

NASHVILLE PRESBYTERY
Presbyterian Church in America
Standing Rules

Chapter 1: Name and Boundaries

- 1-1 The name of this body shall be the *Nashville Presbytery* of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- 1-2 The boundaries of the *Nashville Presbytery* are to include all of Kentucky south and west of and including the counties of Crittenden, Webster, McLean, Ohio, Grayson, Hart, Green, Adair, Russell and Wayne; and all of Tennessee east of the Tennessee River (between Pickwick Lake and Kentucky Lake) to the eastern borders of the counties of Picket, Overton, Putnam, White, Van Buren, Grundy, and Franklin.

Chapter 2: Purpose

- 2-1 Our vision is to be a unified regional expression of the Presbyterian Church in America committed to extending the work of the Gospel, encouraging and strengthening our churches, and providing a worshiping and supportive community for our members and member churches.
- 2-2 The Presbytery wholeheartedly confesses our commitment to the following core values:
 - 1. The transforming power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;
 - 2. The regional community of the Church;
 - 3. The primacy of church planting;
 - 4. The strategic importance of campus ministry;
 - 5. The Biblical mandate to do mercy and participate faithfully in the Great Commission.
- 2-3 The doctrinal and governmental standards of this Presbytery shall be the Word of God as interpreted by the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*.

Chapter 3: Members

- 3-1 The Nashville Presbytery consists of all the teaching elders and churches within its bounds that have been accepted by the Presbytery (*BCO* 13-1).
- 3-2 Standards for examination for membership of both teaching elders and congregations shall be as set forth in the *BCO*.
- 3-3 Commissioners to meetings of the Presbytery shall be the teaching elders of the Presbytery and ruling elders representing their particular churches. Representation by ruling elder commissioners shall be in accordance with provisions of the *BCO*.

Chapter 4: Officers

- 4-1 The officers of the Presbytery shall be a Moderator, a Stated Clerk, a Recording Clerk, and a Treasurer. All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of commissioners.
- 4-2 Both teaching elders and ruling elders are eligible to serve as Moderator, Stated Clerk, Recording Clerk, and Treasurer. In the case of churches using a rotation system for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve in these offices with the consent of their Sessions.
- 4-3 The Moderator shall function as the presiding officer of all meetings of Presbytery and otherwise serve as outlined in the *BCO*.
- 4-4 The Moderator shall serve for a term of one year. The Facilitating Committee will place in nomination a ruling or teaching elder for the office of Moderator at the stated meeting that precedes the stated meeting in which the Moderator is to be elected for the coming calendar year. Nominations from the floor will be received at this meeting. Elections for Moderator shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year, and the Moderator-elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the calendar year. No one may serve as Moderator for two consecutive terms.
- 4-5 The Stated Clerk shall serve for a term of three years. The Facilitating Committee will place in nomination a ruling or teaching elder for the office of Stated Clerk at the stated meeting that precedes the stated meeting in which the Stated Clerk is to be elected for the three-year term beginning with the next calendar year. Nominations from the floor will be received at this meeting. Elections for Stated Clerk shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year in which the Stated Clerk's term expires, and the Stated Clerk-elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the calendar year.
- 4-6 The Stated Clerk shall perform his duties as outlined in the *BCO* in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk is a member and works under the supervision of the Facilitating Committee of Presbytery. His duties shall include the following:
1. Keeping proper records of all meetings of Presbytery and its commissions;
 2. Providing certified extracts of Presbytery meetings;
 3. Maintaining orderly records of all correspondence to and from the Presbytery;
 4. Preparing and transmitting all reports, overtures, or other information to and from the General Assembly;
 5. Opening meetings when the Moderator is not available and presiding until an acting moderator may be elected;
 6. Referring communications to appropriate committees or commissions when practicable;
 7. Advising the Moderator on procedural questions;
 8. Serving as the Presbytery's parliamentarian.
- 4-7 The Recording Clerk shall serve for a term of three years. The Facilitating Committee will place in nomination a ruling or teaching elder for the office of Recording Clerk at the

stated meeting that precedes the stated meeting in which the Recording Clerk is to be elected for the three-year term beginning with the next calendar year. Nominations from the floor will be received at this meeting. Elections for Recording Clerk shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year in which the Recording Clerk's term expires, and the Recording Clerk-elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the calendar year.

