

# Presbytery of Southern New England

Bylaws, Adopted November 16, 2019

## Section 1 – Preamble

- 1.1. The name of this Presbytery shall be The Presbytery of Southern New England. This Presbytery and its member churches are an integral part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and as such are subject to its Constitution, which consists of the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*. This Presbytery and all bodies subordinate to it, as appropriate, shall be conducted in accordance with the most current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, except when otherwise provided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these By-Laws or required by the rules applicable to it as a corporation in the state or states where it is incorporated.
- 1.2. The geographic bounds of this Presbytery are established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): the State of Connecticut, the State of Rhode Island, and those portions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts west of the western boundary of the County of Worcester, and south of the forty-second degree of latitude, and including all of Cape Cod.
- 1.3. The Presbytery of Southern New England shall be the ecclesiastical and corporate successor to the former Presbyteries of Connecticut Valley and of Providence, and shall be entitled to all the rights, privileges, properties, funds, obligations, and liabilities of the two predecessor presbyteries, subject always to the provisions made by those who have given or bequeathed property or money to the two former presbyteries.

## Section 2 – Membership

- 2.1. All ministers properly enrolled as active members or members-at-large of the Presbytery, and all elders who have been properly elected as Elder Commissioners by the sessions of member churches, and all elders who are serving as officers, as members of Roundtable, or as chairpersons of committees as named in these By-Laws, shall be voting members of Presbytery. All persons who are elected officers, chairpersons of committees, members of committees or to any other position shall be ministers who are active members or members-at-large of Presbytery or elders, deacons or unordained persons who hold active membership in one of the member churches.
- 2.2. Each church which is a member of Presbytery shall be entitled to be represented in Presbytery by two (2) ruling elders elected to serve as Elder Commissioners. Churches reporting a membership of 1,000 or more at the end of the prior calendar year shall be entitled to be represented in Presbytery by three (3) elected Elder Commissioners.

When the number of resident ministers entitled to vote in the presbytery is greater than the number of elders so entitled, the imbalance shall be redressed in the following manner. Each year the Stated Clerk shall invite the sessions of a number of the particular Churches of the presbytery to designate one additional elder to serve as a Commissioner, such that there is a balance of elders and ministers entitled to vote. The Stated Clerk shall issue such invitations from year to year in such a manner that all of the particular Churches of the presbytery are afforded an opportunity for additional representation with equal frequency. In determining the number of additional elder commissioners required, the Stated Clerk may consider the attendance of minister members at meetings of the Presbytery.

- 2.3. Sessions may elect Elder commissioners for a term of up to one full year, and may reelect them annually. Elders who by election or appointment to Presbytery positions are voting members of Presbytery, shall not normally be elected as commissioners to Presbytery while serving in such positions. Should a commissioner not be able to attend, the session may elect an alternate.

## **Section 3 – Meetings**

- 3.1. There shall be four (4) stated meetings of Presbytery each year. All meetings of Presbytery shall be opened and closed with prayer, and a worship service shall be conducted during the course of the meeting. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least annually at a stated meeting.
- 3.2. The Committee on Arrangements shall consist of the Session of the host church, or the Presbytery staff when a meeting is not held in a local church.
- 3.3. Excuses for absence from meetings or requests for leaves of absence shall be presented to the Stated Clerk, who shall report to the Presbytery.
- 3.4. If for a period of one year or more, a session of a congregation of the presbytery fails to appoint commissioners without good cause, or if a minister member of the presbytery neglects to attend meetings of the presbytery without good cause, the Committee on Ministry shall inquire of the session or minister member as to the reasons for the failure to attend meetings. If the Committee on Ministry discovers continuing impediments to the participation of ruling elders or ministers which the presbytery is able to correct, it shall report them to the Presbytery Roundtable, which shall propose such measures as may afford more opportunities for participation.
- 3.5. The Presbytery shall hold a stated meeting in the month of May, which shall be the Annual Meeting of the Presbytery. The Roundtable shall have the authority to set the particular times and places of stated meetings, subject to amendment by the Presbytery.
- 3.6. Ordinarily all business matters coming to the Presbytery of Southern New England for consideration shall be presented at a stated meeting. If the delay in waiting for a stated

meeting should cause significant hardship for the parties concerned, then a special meeting of the Presbytery may be called as follows:

- A. The request for the meeting must be presented to the Stated Clerk no less than thirty days in advance of the special meeting, except that a majority of the Roundtable may call a special meeting by any means practicable.
  - B. The Presbytery shall be reimbursed by the congregation or the individual(s) presenting the request in the amount of \$400.00 for each special meeting, to cover the unbudgeted cost of such meetings. *If* the Roundtable determines that such an amount would cause undue hardship, it may choose to reduce or waive the cost.
- 3.7. A quorum of Presbytery shall be any twelve (12) voting minister members and twelve (12) elder commissioners representing at least six (6) churches present at the appointed time and place of the meeting.
- 3.8. The fiscal year of the Presbytery shall be the calendar year.

## Section 4 – Officers

- 4.1. The officers of the Presbytery shall be the **Moderator**, the **Vice Moderator**, the **Stated Clerk**, and the **Treasurer**.
- 4.2. Any question of an officer's availability or absence shall be resolved by the Roundtable.
- 4.3. The **Moderator** shall be the presiding officer of the Presbytery and shall fulfill all of the functions of the Moderator as specified in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0104. The term of office shall be one year, and the Moderator shall not be eligible for election to a second consecutive term. The Moderator shall serve as a member *ex officio* of the Roundtable with vote, and ordinarily shall have no other responsibility in the Presbytery during the moderatorial year. The Moderator shall be invited to represent the Presbytery at services of ordination and installation for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and shall be invited to put the constitutional questions to the person(s) being ordained or installed.
- 4.4. The **Vice Moderator** shall be elected for a term of one year. At the end of that term, the Vice Moderator shall ordinarily be nominated as the next Moderator. The Vice Moderator shall serve as a member *ex officio* of the Roundtable with vote. The Vice Moderator may discharge any or all of the functions of the Moderator when requested by the presiding officer to do so; when, at any meeting of the Presbytery the Moderator is absent or incapacitated; or upon the death of the Moderator or upon the Moderator's removal or withdrawal from the Presbytery, or upon the Moderator's resignation from that office. The Vice Moderator may concurrently serve as a chairperson or member of any committee.
- 4.5. If the Moderator and Vice Moderator are absent at the opening of the meeting, the next previous Moderator present shall preside or, in the absence of any former Moderator,

the Stated Clerk shall convene the meeting of the Presbytery and shall call for the nomination of a moderator *pro tempore* who shall be elected to preside at that meeting of the Presbytery only.

- 4.6. The **Stated Clerk**, as provided for in the *Book of Order*, is an officer of the Presbytery and responsible for recording transactions, keeping its rolls of members and attendees, preserving its records, and furnishing extracts when requested by another council of the church (G-3.0104).

The Stated Clerk maintains the roster of names and terms of members of the Permanent Judicial Commission and, if necessary, selects former members to serve in the event the Commission is unable to reach a quorum (D-5.0206).

The Stated Clerk fulfills all responsibilities assigned under the Book of Order.

In addition, the Stated Clerk shall fulfill such other duties as may be assigned by the Roundtable, or at the appropriate request of the General Assembly or Synod. The Stated Clerk shall hold the seal of the corporation. The Stated Clerk shall provide copies of the Bylaws of the Presbytery to any elder commissioner or minister member of the Presbytery upon request. The Stated Clerk shall serve as the Secretary and Recording Clerk of the Roundtable, shall be Secretary of the Corporation, and Recording Clerk for the Committee on Ministry, in each case *ex officio* and without vote.

The Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Presbytery, shall serve for a term of five years, and may be re-elected. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible to the Presbytery through the Roundtable and its Personnel Committee.

The work of the Stated Clerk and all aspects of the Clerk's compensation shall be thoroughly and constructively reviewed not less than annually by the Roundtable, primarily through the agency of the Personnel Committee, with due regard for goals and priorities mutually agreed upon at the beginning of such period and with such consultation with higher councils as may be required.

