

STRUCTURE OF ALBANY PRESBYTERY—PROPOSED

INTRODUCTION

The Presbytery of Albany is a community of congregations and other forms of collective witness engaged in the mission of God in our particular context. We are the people of God called by Jesus Christ to ministry and empowered by the Holy Spirit with all the gifts of the gospel necessary for the fulfillment of God's mission. We are bound together in communion with one another and united in relationships of accountability and responsibility. We are committed to providing opportunities for all of God's people to contribute their gifts for the benefit of the whole as we seek to be faithful to our common calling in Christ.

In Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all creation, we seek a new openness to God's mission in the world. As we participate in God's mission, the Presbytery of Albany seeks:

- (1) a new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world, to a more radical obedience to Christ, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;
- (2) a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity;
- (3) a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God's activity in the world; and
- (4) a new openness to God's continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be more effective in its mission. [see F-1.0404]

PURPOSE

The responsibilities of the Presbytery shall be

- a) governing the church throughout its district;
- b) assisting & supporting the witness of congregations and non-congregational entities to the sovereign activity of God in the world;
- c) assisting & supporting congregations in becoming communities of faith, hope, love, and witness;
- d) fulfilling all of the responsibilities entrusted to the Presbytery by the *Book of Order*;
- e) fostering fellowship, trust, and love (see G-1.0102).

MEETINGS

The Presbytery shall ordinarily meet three times per year for business and two times per year for education and spiritual growth.

COMMITTEES, BOARDS, & COMMISSIONS

All committees, boards, and commissions are responsible to the Presbytery. All committees, boards, and commissions work under the supervision of the Presbytery through its Committee on Coordination.

All committees and the Board of Trustees shall have the power to appoint subcommittees and task forces to carry out particular aspects of their work. All such appointed groups shall work under the supervision of the appointing committee.

Where required by the *Book of Order*, particular committee responsibilities will be carried out by teaching elders and ruling elders only. In all other cases, the Presbytery welcomes the participation of all members in our common work. In addition, we commit ourselves to welcoming to our common work all participants in our congregations and other forms of corporate witness.

Committees are encouraged to utilize and/or employ professionals with particular expertise to assist them in their work. Any employment of professionals shall be considered in consultation with the Committee on Personnel and the Committee on Budget and Finance.

Committees will seek opportunities to work cooperatively with other presbyteries and ecumenical entities to fulfill their particular responsibilities. Such cooperation will be done in consultation with the Committee on Coordination.

All committees, task forces, and teams shall engage in regular discernment regarding their area of responsibility, in order to seek a vision for what God is doing in the Presbytery and its constituent congregations and corporate witnesses.

All committees will develop plans for fulfilling its ministry responsibilities. These plans may be annual or multi-year. These plans shall be presented to the Presbytery annually for review and approval.

All committees will work with the Committee on Budget and Finance to develop a plan of financial support for the ministry plans of the committee. Committees will be accountable to the Presbytery through its Committee on Budget and Finance for administering its approved spending.

All committees, task forces, and teams shall adopt ways to effectively communicate with the Presbytery concerning their work, decisions made for the Presbytery, and business to be considered by the Presbytery.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNANCE

Coordination Committee (*Moderator, Stated Clerk, Vice Moderator, executive/professional staff, committee chairs or representatives as needed*)

- coordinate agenda for business meetings of the Presbytery
- facilitate planning for education and spiritual growth meetings of the Presbytery
- propose a schedule (dates, times, & locations) for meetings of the Presbytery
- call special meetings of the Presbytery when appropriate
- communicate regularly with all committees to assure that work is done in a timely manner
- work with the Committee on Leadership Development to develop and implement regular plans for growth in leadership skills for those serving in various capacities within the Presbytery
- work with all committees to develop opportunities to work cooperatively with other presbyteries and ecumenical entities to fulfill their particular responsibilities

Committee on Representation & Nominations (5 members)

- advise the Presbytery regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity
- advocate for diversity in Presbytery leadership
- consult with the Presbytery on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403
- nominate persons to serve in positions requiring election by the Presbytery, ensuring that nominations are broadly representative of the Presbytery and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403)

Committee on Budget & Finance (5 members)

- prepare and propose a budget for annual operating expenses, including administrative personnel, to support the church's mission within the Presbytery
- propose to the Presbytery the means for funding the operating budget
- conduct a full financial review of all financial books and records every year
- present a financial report at each business meeting of the Presbytery
- consult and coordinate with the Board of Trustees concerning financial issues impacting the Presbytery budget

Committee on Personnel (5 members)

