioners to that Assembly.
  - (2) Recommend to each General Assembly a date and place for the next General Assembly.
  - (3) Be responsible for arrangements before and during the meetings of the General Assembly that will enable the work of the Assembly. In order to facilitate the exercise of this responsibility, presbyteries and committees authorized to send commissioners or corresponding members are requested to elect such persons and to communicate their selection, including name, address, and telephone number, to the Committee and the Stated Clerk by March 1.
  - (4) It shall recommend to the Assembly the granting of excuses and the method of reimbursement of the commissioners' expenses.
  - (5) Members of this Committee will be exempt from serving on Temporary or Advisory Committees.
- i. The Committee on Coordination shall consist of nine voting members, ministers and ruling elders. Three members shall be elected by the Committees on Christian Education, Foreign Missions, and Home Missions and Church Extension, one from the membership of each committee; and six members shall be elected by the General Assembly, in three classes consisting of one minister and one ruling elder in each class, who shall be neither members nor employees of these three program committees. The General Secretaries of the three program committees shall be ex officio members (without vote) of the Committee on Coordination.
- j. The Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel shall consist of six members arranged in three classes of two members each. The mandate of the committee shall be:
- (1) Represent the General Assembly on the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC). The PRCC shall serve as the agent of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the endorsement of men for military and other chaplaincies.
  - (2) Inform the General Assembly on the policies, decisions and actions of the PRCC and make appropriate recommendations.
  - (3) Inform the General Assembly on other OPC Chaplain ministries such as hospitals and prisons, and where appropriate bring recommendations.
  - (4) Inform OPC chaplains of PRCC and/or General Assembly actions which affect them.
  - (5) Maintain a current roster of OPC active duty, reserve, retired, and other chaplains.
- k. The Committee for the Historian shall consist of four male members of the OPC, including at least one minister and one ruling elder among the four, elected in three classes of two, one, and one, respectively. The Historian shall be an ex officio member of the Committee. The function of the Committee shall be to give advice, assistance, and oversight to the Historian in carrying out the responsibilities of his office; only members who are presbyters may vote on matters of oversight. The duties of the Committee for the Historian shall be:
- (1). To prepare a budget and control expenditures of funds provided by the General Assembly for the work of the Historian
  - (2). To raise capital needed for publication work
  - (3). To promote and distribute the literature and tapes published and produced by the Committee
  - (4). To provide accountability and encouragement to the Historian in the exercise of his duties
  - (5). To provide an annual report to the General Assembly
  - (6). To submit to the General Assembly a nomination for the office of Historian in the appropriate years
3. Special Committees shall be those erected to serve until the next General Assembly. They shall be elected or appointed as determined by the General Assembly, and may be continued by succeeding General Assemblies if they so decide. When these Committees terminate their work, they shall deliver to the Stated Clerk whatever records they wish to be preserved for the Assembly's archives.

- a. Alternate members of Special Committees may be named by the Assembly to fill subsequent vacancies that occur between Assemblies. Alternates shall not automatically fill vacancies that become known during the course of an Assembly.
  - b. (1) Newly-erected committees shall, within six weeks after the close of the General Assembly at which they were erected, establish a date for their first meeting, which shall be no later, and preferably earlier, than the third week of September of that year unless an earlier date is specified.
  - (2) When the date of the meeting has been established, the convener shall notify the Stated Clerk. If the Clerk has not received such notification within two months after the close of the Assembly, he shall seek to confer with the convener of the committee, and if necessary, after consultation with the Moderator of the previous General Assembly, he shall convene a meeting within the required time.
4. Temporary and Advisory Committees
- a. Temporary Committees shall include the following:
    - (1) To Examine Presbyterial Records, composed of twelve members with each member from a different presbytery. The Committee shall conduct an examination of presbyterial records in accordance with the Assembly's Rules for Examining Presbyterial Minutes. Presbyterial minutes shall be kept according to the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Presbyterial Minutes.
    - (2) To Examine Standing Committee Records, composed of eight members, none of whom shall be a member of a Standing Committee. The Committee shall conduct an examination of the minutes of each Standing Committee in accordance with the Assembly's Rules for Examining Standing Committee Records. Minutes of Standing Committees shall be kept according to the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records.
  - b. Advisory Committees
    - (1) All reports, overtures, communications, complaints, and other matters brought to the Assembly in accordance with its Standing Rules and the Constitution of the Church, except such matters as those for which review is unnecessary or inappropriate, shall be referred to Advisory Committees. Their function is to review the matters referred to them, in order to assist the Assembly to understand them as fully as possible and to advise the Assembly concerning them, especially concerning recommendations contained in them. One of these committees shall be assigned the responsibility to review current and proposed expenditures from the General Assembly Operation Fund and to report to the General Assembly concerning them. These committees shall be erected and shall function in accordance with the Assembly's guidelines for them. (see Instrument F)
    - (2) Membership of these committees shall be proposed to the Assembly by the Stated Clerk of the previous Assembly.
    - (3) A copy of any written communication from the Advisory Committee (per Instrument F.5.a) to the body under review shall be provided to the Stated Clerk.
5. A time of recess shall be provided in the docket during which the Temporary Committees may do the work assigned.
6. All recommendations coming from committees that involve General Assembly Operation Fund budgetary requests for the following year shall be committed to the Advisory Committee responsible for reviewing the General Assembly Operation Fund.