- 4-8 The Recording Clerk shall perform his duties in consultation with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Recording Clerk is a member and works under the supervision of the Facilitating Committee of Presbytery. His duties shall include the following:
1. The taking of minutes during all Presbytery meetings;
 2. Preparing Presbytery minutes for transmittal to the Stated Clerk;
 3. Serving as assistant parliamentarian to the Stated Clerk.
- 4-9 The Treasurer shall serve for a term of three years. The Facilitating Committee will place in nomination a ruling or teaching elder for the office of Treasurer at the stated meeting that precedes the stated meeting in which the Treasurer is to be elected for the three-year term beginning with the next calendar year. Nominations from the floor will be received at this meeting. Elections for Treasurer shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year in which the Treasurer's term expires, and the Treasurer-elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the calendar year.
- 4-10 The Treasurer shall perform his duties in consultation with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. The Treasurer is a member and works under the supervision of the Facilitating Committee of Presbytery. His duties shall include the following:
1. Maintaining custody of the funds and securities belonging to the Presbytery;
 2. Receiving, depositing, and disbursing such funds as directed by the Presbytery;
 3. Keeping accurate accounts of the finances of the Presbytery, including the issuing of reports to the Presbytery not less than quarterly;
- 4-11 When helpful in the performance of his duties, the Moderator may appoint a temporary Committee of Thanks to be constituted during a specific Presbytery meeting.

Chapter 5: Meetings

- 5-1 The time and place of each stated meeting shall be determined by the Presbytery at the preceding stated meeting or, should Presbytery fail to make this decision, by the Moderator with the approval of the Facilitating Committee.
- 5-2 The regular times for stated meetings should ordinarily be as follows:
1. The Second Tuesday in February;
 2. The Last Tuesday in April;
 3. The Second Tuesday in August;
 4. The Second Tuesday in November.
- 5-3 Called meetings shall be held when absolutely necessary. Such meetings will be called in strict accordance with the provisions of the *BCO*. In called meetings, the Presbytery may

- only consider and act upon those matters specified in the call.
- 5-4 The quorum for all meetings shall be three teaching elders and three ruling elders as set forth in the *BCO*.
- 5-5 Meetings shall be conducted according to the provisions of the *BCO*. Stated meetings of this Presbytery shall ordinarily include the following elements:
1. A worship service, including celebration of Holy Communion (of approximately thirty minutes);
 2. A regular meeting for the Presbytery's business.
- 5-6 The ordinary docket for the business portion of stated meetings shall be as follows:
1. Formation of the roll, including dealing with requests for excused absences;
 2. Introduction of visitors and seating of corresponding members;
 3. The approval of minutes of previous meetings;
 4. The adoption of the agenda for the business meeting;
 5. Reports of the Standing Committees and Commissions of Presbytery;
 6. The time and place of next stated meeting;
 7. Adjournment with prayer.
- 5-7 All business shall ordinarily be brought before the Presbytery through one of its Standing Committees or Commissions. Any financial items that will change the overall budget of any committee or commission shall be referred to the Facilitating Committee which will make its recommendation to the court. In order to be considered, all business, including recommendations from the Standing Committees or Commissions, shall be in the hands of the Facilitating Committee or the Stated Clerk no later than twenty-one (21) days prior to a stated meeting.
- 5-8 Every teaching elder should attend every meeting of the Presbytery and all Church Sessions should be represented at every meeting of the Presbytery. When hindered from such attendance, the teaching elders and/or Church representatives will be expected to request in writing that the Presbytery excuse him, stating his reason for non-attendance.
- 5-9 Nashville Presbytery, being committed to maintaining a sharp focus on the mission given to her by God, will not ordinarily allow any item on the agenda of her meetings that does not directly relate to the ministries of the Courts of the Presbyterian Church in America. Issues, ministries, or causes that will be placed on the agenda for information and/or promotion will always be those under the direct control and authority of one of the Courts of the Presbyterian Church in America. Any exception to this policy will require approval of the Facilitating Committee by a majority vote.
- 5-10 Meetings by electronic internet videoconference:
1. Meetings of the Presbytery, or any meeting of a commission or committee of Presbytery, may be conducted through use of internet meeting services that identify those participating through visual displays, identify those seeking recognition to speak, show the texts of pending motions, allow anonymous voting, and show the results of votes.

2. Electronic meetings of the Presbytery shall be subject to all rules adopted by the Presbytery in Section 5-11 of its Standing Rules. Any such rules adopted by the Presbytery shall supersede any conflicting rules in the parliamentary authority, but may not otherwise conflict with or alter any rule or decision of the Presbytery. An anonymous vote conducted through the designated internet meeting service shall be deemed to be a ballot vote, fulfilling any requirement in the bylaws or rules that a vote be conducted by ballot.
3. An internet videoconference meeting as described in Standing Rules 5-10 and 5-11 shall not be held to conduct any of the following kinds of Presbytery business:
 - a. Examinations including transfer examinations (BCO 13-6), ministry candidate examinations (BCO 18-3), licensure examinations (BCO 19-2), internship examinations (BCO 19-9), and ordination examinations (BCO 21-4);
 - b. The meetings of judicial commissions (BCO 15-3);
 - c. The gathering of evidence that might lead to the institution of process (BCO 31-2);
 - d. Deliberations of cases of process (BCO Chapter 32) including deliberating guilt or innocence (BCO 36-1) and determining a censure (BCO 30-1).