- 4.7. The **Treasurer** shall be the keeper of all monies controlled by the Presbytery and shall perform all the duties normally connected with the office of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall also serve as a member of the Board of Trustees and the Roundtable *ex officio* without vote. The Treasurer shall be elected for such term as the Presbytery may determine and may be re-elected.

## Section 5 – General Presbyter

- 5.1. The General Presbyter serves as chief administrator of the Presbytery, accountable to the Roundtable and the Presbytery for implementation of decisions and matters of strategy, program, and resources. The General Presbyter supervises and provides staff services for the agencies and committees of the Presbytery. The responsibilities of the

General Presbyter include, but are not limited to: developing leadership, planning and organizing, budgeting, communicating, and evaluating.

In addition, the General Presbyter shall fulfill such other duties as assigned by the Presbytery or the Roundtable, including leadership in worship, prayer, nurture and support of the Presbytery's pastors, congregations, and church leaders. The General Presbyter is to serve as a resource for new ideas and fresh approaches to problems and challenges within the Presbytery.

- 5.2. The General Presbyter shall be nominated and elected as specified in the Presbytery's *Manual of Operations*, and shall serve for an indefinite period.
- 5.3. The General Presbyter shall be administratively responsible to the Roundtable, through its Personnel Committee.
- 5.4. The work of the General Presbyter, and all aspects of the General Presbyter's compensation, shall be thoroughly and constructively reviewed not less than annually by the Roundtable primarily through the agency of the Personnel Committee, with due regard for goals and priorities mutually agreed upon at the beginning of such period, and with such consultation with such higher councils as may be required.
- 5.5. When a General Presbyter is elected, a call shall be issued enumerating the terms of the call, which shall be governed by the Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Presbytery. The General Presbyter shall give not less than two months written notice to Roundtable of his or her intention to resign. Presbytery shall give the General Presbyter not less than two months written notice, or pay in lieu thereof in whole or in part, of its intention to terminate the General Presbyter's services.

## Section 6 – Roundtable

- 6.1. The Presbytery Roundtable shall be composed of the co-chairpersons of the Roundtable, the Moderator of the Presbytery, the Vice Moderator of the Presbytery, the co-chairpersons of the Committee on Ministry, the President of the Board of Trustees, the co-chairpersons of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, the chairperson of the Presbytery Nominating Committee, the chairperson of the Personnel Committee, the chairperson of the Committee on Representation, and four members at large. The balance between ministers and elders who are voting members of the Roundtable shall be as equal as possible. Elders or ministers elected at large shall serve three-year terms and shall be divided into three classes, one class to terminate service each year, and may be reelected, but shall not serve as members-at-large on the Roundtable for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. Members of Roundtable who for this reason are ineligible for reelection shall become eligible for election to a new term after one year shall have elapsed from the end of the prior term.

- 6.2. The General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the Treasurer shall be members of the Roundtable *ex officio* without vote.
- 6.3. The co-chairpersons of the Roundtable shall be elected by Presbytery to serve a three-year term and may serve a total of not more than two consecutive terms, but shall be ineligible thereafter to be elected to a new term until one year shall have elapsed. The co-chairpersons of the Roundtable shall be either ministers or elders.
- 6.4. In the absence of the co-chairpersons of Roundtable, the Moderator or Vice Moderator shall preside at meetings of the Roundtable.
- 6.5. The duties and responsibilities of the Roundtable shall be:
  - A. To promote the growth, work and health of the Presbytery as an instance of the Body of Christ—with special concern for the relationship of the Presbytery to its congregations, immigrant fellowships, and emerging faith communities—and the coordination and effectiveness of the work of its Committees;
  - B. To review periodically the functional relationship between the Presbytery's structure and its Mission Statement;
  - C. To engage in an ongoing process of planning and reform;
  - D. To report to each stated meeting of the Presbytery actions and decisions of the Roundtable since the last such report;
  - E. To prepare the docket of business for meetings of the Presbytery with the assistance of the Stated Clerk;
  - F. To plan and arrange for the implementation of themes, emphases, and services of worship for meetings of the Presbytery;
  - G. To promote effective communication throughout the Presbytery;
  - H. To nominate for election by the Presbytery candidates to serve as chairperson and members of the Presbytery Nominating Committee;
  - I. To correspond with the councils of Synod and General Assembly;
  - J. To establish, appoint, and dismiss task forces of limited duration to complete work not already included in the work of the Committees of the Presbytery;
  - K. To direct the work of the employed staff through the General Presbyter;
  - L. To review, regularly, the work of the Personnel Committee;
  - M. To review and evaluate at least annually through the Personnel Committee the work of the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and all other staff;
  - N. To maintain and promote adherence to the Presbytery's *Manual of Administrative Operations*;