#### Chapter XI. OF THE TRUSTEES

- 1. There shall be a corporation known as The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Board of Trustees of the corporation shall be composed of six members divided into three equal classes, each class being elected for a term of three years. Each class shall be composed of one minister and one ruling elder or deacon chosen by ballot at the annual General Assembly. Vacancies which occur between General Assemblies shall be filled at the next succeeding annual General Assembly.
- 2. The duties of the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be to:
  - a. Perform responsibilities for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church required of them by their corporate charter.

- b. Nominate a person to the General Assembly for election as Stated Clerk in appropriate years, normally one year ahead of the expiration of his term of office.
  - c. Review the performance of the Stated Clerk and recommend his remuneration to each Assembly through the General Assembly Operation Fund budget.
  - d. Provide advice and direction to the Stated Clerk in the carrying out of his duties between Assemblies.
  - e. Propose to the General Assembly a budget for the General Assembly Operation Fund, and suggest a per capita contribution for payment of Assembly expenses.
  - f. Review on a regular basis General Assembly Operation Fund receipts and expenditures and authorize, in conjunction with the Stated Clerk, any over-expenditures of more than ten percent, according to the provisions of Instrument H.2.b.
3. The Trustees are to be regarded as a Standing Committee of the General Assembly and shall submit their records to the Assembly each year for examination by the Committee to Examine Standing Committee Records.

#### Chapter XII. OF FINANCES

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.

#### Chapter XIII. OF SEPARATE INSTRUMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The following provisions shall stand as separate instruments of the Assembly and shall be amended by majority of any Assembly.

- a. Rules for Keeping Presbyterial Minutes
- b. Rules for Examining Presbyterial Minutes
- c. Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records

- d. Rules for Examining Standing Committee Records
- e. Coordinating the Worldwide Outreach of the Church
- f. Guidelines for Advisory Committees
- g. Constitution of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel
- h. Guidelines for the General Assembly Operation Funds

#### Chapter XIV. QUALIFICATIONS

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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#### NOTES (Revised 1985):

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

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR INSTRUMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY



**INSTRUMENTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**A. RULES FOR KEEPING PRESBYTERIAL MINUTES**

1. The minutes of the presbytery shall be kept in lock-type record books with numbered pages.
2. The minutes shall be typewritten or printed, or reproductions from typewritten or printed masters, and shall be neat and legible.
3. The minutes shall state the date and place of each meeting, and the times of convening and adjourning.
4. If a meeting is held at a date, time, or place other than that for which it is called, such facts shall be recorded in the minutes, together with a statement of the reason(s) therefor.
5. The name of the person serving the meeting as Moderator shall be determinable from the minutes.
6. If the Stated Clerk is not present, a Clerk pro tem shall be selected, and his selection shall be indicated in the minutes.
7. The minutes shall state the names of those present at each meeting, using the following categories:
  - a. Ministers
  - b. Elder commissioners (with indication as to churches they represent)
  - c. Alternate elder commissioners (with indication as to churches they represent)
8. The names of absent ministerial members and of churches not represented by elder commissioners shall be indicated in the minutes of stated meetings. If none is absent, the minutes shall state this fact.
9. The portion(s) of the call for a special meeting stating the purpose of the meeting shall be recorded verbatim in the minutes of the special meeting.
10. The minutes shall identify those who have offered opening and closing prayer each day.
11. The minutes of each meeting shall be approved by the presbytery at the same or a subsequent meeting, such approval being recorded in the minutes. When minutes of a previous meeting (or meetings) are approved, the date(s) of said meeting(s) shall be given.
12. The minutes shall state:
  - a. That which is required to describe intelligently the motions adopted and business transacted,
  - b. The terms of all ministerial calls as described in the Form of Government, XXII, 9 (Whenever the form of a ministerial call departs from that given in the Form of Government, XXII, 9, the entire call shall be recorded in the minutes.),
  - c. At the time a call is approved, whether hospitalization insurance is to be provided from any source, and
  - d. All such additional information as the presbytery deems desirable for historical purposes.
13. Each main motion shall normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which they pertain. Main motions may be recorded in the same paragraph if they are closely related and pertain to the same item of business.
14. The minutes of the meetings of the presbytery shall appear in the minutes book in the order in which the meetings occur. When a previous action of the presbytery is referred to, the date of the meeting in which the action occurred shall be given.
15. Insofar as possible, erasures, interlineations, and footnotes shall be avoided.