5-11 Procedures for electronic internet meetings

1. Login time: The Stated Clerk shall schedule the internet meeting service availability to begin no less than 15 minutes before the start of each meeting for participants' login.
2. Form of meeting notice: Each member's notice of a meeting shall include the time of the meeting, the URL and codes necessary to connect to the internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to the audio connection included within the internet service, the phone number and access code(s) the member needs to participate aurally by telephone. The notice shall also include a copy of these rules (or a link to these rules) and shall follow all of the notice requirements included in BCO 13-12.
3. Signing in and out: Members shall sign into the internet meeting service, and shall maintain internet access throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure prior to adjournment. Members shall also maintain aural participation throughout the meeting (whenever present), either through the use of the member's computer microphone and speakers through the internet meeting service or through participation in the linked telephone connection.
4. Quorum calls: The presence of a quorum shall be established by the Moderator at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members.
5. Technical requirements and malfunctions: Each member is responsible for his connection to the internet and telephone conference call; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented him from participating in the meeting.
6. Assignment of the floor: To seek recognition by the Moderator, a member shall [specify the exact method appropriate to the internet meeting service being used]. Upon assigning the floor to a member, the Moderator shall clear the online queue of members who had been seeking recognition. Another member who claims preference in recognition shall thereupon promptly seek recognition again, and the Moderator shall recognize the member for the limited purpose of determining whether that member is entitled to preference in recognition.
7. Interrupting a member: A member who intends to make a motion that under the rules

- may interrupt a speaker shall use [the designated feature of the internet meeting service being used] for so indicating, and shall thereafter wait a reasonable time for the Moderator's instructions before attempting to interrupt the speaker by voice.
8. Motions submitted in writing: A member intending to make a main motion, to offer an amendment, or to propose instructions to a committee, shall, before or after being recognized, post the motion in writing to the online area designated by the Stated Clerk for this purpose, preceded by the member's name and a number corresponding to how many written motions the member has so far posted during the meeting (e.g., "SMITH 3:"; "JONES 2:"). Use of the online area designated by the Stated Clerk for this purpose shall be restricted to posting the text of intended motions.
 9. Display of motions: The Stated Clerk shall designate an online area exclusively for the display of the immediately pending question and other relevant pending questions (such as the main motion, or the pertinent part of the main motion, when an amendment to it is immediately pending); and, to the extent feasible, the Stated Clerk, or any assistants appointed by him or her for this purpose, shall cause such questions, or any other documents that are currently before the meeting for action or information, to be displayed therein until disposed of.
 10. Voting: Votes shall be taken by the anonymous voting feature of the internet meeting service unless otherwise ordered by the Presbytery or required by the rules. When required or ordered, other permissible methods of voting are by electronic roll call or by audible roll call. The Moderator's announcement of the voting result shall include the number of members voting on each side of the question and the number, if any, who explicitly respond to acknowledge their presence without casting a vote. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.
 11. Webcam displays: The Stated Clerk, or his assistants, shall cause a webcam video of the Moderator to be displayed throughout the meeting, and shall also cause the display of the webcam video of the member currently recognized to speak or report.

Chapter 6: Standing Committees

- 6-1 Most business of the Presbytery shall be delegated to a series of permanent committees and commissions. The Standing Committees and Commissions of Presbytery are as follows:
1. Facilitating Committee
 2. Leadership Development Committee
 3. Church Multiplication Committee
 4. Campus Ministry Committee
 5. Shepherding Committee
 6. Mercy and Missions Committee
 7. Judicial Business Committee
 8. Review of Session Records Committee
 9. Relational Health Committee
 10. Strategic Communication Commission
- 6-2 These standing committees and commissions are entrusted with the responsibility of providing visionary leadership to the Presbytery in their given areas of ministry. It is the responsibility of the Presbytery to place a high degree of trust in the integrity of these

committees. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the committees to ensure that their ministries are being conducted in conformity to the Presbytery's theological vision, core values, and guiding principles. Campus Ministers or Church planters are ineligible to serve on the committee that is funding their work.