- develop and administer the personnel policies of the Presbytery
- propose job descriptions and compensation for Presbytery staff and employees to the Presbytery
- review and evaluate the work of Presbytery staff and employees and report annually to the Presbytery
- provide care and support for all Presbytery employees
- facilitate the process for employing and terminating Presbytery employees

Board of Trustees (7 members) [Ruling Elders & Teaching Elders]

- receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the Presbytery
- monitor and oversee the financial condition of loans co-signed by the Presbytery
- administer the Grants and Loans Program
- assist congregations in developing plans for the care and maintenance of buildings
- consult and coordinate with the Committee on Budget and Finance concerning financial issues impacting the Presbytery budget

The Board of Trustees is commissioned to:

- consider and act upon requests from congregations for permission to take the actions regarding real property as described in G-4.0206**

Permanent Judicial Commission (7 members) [Ruling Elders & Teaching Elders]

- shall consider and decide cases of process for the Presbytery according to the Rules of Discipline
- shall be composed of no fewer than seven members, with no more than one of its ruling elder members from any one of its constituent churches
- the term of each member shall be six years, with members elected in three classes and with no more than one half of the members to be in one class

MINISTRY OF ASSISTANCE, SUPPORT, & DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Teaching Elders and Congregations (Min: 9 members Max: 15 members)

- serve as pastor and counselor to all Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders
- facilitate relationships between congregations and Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders
- counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including: (1) advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties, (2) offering to help as a mediator, and (3) acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Rules of Discipline
- recommend to the Presbytery the appointment of commissions to assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority
- propose annually the minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators for approval by the presbytery
- propose and administer the Presbytery's financial support for teaching elders and congregations

This Committee is commissioned to:

- appoint administrative commissions of Presbytery for the purpose of ordaining and installing Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders to particular pastoral service**
- approve terms of call and contracts for Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders**
- examine and receive Teaching Elders by transfer from other presbyteries for the purpose of accepting valid calls to ministry and membership in the Presbytery; and for membership in the Presbytery as at-large and honorably retired.**
- approve and review annually the work of all teaching elders engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation**

Committee on Leadership Development (Min: 5 members Max: 9 members)

- care for and supervise of candidates and inquirers for ordination as Teaching Elders
- supervise the preparation of Commissioned Ruling Elders
- work with the Committee on Coordination to develop and implement regular plans for growth in leadership skills for those serving in various capacities within the Presbytery
- propose and administer the Presbytery's financial support for preparation for ministry

This Committee is commissioned to:

- enroll inquirers in covenant relationship with the Presbytery**
- transfer inquirers and candidates to other presbyteries**
- receive inquirers and candidates by transfer from other presbyteries**
- perform annual consultations with inquirers and candidates**
- certify candidates ready to receive a call and give candidates permission circulate their Personal Information Form**
- remove an individual from inquirer status**

Committee on Church Development (Min: 9 members Max: 12 members)

- promote, support, and coordinate the establishment of new congregations, new worshiping communities, fellowship groups, non-congregational entities, and other forms of corporate witness
- support congregations in the work of transformation, revitalization, and transition
- propose and administer the Presbytery's financial support for church development

Committee on Church Mission (Min: 9 members Max: 12 members)

- develop and support ways in which the Presbytery, its congregations and pastors, its members engaged in validated ministries, and its new congregations, new worshiping communities, fellowship groups, and other non-congregational entities can fulfill the mission of God in Christ, guided particularly by the Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304)
- encourage and support ministry partnerships among congregations, regions, and ecumenical and interfaith organizations which fulfill the mission of church
- promote and support ministries of social, racial, and environmental justice, peacemaking, and self-empowerment throughout the congregations of the Presbytery
- promote and support ministries of proclamation, evangelism, and discipleship throughout the congregations of the Presbytery
- propose and administer the Presbytery’s financial support for church mission

REVIEW AND REFORM

The Presbytery shall review its structure every three years in order to evaluate the effectiveness in fulfilling its stated responsibilities. After review, proposals for reform to the structure will be made to the Presbytery at a regular business meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The Presbytery Council recommends that the Stated Clerk propose changes to the Standing Rules to facilitate implementation of the new Presbytery structure.
- (2) The Presbytery Council recommends that the Guatemala Partnership Task Force and the Peacemaking Task Force function under the supervision of the Committee on Church Mission.
- (3) The Presbytery Council recommends that the Ministry Plan be implemented by the Committee on Church Development.
- (4) The Presbytery Council recommends that the Committee on Coordination and the Committee on Leadership Development lead an annual retreat to train Presbytery leaders.
- (5) The Presbytery Council recommends the creation of a task force to work with the Transitional Presbyter to complete the transition plan adopted by the Presbytery Council. Members of the current Presbytery Council shall compose this task force.