16. Documents and their specific location may be referred to in the minutes, and filed separately in a file maintained by the Clerk. However, such documents shall be included in the minutes only by transcription.
17. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for the custody of the minutes of the presbytery, and he shall be responsible for the presentation at each stated meeting of the minutes or such portion thereof as the presbytery may direct.
18. The minutes of each meeting of the presbytery shall be signed by the Clerk of the meeting.
19. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for the presentation to the General Assembly for approval of all minutes of the presbytery which have been approved by the presbytery and not previously approved by the General Assembly. All other minutes of presbytery (or conformed copy thereof) to which specific reference is made in the minutes submitted to the General Assembly for approval shall be submitted for the purpose of information. Presbytery minutes shall be placed in the hands of the Stated Clerk of the Assembly no later than the start of the Assembly's recess for Advisory Committee meetings.
20. A copy of the current Rules for Keeping Presbyterian Minutes shall be kept with the minutes of the presbytery.
21. A copy of the by-laws of the presbytery, corrected as amended, shall be kept with the minutes.
22. The presbytery shall record in its minutes each individual exception taken to sessional minutes in its annual review of those minutes.
23. The presbytery shall take note in its minutes of exceptions taken by the Assembly together with the corrections or explanations adopted by the presbytery to rectify them. The presbytery shall advise the next General Assembly of the disposition it has made of the exceptions.

#### B. RULES FOR EXAMINING PRESBYTERIAL MINUTES

1. Presbyterian minutes shall be examined for conformity to (a) the primary and secondary standards of the church, as to the substance of the actions recorded; (b) the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Presbyterian Minutes, as to form, structure, and minimum content; and (c) appropriate standards as to use of the English language; and for reporting to the Assembly activities and decisions of presbyteries which the Committee deems could be useful to the rest of the Church for its benefit and edification, with authority to make recommendations to the Assembly if deemed appropriate.
2. Each set of presbyterial minutes shall be read by at least two members of the Committee.
3. The Committee may divide its work so that two or more members examine minutes primarily as to form and two or more members examine them primarily as to substance.
4. The findings of the Committee, with respect to the minutes of each presbytery, shall be reported under the following categories, as appropriate:
  - a. Notations: Typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation, non-prejudicial misstatements of fact, etc., may be reported under this category. Also, failures to provide proper or sufficient information or identification, prejudicial misstatements of fact, etc., may be reported under this category.
  - b. Exceptions: Violations of the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Presbyterian Minutes and actions which in substance appear not to conform to the standards of the Church or to be out of accord with the deliverances of General Assemblies may be reported under this category.
5. Before recommending that exceptions be taken to the minutes of a presbytery, the Committee shall confer with a member of that presbytery.
6. The Committee shall prepare a report concerning the minutes of each presbytery. The filling out of a form designed for the purpose, for each presbytery, shall meet the requirements of this section. After action by the

Assembly, one copy of the report shall be sent by the Stated Clerk to the presbytery. A second copy shall be retained by the Stated Clerk in a permanent file. A third copy shall be kept in the records of the committee, which shall be maintained in a suitable binder. The custody of the records of the Committee shall be the responsibility of the Stated Clerk in the period between General Assemblies.

7. Notations and exceptions in the Committee's reports shall be disposed of as follows:
  - a. Notations shall normally be sent to the presbyteries by the Stated Clerk without being read before the Assembly or recorded in its minutes.
  - b. Exceptions shall be read before the Assembly, recorded in its minutes, and disposed of as the Assembly determines.
  - c. The Assembly shall adopt an appropriate motion with respect to the minutes of each presbytery, the following forms being examples:
    - (1) That the minutes of the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ be approved without exception.
    - (2) That the minutes of the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_ be approved with the exceptions noted.
8. Reports to the Assembly from the presbyteries concerning disposition of exceptions taken by past Assemblies shall normally be referred to the Committee without being read before the Assembly, nor printed in its agenda or minutes. The committee shall examine such reports and shall report to the Assembly its judgment as to the suitability of the disposition that has been made. The Committee shall also present recommendations concerning all exceptions taken by previous Assemblies or committees that have not been disposed of suitably.