- O. To observe the principles of participation and inclusiveness (G-3.0103) in all its actions, and to promote these principles within the life of the Presbytery as a whole;
  - P. To consider and make recommendations to Presbytery concerning:
    - 1. all budget items, including the *per capita* apportionment;
    - 2. all solicitations of funds except those initiated by a session for that local church's mission and those previously endorsed by the General Assembly;
    - 3. the budgets of the missionary and benevolent causes and agencies as adopted by the General Assembly;
    - 4. all proposals and appeals for money from funds controlled by the Presbytery before the Presbytery may act on the same;
    - 5. all committee proposals for policy changes for the Presbytery, making appropriate comments thereon, but not amendments thereto, before they are put before the Presbytery.
  - Q. To fill, upon the recommendation of the Presbytery Nominating Committee, any vacancy occurring in any office or position normally filled by election by the Presbytery, excluding the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk. The Presbytery shall confirm such action at its next stated meeting, or else elect another person for the balance of the unexpired term.
  - R. To take such appropriate actions as may be necessary, between stated meetings of the Presbytery, to promote and preserve the Presbytery's welfare;
  - S. To evaluate and make recommendations concerning programs or proposed programs of organizations within the Presbytery bounds for which requests for funding have been received by a denomination-wide agency seeking the endorsement of the Presbytery for such funding;
- 6.6. The decisions of the Roundtable implementing any of the responsibilities listed in the By Laws shall take immediate effect, but are subject to review and amendment or reversal by the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.
- 6.7. The Roundtable shall meet at least four times each year. Special meetings of the Roundtable may be called by its co-chairs, and shall be called at the request of any three voting members of the **Roundtable**. A quorum of the **Roundtable** shall be a majority of its members assembled at the designated time and place.

## The Personnel Committee

- 6.8. The Personnel Committee shall be composed of a chairperson and four members. The members of this committee shall be ministers, elders, deacons, or unordained active church members. The Personnel Committee is a sub-committee of the Roundtable.

- 6.9. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority and responsibility:
- A. To act as the agent of the Roundtable in providing the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk with administrative supervision, and in reviewing thoroughly and constructively the work and all aspects of compensation of the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk at least annually;
  - B. To recommend to the Roundtable personnel policies and procedures, including policies for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action;
  - C. To review personnel matters referred to it by the General Presbyter, or referred by the personal initiative of any staff member, after following the procedures outlined in the *Manual of Administrative Operations*, and providing a full and impartial hearing for all parties involved;
  - D. To serve as the nominating committee for temporary or permanent administrative staff other than the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk, excluding clerical staff;
  - E. To serve, in consultation with the Presbytery Nominating Committee, as the nominating committee for Stated Clerk;
  - F. To provide care and support to the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and other staff;
  - G. To assist the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk on behalf of the Roundtable in developing their goals, objectives, and work schedules.

## **Judicial Process**

- 6.10. Whenever it becomes necessary, the Roundtable chairperson or co-chairpersons and the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the Presby, together with the Stated Clerk, shall appoint an Investigating Committee for judicial process, in accordance with the Rules of Discipline (D-10.0201b).

## **Section 7 – Committees of the Presbytery**

- 7.1. The Presbytery's Committees shall work to accomplish the mission of the Presbytery within their particular areas of responsibility.
- 7.2. The chairperson (or co-chairpersons) of each committee shall be elected by the Presbytery, unless otherwise specified, to serve a term of one year. They may serve a total of not more than three consecutive terms, but shall be ineligible thereafter to be elected to a new term until one year shall have elapsed. A chairperson (or co-chairperson) of a committee must be either a minister member of the Presbytery, or an elder who is an active member of one of the Presbytery's congregations.