- 6-3 Members of committees and commissions are elected by the Presbytery. Members of leadership committees and commissions which are permanent committees and commissions of Presbytery may be made up of both teaching and ruling elders. In the case of churches following a rotation system for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve on leadership committees and commissions of Presbytery with the consent of their Sessions.
- 6-4 Each committee or commission shall be led by a chairman who shall also be elected by the Presbytery. No one may serve as chairman of more than one Standing Committee or Commission at a time. Nominations and elections shall, as far as possible, be based on spiritual giftedness, Presbytery faithfulness, and willingness to serve.
- 6-5 Standing Committees may, by an act of the Presbytery, be clothed with the powers of a commission for carrying out specific ministries within their field. Any such action of Presbytery shall always be done in strict accordance with the provisions of the *BCO*.
- 6-6 The purpose of the Facilitating Committee is to provide the organization, planning process, information services, meeting space, agenda preparation services, and record keeping that will enable the Presbytery effectively to accomplish its God-given vision. The Stated Clerk shall be a member of the Facilitating Committee, and the Facilitating Committee shall assist the Clerk in the operations of his ministry. The Facilitating Committee shall oversee the administrative work of the Presbytery, generally ensuring the maintenance of the theological vision, core values and guiding principles of Presbytery. Specifically, the Facilitating Committee shall be responsible for the following:
1. Developing and maintaining appropriate organizational structures;
 2. Presenting nominations to the Presbytery for officers, for Standing Committees and their chairmen, and for various General Assembly committees and boards;
 3. Coordinating and ensuring the work of the Standing Committees;
 4. Coordinating all correspondence with the Stated Clerk;
 5. Preparing and proposing Presbytery financial records with the Treasurer;
 6. Making arrangements for Presbytery meetings, including planning the worship services;
 7. Producing and distributing the agenda at least one week prior to each stated meeting of Presbytery;
 8. Overseeing the work of the Presbytery's Women's Ministry, including representing them at Presbytery meetings, encouraging them and facilitating their ministry, and bringing their leadership recommendations to the Presbytery for approval;
- 6-7 The purpose of the Leadership Development Committee is to facilitate the process by which men are identified and prepared for the ministry of the gospel and to help them assess their calling, gifts, skills, and knowledge for effective service for our Lord Jesus

Christ in His Church. Specifically, the Leadership Development Committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Conducting examinations of applicants for ministerial credentials and ensuring that such examinations are conducted in a timely and equitable way in conformity with the *BCO*;
2. Working with the Campus Ministry Committee and the Church Planting Committees in identifying, recruiting, and nurturing potential new leaders and pastors within the bounds of the Presbytery;
3. Providing for ministerial and theological training seminars;
4. Developing position papers acceptable to the Presbytery on issues which are important to the ongoing work of the Presbytery;
5. Providing care to ministerial candidates under care of Presbytery;
6. Receiving and considering changes of a call to an “out of bounds” status and making a recommendation to the Presbytery regarding approval, according to the direction provided in *BCO* 8-7;
7. Overseeing the work of teaching elders serving outside the bounds of Presbytery, according to *BCO* 8-7;
8. Administrative oversight of men without call, according to *BCO* 13-2.
9. Subsequent to the successful completion of this committee’s transfer examination (*BCO* 13-6), this committee may act as a commission and grant permission for an ordained minister in good standing from another presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America to move on to the field to which he has been called before he is examined and received by Presbytery in cases it deems necessary by the unanimous vote of those present.
10. The quorum for this committee’s meetings shall be 6 members, including no fewer than one (1) ruling elder.

6-8 The purpose of the Church Multiplication Committee is to facilitate and lead the Presbytery in the process of planting churches within the bounds of our Presbytery that are committed to the Presbytery’s theological vision, core values, and guiding principles. Specifically, the Church Multiplication Committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Developing and coordinating a strategic plan for church planting within the Presbytery;
2. Coordinating joint efforts with specific churches seeking to plant churches;
3. Providing supervision for mission churches and guide them through the process to particularization;
4. Recruiting and identifying potential church planters for our Presbytery in coordination with the Leadership Development Committee;
5. Cooperating with Mission to North America and the Southeast Regional Coordinator for church planting.