#### C. RULES FOR KEEPING STANDING COMMITTEE RECORDS

1. The minutes of the Standing Committees shall be kept in lock-type record books with consecutively numbered pages. No numbered pages shall be left blank.
2. The minutes shall be typewritten or printed, or reproductions from typewritten or printed masters and shall be neat and legible.
3. The minutes shall state the date and place of each meeting, and the times of convening and adjourning.
4. If a meeting is held at a date, time, or place other than that for which it is called, such facts shall be recorded in the minutes, together with a statement of the reason(s) therefor.
5. The name of the person serving the meeting as Chairman shall be determinable from the minutes.
6. If the Secretary is not present, a Secretary pro tem shall be selected, and his selection shall be indicated in the minutes.
7. The minutes shall state the names of those present at each meeting.
8. The names of absent members shall be indicated in the minutes of the stated meetings.
9. The portion(s) of the call for a special meeting stating the purpose of the meeting shall be recorded verbatim in the minutes.
10. The minutes shall identify those who have offered opening and closing prayer each day.
11. The minutes of each meeting shall be approved by the committee at the same or a subsequent meeting, but not later than the first regular meeting in the following year, such approval being recorded in the minutes. When minutes of a previous meeting (or meetings) are approved, the date(s) of said meeting(s) shall be given.
12. The minutes shall state that which is required to describe intelligibly the motions adopted and business transacted, together with such additional information as the committee deems desirable for historical purposes.

13. Each main motion shall normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which they pertain. Main motions may be recorded in the same paragraph if they are closely related and pertain to the same item of business.
14. The minutes of the meetings of the committee shall appear in the minute book in the order in which the meetings occur. When a previous action of the committee is referred to, the date of the meeting in which the action occurred shall be given and the volume and page number(s) on which it is recorded shall be designated.
15. Insofar as possible, erasures, interlineations, and footnotes shall be avoided.
16. Documents and their specific location may be referred to in the minutes, and filed separately in a file maintained by the General Secretary, if there be one, and if not, by the Chairman. However, such documents shall be included in the minutes only by transcription, with the exception of financial reports and annual reports.
17. The General Secretary, if there be one, and if not, the Chairman, shall be responsible for the custody of the minutes of the committee, and he shall be responsible for the presentation of the minutes at each stated meeting.
18. The minutes of each meeting of the committee shall be signed by the Secretary of the meeting.
19. The General Secretary, if there be one, and if not, the Chairman, shall be responsible for the presentation to the General Assembly for approval of all minutes of the committee which have been approved by the committee and not previously approved by the General Assembly, and shall provide a copy of these minutes to the Advisory Committee of that Standing Committee for their perusal. All other minutes of the committee (or conformed copy thereof) to which specific reference is made in the minutes submitted to the General Assembly for approval shall be submitted for the purpose of information. Standing Committee minutes shall be placed in the hands of the Stated Clerk of the Assembly no later than the start of the Assembly's recess for Advisory Committee meetings.
20. Each Standing Committee (or venture in which a Standing Committee is a member) which has an audit or review performed by a certified public accountant shall present a copy of that report to the Advisory Committee reviewing its work.
21. A copy of the current Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records shall be kept with the minutes of the committee.
22. A copy of the bylaws of the committee, if there be such, corrected as amended, shall be kept with the minutes.
23. The Standing Committees shall take note in their minutes of exceptions taken by the Assembly, together with the corrections or explanations adopted by the Standing Committee to rectify them. The Standing Committees shall advise the next General Assembly of the disposition they have made of the exceptions.

#### D. RULES FOR EXAMINING STANDING COMMITTEE RECORDS

1. Standing Committee records shall be examined for conformity to (a) the primary and secondary standards of the church, as to the substance of the actions recorded; (b) the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records as to form, structure, and minimum content; and (c) appropriate standards as to use of the English language.
2. Each set of Standing Committee records shall be read by at least two members of the Committee.
3. The Committee may divide its work so that two or more members examine records primarily as to form and two or more members examine them primarily as to substance.