- 7.3. The members of each committee, including the chairperson(s), shall be divided into three classes as nearly equal as possible, one class of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term. In any committee with a complement of more than five members, the numbers of ministers and of elders in any class shall be as nearly equal as practicable. In any committee on which deacons and unordained active church members may serve, the total number of ministers and elders together shall constitute a majority of the total membership, including the chairperson(s). No member of any committee shall serve on that committee for consecutive terms, either full or partial, as a member or chairperson, aggregating more than six years, and shall be ineligible thereafter for election to a new term on that committee until one year shall have elapsed.
- 7.4. A quorum for a committee shall be a majority of its voting members.
- 7.5. Unless otherwise specified, the term of service for committee members begins immediately upon their election.
- 7.6. If a committee member fails to attend three or more scheduled meetings within any twelve-month period, without asking to be excused or providing sufficient explanation, the chairperson(s) may declare that member's position to have been vacated, and so notify the member, and advise the Presbytery Nominating Committee of the need for a replacement member to serve out the balance of the term.
- 7.7. Each committee shall ordinarily hold no fewer than four scheduled meetings each year. Meetings should not be scheduled in such a way to draw the members of the committee away from participating in the business and fellowship of a meeting of the Presbytery.
- 7.8. Only those members present and assembled at the designated time and place of a committee meeting, or those participating remotely as provided for in Section 16 of these Bylaws, may vote on matters before the committee. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
- 7.9. All reports and recommendations from committees to be made to the Presbytery shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk before they are presented on the floor of Presbytery. Any recommendation affecting policy, budget, and/or operational procedures of the Presbytery shall be submitted to the Roundtable for consideration prior to submission to Presbytery.
- 7.10. The chairperson of any committee shall have access to the Roundtable at the request of the Roundtable or, having provided the Stated Clerk with advance notice, at the chairperson's own request.
- 7.11. The committees shall have the following general responsibilities:
  - A. To administer the projects and funds assigned by the Presbytery;
  - B. To present budget or funding requests to the Board of Trustees or Roundtable, as appropriate, and to operate within the approved budget;

- C. To communicate to the Presbytery Office the proposed time, date, and location of each meeting, conference, workshop, and other event as far in advance as possible, and to advise of any change in such matters as promptly as possible;
- D. To report to the Presbytery at least annually in writing, and to include in the report all recommendations written as motions for actions by the Presbytery.

## Section 8 – The Committee on Ministry

- 8.1. The Committee on Ministry shall carry out the work of the Presbytery as Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to the Presbytery's ministers and congregations (G-3.0307). It shall be composed of two co-chairpersons and sixteen other members, divided as evenly as possible between ministers and ruling elders.
- 8.2. The Committee on Ministry shall have the authority and the responsibility:
- A. To develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ministers of the Word and Sacrament commissioned pastors [also known as commissioned ruling elders]), and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient (G-3.0307).
  - B. To make recommendations to the Presbytery regarding:
    1. the Standards for Ministerial Compensation;
    2. approval of terms of call for all installed pastors;
    3. annual validation of the ministries of those minister members serving in ministries beyond the PC(U.S.A.)
  - C. To provide counseling resources for professionals in the parishes and specialized ministries as the need may arise;
  - D. To provide for the spiritual and emotional development of all clergy;
  - E. To appoint a moderator of a session where the pulpit is declared vacant;
  - F. To counsel with a member church if the various constituencies of the congregation are not fairly represented on the session;
  - G. To appoint a commission for the ordination and/or installation of a minister who has received a properly approved call to labor within the bounds of Presbytery;
  - H. To dismiss ministers, in good standing, who are without pastoral charge, in the intervals between stated meetings of Presbytery;
  - I. To dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss ministers in good standing to a calling Presbytery, in the interval between stated meetings of Presbytery, when requested by both the congregation and the minister;
- 8.3. The Committee on Ministry shall have the Presbytery's authority to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the Presbytery, and to dismiss members to other presbyteries, provided that all such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery

## Section 9 – The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

- 9.1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall be composed of a chairperson or two co-chairpersons, and sufficient members to constitute a total membership of nine. The members of this committee shall be ministers or elders, and their numbers shall be as nearly equal as possible.
- 9.2. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:
  - A. To adhere to the provisions of the *Book of Order* G-2.06 and all other constitutional provisions regarding the selection, care, and supervision of candidates for professional ministry;
  - B. To see to the observance of all such provisions of the *Book of Order* by each candidate under care of the Presbytery and by each prospective candidate;
  - C. To enroll inquirers on behalf of the Presbytery, provided that the action shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery;
  - D. To fulfill such other related functions as may be properly assigned to the committee by the Presbytery or the Roundtable.

## Section 10 – The Presbytery Nominating Committee

- 10.1. The Presbytery Nominating Committee shall be composed of a chairperson and eight other members. The members of this committee, including the chairperson, shall be ministers and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. The membership of the committee shall be broadly representative of the Presbytery, and shall reflect the church's commitment to unity in diversity (*Book of Order* F-1.0403).
- 10.2. The Presbytery Nominating Committee shall have the responsibility to nominate candidates to serve as officers, chairpersons, committee members, and other personnel assignments in or related to the Presbytery's structure, with the exception of the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the support and clerical staff. Members of the assembly retain the right to make nominations from the floor, provided that each nominee shall declare to the Presbytery a willingness to serve.
- 10.3. In its work, the Presbytery Nominating Committee shall take care to adhere to the principles of Participation and Representation (*Book of Order* G-3.0103), seeking to give full expression to the rich diversity of the Presbytery and its congregations in nominating persons for election by the Presbytery.

## Section 11 – The Board of Trustees

- 11.1. The Board of Trustees shall be composed of a chairperson elected by the Presbytery for a one-year term and eight other members, divided into three classes as nearly equal in size as possible, one class of which shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting for a three-year term. The chairperson shall serve as the President of the Corporation, shall serve a total of not more than four consecutive terms, and shall be ineligible thereafter to be elected to a new term until one year shall have elapsed. Four of the Trustees shall be ministers, and four of the Trustees shall be elders, and the chairperson of the Trustees may be either a minister or an elder. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall serve as Secretary of the Corporation, and the Treasurer of the Presbytery shall serve as Treasurer of the Corporation.
- 11.2. The Trustees shall take care to adhere, and promote adherence within the community of the presbytery, to the provisions of the Book of Order, G-4.0203 (the “Trust Clause”), and shall recommend such measures as may serve to give fuller effect to the principle that all church property is to be held for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- 11.3. The Board of Trustees shall have the authority and responsibility:
  - A. To receive, hold, encumber, manage and transfer property, both real and personal, on behalf of the Presbytery and to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, when directed by the Presbytery in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
  - B. To recommend to Presbytery through the Roundtable, after reviewing the requests of the committees of Presbytery, the Budget for the total life and work of the governing body;
  - C. To recommend to Presbytery through the Roundtable the annual per capita apportionment;
  - D. To supervise all fiscal matters, including but not limited to accounting, investment, insurance, bonding, and auditing;
  - E. To be the committee on buildings and grounds for all physical property belonging to the Presbytery;
  - F. To receive from local churches, and to recommend to Presbytery as to, all requests relating to the sale, encumbering or leasing of real estate, in accordance with *Book of Order* G-4.0206a,b;
  - G. To develop, when appropriate, a uniform system of accounting and to encourage its adoption and use by member churches;

- H. To ensure that the records of the Presbytery represent accurately, fairly, and openly, its actual financial condition;
- I. To suggest to the Presbytery changes in financial practice which will enable and further the Presbytery's mission or improve its administrative efficiency;
- J. To arrange in such detail as deemed appropriate for an external, independent audit annually;
- K. To report directly to the Presbytery the results of each said audit;
- L. To be responsible for the development of corporate stewardship commitments from the churches of the Presbytery.