6-9 The purpose of the Campus Ministry Committee is to promote the strategic importance of leadership development through Reformed University Fellowship ministries on college and university campuses within our Presbytery; to provide oversight to the existing campus ministers and campus ministries; and initiate new campus ministries on the many campuses within our bounds. Specifically, the Campus Ministry Committee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Developing and coordinating a strategic plan for campus ministries within the Presbytery;
 2. Communicating and coordinating with Reformed University Ministries Coordinator on the General Assembly level;
 3. Providing supervision for the established campus ministries in the bounds of our Presbytery;
 4. Providing support and accountability to the campus ministers in our Presbytery;
 5. Recruiting and identifying potential campus ministers for our Presbytery in coordination with the Leadership Development Committee.
- 6-10 The purpose of the Shepherding Committee is to aid the individual churches and the Presbytery as a whole in becoming gospel-shaped communities in which people receive support, encouragement, and accountability from one another. Specifically, the Shepherding Committee shall be responsible for the following:
1. Reviewing changes in pastoral calls and encouraging congregations in their responsibilities for the care of their ministers, providing pastoral care as needed, especially in circumstances of changes in or dissolution of pastoral calls;
 2. Reviewing the reasons for absences from meetings of Presbytery and providing pastoral care where needed;
 3. Serving as a resource for reconciliation and mediation and encouraging mutual shepherding and mentoring throughout the Presbytery;
 4. Providing pastoral oversight of ministers without call, encouraging them in their pursuit of a call and continued engagement in the life of the Church;
 5. Meeting with ministers who are without call at least annually to provide pastoral care;
 6. Overseeing the work of the Pastor of Spiritual Formation. The Pastor of Spiritual Formation will report to the Shepherding Committee quarterly, and the Shepherding Committee will report annually to the Presbytery on the pastor's work which includes: training, counseling, connection, and prayer.
- 6-11 The purpose of the Mercy and Missions Committee is to provide leadership to our Presbytery and her member churches in the areas of mercy and missions. Specifically, the Mercy and Missions Committee shall be responsible for the following:
1. Offering support and encouragement to missionaries sent from our Presbytery and her member churches;
 2. Serving as a liaison between Mission to the World and our Presbytery and promoting the world mission ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America within our Presbytery;
 3. Finding creative and practical ways to assist the member Churches in our Presbytery in strengthening their ministries of mercy and missions;
 4. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure that our Presbytery and her member churches makes a strong and timely response to disasters locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- 6-12 The purpose of the Judicial Business Committee is to serve as a standing committee on judicial matters and to advise and work at the request of our Presbytery by handling all formal judicial business following the instructions in Scripture, the *BCO*, Chapter 7 of these Standing Rules, and any other rules of process deemed appropriate by our

Presbytery.

1. The Judicial Business Committee will consist of three classes of three men each. Each class will have at least one ruling and one teaching elder. No class may have two men from the same church. The term of office is three years. There is no term limit on members;
2. The Judicial Business Committee may be empowered as a commission or form the core of any judicial commission erected by the Presbytery taking any conflicts of interest into consideration;
3. The Judicial Business Committee is empowered as a commission for the receipt of all BCO 31-2, 38-1, and 40-5 matters as described in SR 7.

6-13 The purpose of the Review of Session Records Committee is to ensure that the Nashville Presbytery fulfills the requirement of *BCO* 40-1, in accordance with its authority granted in *BCO* 13-9.b, by reviewing the records of church Sessions within the Nashville Presbytery and making an annual report of the committee's findings to Presbytery in accordance with *NP Standing Rules*, Chapter 11.

1. The Review of Session Records Committee shall be comprised of one representative appointed by each church Session to serve a one-year term. The Presbytery may also appoint teaching or ruling elders who are not members of a Session.
2. The name of each appointee of a Session or the Presbytery should be submitted by April 30 of each year.
3. There shall be no term limit for members serving on the Review of Session Records Committee. Nevertheless, each appointee serving a consecutive term must be re-appointed by his Session or the Presbytery.
4. The moderator of Presbytery, or his representative, will appoint a convener annually from among the appointees. Once convened, the committee shall elect its officers: chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. Ordinarily, officers will be serving at least a second consecutive term.

6-14 The purpose of the Relational Health Committee is to encourage and grow loving brotherhood and Christ-centered community within the presbytery.

1. Coordinate with the Facilitating Committee the planning and organization of the stated meetings of Presbytery to the end of fostering relational health and growing Christ-centered community among the presbyters.
2. Work with the standing committees of the presbytery to consider ways of intentionally maturing the relational health of their members, particularly in the way their meetings are conducted (Romans 12:9-11).
3. Host presbytery-wide gatherings and events and develop ministries and structures that contribute to the mutual encouragement (Hebrews 3:13), healthier relationships (Ephesians 4:15-16), and loving care (1 Corinthians 12:25-26) of the brothers.

6-15 The purpose of the Strategic Communication Commission is to develop and oversee strategic communication efforts for the Presbytery. It will consist of no fewer than three teaching elders and three ruling elders with a quorum of four members. The Stated Clerk will fill one of these positions by virtue of his office. Nonvoting advisors may be selected by the commission. It shall be responsible for the following:

1. Engaging in strategic communication efforts with external audiences, Presbytery

- members, and other church entities, including the formulation of media releases, public statements, and responses to media inquiries as appropriate.
2. Review media coverage relevant to the Presbytery and adapting communication strategies consistent with biblical principles and in support of the church's peace, purity, and unity.
 3. Providing communication support to teaching elders members and member churches upon request and collaborating with the PCA Stated Clerk's Office and other denominational bodies on matters of mutual interest.
 4. Keeping a full record of its proceedings to be submitted annually at the November stated meeting and providing timely updates at other stated meetings, called meetings, or between meetings.