4. The findings of the Committee with respect to the records of each Standing Committee shall be reported under the following categories, as appropriate:
  - a. Notations: Typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation, non-prejudicial misstatements of fact, etc., may be reported under this category. Also, failures to provide proper or sufficient information of identification, prejudicial misstatements of fact, etc., may be reported under this category.
  - b. Exceptions: Violations of the Assembly's Rules for Keeping Standing Committee Records and actions which in substance appear not to conform to the standards of the Church or to be out of accord with the deliverances of General Assemblies may be reported under this category.
5. Before recommending that exception be taken to the minutes of a Standing Committee, the examining Committee shall confer with a member of that Standing Committee or its General Secretary.
6. The Committee shall prepare a report concerning the minutes of each Standing Committee. The filling out of a form designed for the purpose, for each Standing Committee, shall meet the requirements of this section. After action by the Assembly, one copy of the report shall be sent by the Stated Clerk to the Standing Committee. A second copy shall be retained by the Stated Clerk in a permanent file. A third copy shall be kept in the records of the Committee, which shall be maintained in a suitable binder. The custody of the records of the Committee shall be the responsibility of the Stated Clerk in the period between General Assemblies.
7. Notations and exceptions in the Committee's reports shall be disposed of as follows:
  - a. Notations shall normally be sent to the Standing Committees by the Stated Clerk without being read before the Assembly or recorded in its minutes.
  - b. Exceptions shall be read before the Assembly, recorded in its minutes, and disposed of as the Assembly determines.
  - c. The Assembly shall adopt an appropriate motion with respect to the records of each Standing Committee, the following forms being examples:
    - (1) That the records of the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ be approved without exception.
    - (2) That the records of the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ be approved with the exceptions noted.
8. Reports to the Assembly from the Standing Committees concerning disposition of exceptions taken by past Assemblies shall normally be referred to the Committee without being read before the Assembly, nor printed in its Agenda or Minutes. The Committee shall examine such reports and shall report to the Assembly its judgment as to the suitability of the disposition that has been made. The Committee shall also present recommendations concerning all exceptions taken by previous Assemblies, or Committees, that have not been disposed of suitably.

#### E. COORDINATING THE WORLDWIDE OUTREACH OF THE CHURCH

1. PURPOSE
 

There shall be a Committee on Coordination ("the Committee") whose purpose shall be:

  - a. to develop and operate a Worldwide Outreach centralized accounting system;
  - b. to recommend to the General Assembly a combined budget for the Committee on Christian Education, the Committee on Foreign Missions, and the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension ("the program committees") for the following year, so as to help the Church maximize the use of its resources for the fulfillment of its tasks;
  - c. to encourage and assist the program committees in the development of the financial support needed to carry out their programs;
  - d. to promote Worldwide Outreach and to help coordinate the promotion of the work of the program committees;
  - e. to support the ministry of the pastors and sessions in their responsibility to teach and encourage the practice of biblical stewardship in the church; and
  - f. to act as fiscal agent for the General Assembly with respect to its Operation Fund and its Travel Fund.
2. STRUCTURE

The Committee shall consist of (a) one member from each of the three program committees, elected by his respective committee; (b) six members at large, elected by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule X.2.); and (c) the General Secretaries of the three program committees as ex officio members without vote.

### 3. FUNCTIONS

Toward the accomplishment of its purpose, the Committee's functions shall include:

- a. arranging for the orderly receiving and accounting of funds for the program committees;
- b. considering the ministries (including budgets, short- and long-term objectives and promotion plans) being proposed by each program committee;
- c. recommending a Worldwide Outreach combined budget for the program committees for submission annually to the General Assembly for its approval and commendation to the churches for their support;
- d. approving and reviewing special relationships between a program committee and one or more presbytery(s) or session(s) (see 7, below);
- e. helping to coordinate the promotion of the work of the program committees (see 6, below);
- f. encouraging, as the Lord provides, the enlargement of the work of the program committees and the development of the financial resources needed to support such through both current and deferred giving, and from sources outside of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church;
- g. developing and preparing resources to encourage the practice of good stewardship;
- h. acting as fiscal agent for the General Assembly in receiving, disbursing, and keeping account of receipts and disbursements of the General Assembly with respect to its Operation Fund and its Travel Fund, and making reports to the Stated Clerk and the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### 4. OPERATION

The method of operation to carry out the functions of the Committee shall be these or similar activities:

- a. Develop a budget for its own operations, to be included in the combined budget to be recommended to the General Assembly.
- b. Recommend to the General Assembly a Worldwide Outreach combined budget for the following year reflecting the Committee's judgment as to the most desirable apportionment of the anticipated resources of the church.
- c. Report annually to the General Assembly. The report shall include:
  - (1) information concerning the Committee's work, including the costs of the operation of the Committee, and the promotional activities of the Committee;
  - (2) recommendation(s), together with the rationale therefor, for a combined budget for the program committees for the Assembly's approval and commendation to the churches for their support; and
  - (3) a compilation of the promotional activities of the past year of the program committees along with that of the Committee.
- d. Report periodically to the churches. (1) Inform the churches of the programs (including budgets) approved and commended by the General Assembly; and (2) provide the churches with periodic updates reporting the progress in reaching the approved combined budget of the respective program committees.
- e. Arrange for the receiving of a Thank Offering each year for Worldwide Outreach.
- f. Assist the program committees in providing to the churches an annual Worldwide Outreach report, and to the General Assembly an annual financial report subjected to an audit or a review engagement by certified public accountants.
- g. Provide counsel, assistance, and literature to help support the ministry of pastors and sessions in their responsibility to teach and encourage the practice of biblical stewardship in the church.
- h. May employ a Director of Finance and Planned Giving and such staff as is needed to carry out the Committee's functions.