## **Section 12 – Study and Advocacy Groups**

- 12.1. Ministers, elders, deacons, and members of congregations which are part of the Presbytery may associate together to study and/or be an advocate for issues, causes, or institutions which further the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the Presbytery.
- 12.2. Such groups may apply to Presbytery through the Presbytery Council for recognition. If the Presbytery approves of the goals and statement of purpose of the group that group may:
  - 1. use the mailing lists of the Presbytery at the group's expense.
  - 2. request time on the docket of Presbytery meetings for reports and programs. Requests for docket time are to be made to the Stated Clerk and will be scheduled by the Presbytery Council.
  - 3. distribute literature at meetings of Presbytery.
  - 4. visit sessions and congregations at their request.
- 12.3. Recognized groups will not be funded through the budget of Presbytery and will not receive staff support, unless specifically voted by Presbytery. Any request for such funding must be made through the Presbytery Council.
- 12.4. Recognized groups shall present a written report to Presbytery at its May/June meeting, annually. The report will detail the group's activities for the year and will show how that group has fulfilled its stated goals and statement of purpose.
- 12.5. Recognition of a group shall be for a term of three years, and such recognition may be renewed by the Presbytery through the Presbytery Council.

## **Section 13 – Permanent Judicial Commission**

- 13.1. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall be composed of seven members, with ministers and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible, with no more than one of its ruling elder members from any one of its constituent churches.

## **Section 14 – Committee on Representation**

- 14.1. The Committee on Representation shall consist of a chairperson or two co-chairpersons, and a sufficient number of other members to constitute a total membership of nine, with men and women in numbers as nearly equal as possible. Among the nine members, five shall be from the racial ethnic minority membership of the Presbytery, of whom at least one shall be male and one shall be female. One member shall be from the majority male membership, one from the majority female membership, and one member—either male or female—shall be a youth, less than 18 years of age at the time of election.
- 14.2. The committee shall fulfill the functions described in Book of Order G-3.0103.

## **Section 15 – Indemnification**

- 15.1. The Presbytery of Southern New England shall indemnify each of its directors, officers, trustees, voting members, and employees to the fullest extent permitted by law in connection with any actual or threatened action or proceeding arising out of their service to the Presbytery or to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), another church, another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefits plan, or other enterprise at the Presbytery's request. This article applies to past, present, and future directors, officers, trustees, voting members, and employees and to their heirs, executors, and administrators.

## **Section 16 – Amendment and Suspension**

- 16.1. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any stated meeting of the Presbytery, provided that the amendment shall have been presented in writing at the previous stated meeting of Presbytery with all major proposed changes clearly noted, and provided that such amendment does not conflict with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- 16.2. These Bylaws may be suspended at any meeting of Presbytery by a vote of three quarters of the members present, provided that such suspension does not conflict with with Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or with any rule of the General Assembly. A separate vote shall be taken for each rule that is to be suspended.

## **Section 17 – Electronic Meetings**

- 17.1. At meetings of the Presbytery and its committees, some or all of the voting members may participate via live teleconference, provided that there is simultaneous aural communication between all participants in the meeting, and provided that all participants have an equal opportunity to be recognized by the moderator.
- 17.2. The notice of the meeting must include an adequate description of how to participate in it. When participants are not represented visually to the moderator—for example, because they are communicating over an ordinary telephone connection—consideration should be given to establishing a mechanism whereby these members of the committee or assembly might communicate a request to be recognized.

# **Addendum of Policies**

## **Disciplinary Proceedings**

Adopted by the Presbytery on 1/16/1993

- A. It shall be the policy of the Presbytery of Southern New England to inform each member church and each continuing member of the presbytery of the commencement of disciplinary proceedings.
- B. It shall be the policy of the Presbytery of Southern New England to call and moderate a local church session meeting when disciplinary proceedings have concluded in anything other than a finding of “innocent” against a Presbytery member who labors in a local church. No decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall diminish the fulfillment of this responsibility.

## **Calls and Dockets for Presbytery Meetings**

Adopted by the Council on 6/21/1994

- 1. That items of potential controversy, which need the full attention of Presbytery, will, as much as possible, be placed early on the docket of the Presbytery meetings.
- 2. The Presbytery Council report for each upcoming Presbytery meeting will be mailed with the call to each Presbytery meeting.
- 3. That a 15-minute reading period will be incorporated into the early part of the meetings of the Presbytery.