Chapter 7: Investigations, Charges, Cases Without Process, and Session Irregularities

- 7-1 Whenever a member or committee of the Presbytery becomes aware of credible accusations of serious sin made against a teaching elder member, Matthew 18 should be followed when appropriate, and the member or committee who has received the accusations must report them to the Stated Clerk without delay.
- 7-2 Whenever the Stated Clerk receives a report of sin concerning a teaching elder member of the Nashville Presbytery he shall, without delay, pass this report to the Judicial Business Committee empowered as a commission to conduct a *BCO* 31-2 investigation. Judicial Business Committee shall then report at the next stated meeting or at a meeting called for that purpose, with a recommendation regarding judicial process. If time has not permitted an investigation to be completed before the next stated meeting, an extension to the following stated meeting may be permitted. No further extension should be granted.
- 7-3 Whenever charges are filed under *BCO* 32-2, the Presbytery shall treat them as initiating judicial process, distinct from reports under *BCO* 31-2.
1. Charges shall be in writing and shall:
 - a. State the alleged offense(s) as something provable from Scripture (*BCO* 29-1); and
 - b. Include specifications with times, places, acts, and named witnesses (*BCO* 32-3). The Stated Clerk shall then docket the charges for adjudication and place them before the Presbytery at the next stated meeting or a called meeting for that purpose.
 2. The Presbytery may decline to commence process when charges are filed if it determines and records, with reasons and supporting facts, one or more of the following:
 - a. *Accuser caution* (*BCO* 31-8): the accuser is known to be malignant, litigious, rash, or imprudent, such that great caution counsels declining;
 - b. *Slight grounds* (*BCO* 34-2): scandalous charges against a minister rest on slight grounds;
 - c. *Passage of time* (*BCO* 32-20): the passage of time since the alleged offense makes fair adjudication unachievable, considering both the gravity of the alleged offense and the degradation of evidence or memory;
 - d. *Not an offense* (*BCO* 29-1): the conduct alleged is not an offense demonstrably

- contrary to Scripture;
- e. *Inadequate evidence or ends of discipline*: the evidence proposed is inadequate or the ends of discipline (*BCO* 27-3) would not be promoted by proceeding to trial.
3. The Presbytery may (a) adjudicate a case of process as a committee of the whole, (b) refer the case to a judicial commission, or (c) refer the matter to a standing committee or an ad-hoc committee to conduct the trial and report back to the Presbytery. When the matter is referred to a committee, it will normally bring back a recommendation regarding the judgment of guilt and the Presbytery will decide the censure.
 4. When the Presbytery declines charges under 32-2 constitutional reasons shall be recorded in the minutes sufficient to allow review by the higher court.
- 7-4 Whenever a teaching elder member of the Nashville Presbytery comes forward and makes his offense known to the Stated Clerk, the Stated Clerk shall refer the *BCO* 38-1 matter to the Judicial Business Committee empowered as a commission to receive the confession of sin and:
- A) Determine if the *BCO* 38-1 process is appropriate in this instance, then
 - B) conclude the *BCO* 38-1 process, and report to Presbytery so that Presbytery may determine a censure, or
 - C) if the *BCO* 38-1 process cannot be successfully concluded, make a recommendation to Presbytery regarding *BCO* 32-2 charges.
- 7-5 Whenever the Stated Clerk receives a credible report with respect to any Session of a member church of the Nashville Presbytery of any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings of such Session (*BCO* 40-5) he shall pass this report without delay to the Judicial Business Committee to return a recommendation concerning the report at the next stated meeting or at a meeting called for that purpose. If time has not permitted an investigation to be completed before the next stated meeting, an extension to the following stated meeting may be permitted. No further extension should be granted.

Chapter 8: Election of Respondents and Appellees

- 8-1 When Presbytery Respondent(s) or Appellee(s) are needed, the Stated Clerk will send a request for nominees or volunteers to the list of teaching elders, ruling elder commissioners enrolled at the previous Presbytery stated meeting, and Session clerks of member churches. The Presbytery will elect Presbytery Respondent(s) or Appellee(s) best able to serve on behalf of the Presbytery in the matter(s) before the higher court at the next stated meeting or at a meeting called for that purpose. The Respondent(s) or Appellee(s) will provide updates on the judicial matter(s) at each stated meeting of Presbytery until the conclusion of the matter(s).

Chapter 9: Budget and Finances

- 9-1 The purpose of the budget of the *Nashville Presbytery* is to enable the Presbytery to fulfill its theological vision and to uphold its core values and guiding principles, chiefly through the support of church planting projects and campus ministries approved by the

Presbytery.