### 5. ALLOCATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions shall be allocated as follows:

- a. Contributions for the attainment of the total Worldwide Outreach budget shall be allocated monthly to the program committees in the proportion approved by the General Assembly for that year (after meeting the needs of the Committee on Coordination and New Horizons); checks for this purpose shall be made payable to "The Orthodox Presbyterian Church" with the notation "Worldwide Outreach."
- b. Designated contributions shall be allocated to the causes designated by the donors.

- c. Funds received by bequest, deferred gift, or from sources outside the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall not be reckoned as contributing to the fulfillment of the responsibility of the Orthodox Presbyterian churches for the approved budgets of the program committees.

## 6. PROMOTIONAL GUIDELINES

### a. Advertising

- (1) Purposes. The purposes of advertising Worldwide Outreach and the program committees' activities to the churches are to:
  - (a) Enable the churches to praise the Lord for His specific faithfulness and goodness to us;
  - (b) Enable the churches to pray intelligently and specifically for particular activities of the committees;
  - (c) Encourage the churches in their own local works;
  - (d) Inform the churches of ways in which they can participate (including financially) in the committees' activities;
  - (e) Instruct the churches in biblical principles of stewardship; and
  - (f) Discharge, in part, the committees' responsibility to report their activities to the churches.
- (2) Guidelines.
  - (a) All advertising shall be done in a manner designed to give the glory to God.
  - (b) Every effort shall be made to ensure the truthfulness and completeness of all representations made.
  - (c) Efforts shall be made to achieve a balance in presenting the various aspects of the featured activities in each piece of advertising; the financial aspects shall not be unduly emphasized.
  - (d) Whenever possible, advertising shall present specific prayer requests for the needs of the activity being featured.
  - (e) Proper vehicles for advertising the activities of the program committees include (but are not limited to) New Horizons, the OPC website, electronic newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, visits to the presbyteries and congregations by members of the committees' staff and missionaries, and electronic media presentations.
  - (f) Each of the program committees shall be encouraged to promote, both unitedly and separately, its own work, as part of Worldwide Outreach, to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
  - (g) The laying of specific financial needs before the churches shall be done in such a manner as to promote giving to Worldwide Outreach rather than designated giving to a particular committee or activity of such committee, except:
    - (i) in the case of an approved special relationship (see 7, below); or
    - (ii) with respect to an annual "Special Projects List" that is approved by a program committee and features particular needs (totaling, in the aggregate, not more than ten percent of that committee's approved budget for that year) for which general fund resources are not available (e.g., capital items). The list may be communicated annually to the churches for use in Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, missions societies, etc.—and to individual members and/or adherents only in response to their request for a copy of such.

### b. Solicitation Guidelines

- (1) As the bringing of tithes and offerings is a proper part of corporate worship, members and adherents of the churches shall be encouraged to give towards the support of activities of the program committees through the budgetary processes of the local church.
- (2) Individual members and/or adherents of the churches shall not be sent direct solicitations for funds to support the activities of the program committees. Exceptions:
  - (a) Direct solicitations made for purposes specifically authorized by the General Assembly.
  - (b) Direct solicitations made in an emergency situation (as determined by the Committee on Coordination and reported to the next General Assembly).
  - (c) General and specific financial needs for the support of the activities of the program committees described in New Horizons (which is mailed directly to the residences of

members and adherents), and in bulletin inserts and similar materials mailed to the churches at their church address.

- (d) Communications made in response to a designated gift.

## 7. SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS

A program committee may, with the approval of the Committee on Coordination, seek to undertake a special relationship with one or more session(s) or presbytery(s) to implement a part of that committee's program with respect to a specific missionary or project. The contemplated special relationship includes a commitment by the session or presbytery to provide financial support for the missionary or the project from sources that are over and above its regular giving to the Worldwide Outreach combined budget. All approved special relationships shall be reviewed by the Committee and reported to the General Assembly annually.