- 9-2 Each church and mission shall be asked to contribute two percent (2%) of the general giving of that work to the general budget of the Presbytery.
- 9-3 Administrative costs associated with the operation of the Presbytery shall be taken from the general budget of Presbytery and reported to the Presbytery.
- 9-4 Churches may, with the approval of Presbytery, designate up to 50% of their giving to Presbytery-approved mission projects within the bounds of the Presbytery.
- 9-5 Designated and special offerings may be received by the Presbytery from time to time for mercy, missions, disaster relief, and any other purpose consistent with the mission of Nashville Presbytery and approved by the same. To address extraordinary needs the Missions and Mercy Committee with approval of the Facilitating Committee may solicit funds. These policies will apply to all such offerings:
 - 1. Offerings received will be allocated promptly and judiciously to the stated objective under the supervision of the Mercy and Missions Committee;
 - 2. Mercy and Missions Committee administrative and development costs shall not exceed 5% of any relief offering received;
 - 3. The Mercy and Missions Committee will make available a detailed quarterly accounting report of all expenditures to the Presbytery and will include that accounting report in their committee report to the Presbytery at all stated meetings.

Chapter 10: Parliamentary Procedure

- 10-1 It is the responsibility of the Moderator to preside over meetings equitably and efficiently, protecting the privileges of parliamentary minorities while refusing to allow the meeting to become mired in minutiae of procedural rules. Likewise, it is the responsibility of all commissioners to exercise proper humility and deference to one another, remembering their ordination vows to submit to one another in the Lord.
- 10-2 All parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with the provisions of the *BCO*, these standing rules, and any special rules of order the Presbytery may adopt. The Moderator may appoint a parliamentarian when the Stated Clerk and Recording Clerk are unable to assist him as such. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the standard in parliamentary procedure in all cases to which they are applicable.
- 10-3 Discussion and debate of any main motion shall be limited to fifteen minutes. This time may be extended by majority vote for a period of no more than fifteen additional minutes at a time.

Chapter 11: Review of Session Records

- 11-1 It is the right and duty of the Nashville Presbytery to review, at least once a year, the records of the Sessions of the churches within her bounds (*BCO* 40-1 and 2).

11-2 Presbytery carries out this review through its Review of Session Records Committee.

11-3 Guidelines for Submitting of Session Records:

- a. The stated clerk of each Session is to provide the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery with copies of all minutes to be reviewed, in one of two formats: (1) one paginated digital copy transmitted by email or by providing a link to a downloadable file or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies.
- b. The minutes to be reviewed shall include the unreviewed minutes of all Session meetings and congregational meetings that have been held through the end of the previous calendar year (*BCO* 40-1).
- c. The minutes are to be reviewed and shall be delivered to the office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery by April 30 each year.
- d. If a Session repeatedly fails to submit its minutes, or its responses to exceptions of substance, the Review of Session Records Committee may recommend to the Presbytery that the provisions of *BCO* 40-1, 4, & 5 be applied.

11-4 The stated clerk of each Session, or his representative, should be prepared to correspond or meet with the committee to answer questions and to clarify any possible discrepancy. The committee should make every reasonable effort to consult with the clerk of the Session (or his designee) on any questions before finalizing the report to the Presbytery.

11-5 Guidelines for Examining Session Records:

- a. Session minutes shall be examined for conformity to:
 - 1) The Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America as to the substance of the actions recorded (*BCO* 40-2), and
 - 2) The *Handbook for Clerks of Session*, as to form, structure, and minimum content.
- b. Each set of Session minutes and other materials submitted under 11-3.b should be read by at least two members of the Review of Session Records Committee.
- c. The findings of the committee with respect to the minutes of each Session shall be noted under the following categories as appropriate:
 - 1) Exceptions of substance: Apparent violations of the Scripture or serious irregularities from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, actions out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly, and matters of impropriety and important delinquencies.
 - 2) Exceptions of form: Violations of the *Handbook for Clerks of Session*, rules of order, etc. should normally be reported under this category. When a minor irregularity from a *BCO* provision or requirement is noted, it may be treated as an exception of form (*BCO* 40-3). If subsequent minutes continue to reflect the same particular exception of form, it may become an exception of substance.
 - 3) Notations: The committee may report to the clerk of Session any typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation and other minor variations in form and clarity.

These are to be given as advice for the respective clerks.