## F. GUIDELINES FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES

1. All members of the Assembly, and such corresponding members and alternates as may be used to advantage, excepting the Moderator, the Clerks, and those commissioners whose presence is needed for presentation or questioning by Temporary or Advisory Committees, shall be assigned to Temporary or Advisory Committees.
2. Recommendations of Advisory Committees shall be considered secondary to the reports and recommendations of the committees whose reports they review; thus the order of consideration of reports and recommendations shall be:
  - a. Report of the committee
  - b. Report of the Advisory Committee
  - c. Recommendations of the committee
  - d. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee (may be moved as amendments to the recommendations of the committee)
3. The Assembly shall recess prior to presentation of the main body of committee reports to permit Temporary and Advisory Committees to meet and do their work.
4. In proposing the assignment of matters and commissioners to Temporary and Advisory Committees, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the moderator of the previous assembly shall observe the following:
  - a. Commissioners shall not be assigned to Advisory Committees that are to review reports of Standing or Special Committees on which they serve or of which they are employees, except for members of the Committee on Appeals and Complaints, as provided in the *Standing Rules of the General Assembly*, X,2.b.
  - b. Not more than two commissioners from the same presbytery shall normally be assigned to the same Temporary or Advisory Committee. However, each member of the Committee to Examine Presbyterial Records shall be drawn from a different presbytery.
5. In discharging their assignments, Advisory Committees shall observe the following:
  - a. Suggestions of Advisory Committees concerning the work of any committee under review shall be given directly to the committee and not brought to the floor of the Assembly, unless they involve a redirection, expansion, or diminution of that work.
  - b. Silence by an Advisory Committee with respect to the work or recommendations of a committee under review shall be construed as general approval of the work and concurrence in the recommendations.
  - c. Advisory Committees shall not bring recommendations or advice to the Assembly that is critical of or at variance with the work or recommendations of a committee without first conferring with at least one representative of the committee, if there be one available.
  - d. Temporary and Advisory Committees shall arrange to have at least two of their members prepared to report to the Assembly on any matter under review, in order to avoid confusion arising from unexpected or early departures of spokesmen from the Assembly. Reports of Advisory Committees shall ordinarily be signed by the chairman.

## G. CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED COMMISSION ON



## CHAPLAINS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL

### Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel.

### Article II. PURPOSES

The Commission is an agent of its member denominations (not an ecclesiastical commission in the technical sense). The Commission was created to assist in carrying out their ministries to members of the Armed Forces and other institutions. Since the primary structure of such ministries is through formal chaplaincies, the principal activity and concern of the Commission shall be involved with chaplains.

In carrying out its mission, the Commission functions in the following ways:

1. By maintaining liaison with the appropriate contact point of each member denomination, and through their various presbyteries, to:
  - a. Provide current information regarding criteria, policies and procedures for the appointment of ministers as chaplains.
  - b. Provide a technical service to the presbyteries by recommending qualified candidates to the chaplaincy.
2. By maintaining cooperative relationships with the Armed Forces Chaplain Board and the leadership of military and other institutional chaplaincies by:
  - a. Certifying to the proper agencies the ecclesiastical endorsements and approvals granted by the member denominations through their various presbyteries.
  - b. Serving as a representative body for problems referred by or concerning chaplains, both individually and collectively.
3. By maintaining contact and liaison with individual chaplains serving in the Armed Forces and other institutions through regular reports, newsletters, written correspondence, and personal visits as authorized by the Commission.
4. By establishing and maintaining methods of liaison with individual congregations of the member denominations to assist them in providing adequate ministry to their members while they are separated from the particular church during periods in the Armed Forces and other institutions.
5. By keeping member denominations informed on significant developments, trends, issues and problems concerning chaplains and members of the Armed Forces and other institutions and to report annually on the activity of the Commission to each member denomination through the proper agencies.
6. By assisting the presbyteries in the promotion of the ministry of the Chaplaincy to the member denominations and their particular churches.

### Article III. MEMBERSHIP

The Commission is made up of the following member denominations:

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
2. Korean American Presbyterian Church
3. Orthodox Presbyterian Church
4. Presbyterian Church in America
5. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Any member denomination may withdraw from the Commission by act of its General Assembly/Synod. Any denomination seeking membership in the Commission shall:

1. Submit a letter of application for membership to the Commission no later than 1 January of the year in which it desires membership.
2. Be approved by vote of all current member denominations at their General Assembly/Synod. Each member denomination or its responsible committee shall elect its representatives to serve

as voting members of the Commission, with qualifications and terms to be set by the member denominations.

Each denomination shall be entitled to three Commission members for its first fifty thousand members or portion thereof. One Commission member may be added for each additional fifty thousand members or portion thereof.

The Commission may serve as the endorsing agency for applicants of associate member denominations that are in doctrinal agreement with the standards of the member denominations. The Commission will only entertain applications from denominations that are members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) for associate membership in the PRCC. Formal applications from associate member denominations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to approval at the next meeting of the Commission.

#### Article IV. INCORPORATION

The Commission shall be incorporated under the corporation laws of the State of Colorado relating to non-profit, religious corporations.

#### Article V. RULES OF ORDER

The Commission shall regulate its own proceedings in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, By-Laws, and Roberts Rules of Order (current edition). Any portion of the By-Laws and their rules of order, except Article VII of the By-Laws, may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote.

#### Article VI. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Commission shall be financially supported primarily through contributions of member denominations and donations from interested individuals, churches and groups. Commission income shall be supplemented by the dues of endorsed chaplains.

The financial support of the Commission shall be primarily the responsibility of the member denominations, for whom the Commission endorses and supports chaplains.

1. Each denomination shall contribute a specific annual amount for each endorsed chaplain.
2. In addition, the Commission shall be free to communicate with and to receive donations from individuals, churches or other organizations, both within and outside of the denominations.
3. Each denomination shall be responsible for all expenses incurred by its own representatives at any meetings of the Commission or its committees.

Chaplains also have a responsibility to share in the cost of their endorsement and support. Chaplain dues, as distinct from denominational contributions, will be assessed and received as follows:

1. Amounts of chaplain dues shall be reviewed by the Commission at least biennially.
2. Every endorsed chaplain shall pay a designated amount of annual dues. Requests for waivers of dues shall be considered by the Commission when received in writing.
3. A chaplain may request his church, presbytery, or denomination to pay some or all of his dues, or a presbytery or denomination may elect to contribute all or part of their chaplains' dues to the Commission.
4. If a chaplain's dues remain unpaid, and a waiver request is not approved by the Commission, the Executive Director shall inform his denominational representatives on the Commission. The Chaplain's denomination will become responsible for the dues, and will deal with the chaplain through his presbytery as it desires. Failure to pay dues by the chaplain or his supporting church, etc. (see #3 above), or by the denomination to cover for the chaplain (as stated above in this section), may lead to the withdrawal of endorsement.

#### Article VII. STAFF

The Commission shall have as its chief operating officer an Executive Director, and may hire such other personnel as it may determine.

## Article VIII. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended only by written submission of proposed amendments to each member denomination and by subsequent approval of each denomination at their annual General Assembly/Synod. Proposed amendments shall be provided to members of the Commission with at least twenty days prior notice to the date of the meeting. If a constitutional quorum is present, a 3/4ths vote shall be required to submit a proposed amendment to member denominations' General Assembly/Synod for approval.

## APPENDIX A

The following are policy guidelines which apply to the ministry of chaplains of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church serving with the military. They are not changes to the Constitution of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel but serve to explain and codify specific issues considered necessary by this denomination.

- 1). Since the Orthodox Presbyterian Church holds that the office of minister, or teaching elder, is given only to biblically qualified men, it is impermissible for any minister of this Church serving as a military chaplain to share in the conduct of any service of public worship where those not meeting biblical qualifications take part in the leading of that worship service. This principle does not prohibit such a chaplain from working with chaplains from other denominations in biblically appropriate areas of cooperative ministry.
- 2). Our chaplains will provide compassionate and caring ministry to all service members and their families regardless of sexual orientation and behavior or the diseases with which they may be afflicted. At the same time we will never condone the sinful and destructive behavior of homosexuals. Those OPC chaplains endorsed by the Commission will continue to preach the whole counsel of God, but are not permitted to conduct divine worship with homosexual chaplains, are not permitted to have homosexual ministry assistants, and are not permitted to perform same-sex marriages.

### H. GUIDELINES FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPERATION FUND

1. Those making contributions for the attainment of the approved budgets of the General Assembly Operation Fund (GAOF) are encouraged to make their checks payable to "The Orthodox Presbyterian Church" and to note "GAOF" thereon.
2. Standing or special committees that draw upon the GAOF for their expenses shall limit their expenses to the amounts set by the Assembly when it adopts the budget for the GAOF, except as follows:
  - a. The Stated Clerk may authorize such a committee to spend up to 10% over its budget, upon request of the committee submitted prior to the incurring of the expense, if in his judgment the expense will be offset by a corresponding under-expenditure elsewhere in the GAOF.
  - b. In situations in which the Stated Clerk and the Trustees of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church jointly determine to be of overriding importance to the Church, they may (if there are sufficient funds on hand in the GAOF) authorize an expenditure in excess of that allowed in a. above, and they shall report their decision (together with the reasons therefor) to the next General Assembly.
  - c. Gifts designated for projects/purposes included in approved budgets shall not increase the total amount budgeted for that committee/cause unless the GAOF has met its budgeted receipts.
  - d. Gifts specially designated for projects/purposes not included in approved budgets may be accepted only upon approval by the Stated Clerk (after consulting with the appropriate committee), who shall determine whether such gifts shall or shall not be reckoned in fulfillment of the approved budget.
  - e. Gifts received by bequest or from sources outside the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall not be reckoned as contributing to the fulfillment of the approved budget.