11-6 Guidelines for Reporting on Session Records: The report of the committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:

- a. A list of the minutes, by Sessions, received by the committee.
- b. A list of the Sessions which have not submitted minutes, if any.
- c. A recommendation concerning the minutes of each Session, which shall include:
 - 1) Minutes approved without exception;
 - 2) Minutes approved with exceptions of form, which shall be reported directly to the Session;
 - 3) Minutes approved with exceptions of substance which shall be presented to the Presbytery at its August meeting each year, which presentation shall include citation of any relevant scriptural and/or constitutional references, and provide the committee's rationale for finding the exception of substance;
 - 4) Responses to exceptions of previous years, if any;
 - 5) Recommendations concerning all responses to exceptions taken by previous Presbytery meetings that have not been disposed of suitably.
- d. Any other recommendation to the Presbytery.
- e. A statement of the division of the vote on each recommendation.
- f. A list of members present.

11-7 The report of the committee shall be prepared and handled in the same manner as reports of standing committees as set forth in *NP Standing Rules* 5-7. Neither the report of the committee nor the Presbytery's approval or disapproval of this report establishes doctrinal precedent.

11-8 While quarterly status updates may be submitted to the Presbytery by written report, no other partial report of the committee shall be presented without the consent of the Presbytery.

11-9 Guidelines for Responding to Presbytery

- a. Sessions shall be advised of exceptions of form; however, they shall take note in their minutes of exceptions of substance taken by the Presbytery, together with their responses adopted by the Session to these exceptions. These responses should normally be adopted by Session in the same calendar year as the exceptions were taken by the Presbytery. Regardless, responses must be filed in accordance with *NP Standing Rules* 11-3.d.
- b. Sessions shall correspond with the next meeting of Presbytery the disposition they have made of the exceptions of substance (including general), with specific reference to the Session's action as recorded in its minutes. Responses shall be in one of the following forms:
 - 1) Session agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its

- actions (if possible) and promises to be more careful in the future. Or,
- 2) Session respectfully disagrees with the exception, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery.
- c. If, in responding to an exception of substance, a Session reports that it disagrees with the conclusion of the Presbytery and/or has not corrected or redressed the identified problem; and, the committee (after reviewing the Session's response and rationale, and, if a majority so desires, consulting with the Stated Clerk of Presbytery) continues to believe that the Session has persisted in an error that is significant enough to require a Presbytery response; then, the committee shall notify the Presbytery of the continuing exception, and shall make recommendation as to whether the Presbytery should again seek a more acceptable response from the Session, or should appoint a representative to present its case and refer the matter to the Judicial Business Committee to cite the Session to appear for proceedings according to *BCO* 40-5.

Chapter 12: Suspension and Amendment of Standing Rules

- 12-1 These standing rules may be temporarily suspended at any stated meeting of Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners.
- 12-2 These standing rules may be permanently amended or revoked only by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners at two consecutive stated meetings of Presbytery.

Appendix:**A Record of Nashville Presbytery Actions Concerning its Standing Rules:**

- 1st Stated Meeting: The original Nashville Presbytery Standing Rules were adopted.
- 4th Stated Meeting: The MTW Committee was eliminated and the MNA Committee's name was changed to Missions Committee with related editorial changes.
- 7th Stated Meeting: The summer meeting of Presbytery was eliminated.
- 9th Stated Meeting: The Stewardship Committee with replaced by a Worship & Work Committee.
- 18th Stated Meeting: The frequency of Presbytery stated meetings was changed from three to four times annually.
- 24th Stated Meeting: A newly proposed Standing Rules was adopted.
- 25th Stated Meeting: At a third reading the newly proposed Standing Rules was adopted with amendments.
- 29th Stated Meeting: The Shepherding Committee's responsibility for the review of Session records was made explicit.
- 38th Stated Meeting: Meeting dates were changed, and the Moderator's maximum length of service was specified.
- 42nd Stated Meeting: Changes were made so that agenda items would only be allowed if they "relate to the ministries of the Courts of the Presbyterian Church in America."
- 45th Stated Meeting: The Mercy and Missions Committee was given new list of responsibilities.
- 50th Stated Meeting: Changes were made to the Budget & Finance section of the Standing Rules on designated giving and on special offerings for the Missions & Mercy Committee.
- 65th Stated Meeting: A new standing committee called the Judicial Business Committee was created.
- 69th Stated Meeting: The Leadership Development Committee was given responsibilities concerning out of bounds calls, and the Shepherding Committee was given duties concerning the care for pastors during the dissolution of pastoral calls.
- 72nd Stated Meeting: Changes were made to require the agenda of Presbytery stated meetings to include "a hymn and opening prayer," "a seminar . . ." and "a regular meeting for Presbytery business."
- 73rd Stated Meeting: An amended was adopted concerning the review of Session records "at the first stated Meeting of every calendar year."
- 74th Stated Meeting: Additional duties were given to the Shepherding Committee and Leadership Development Committee.
- 78th Stated Meeting: The Facilitating Committee was given oversight of the Presbytery's Women in the Church ministry.
- 81st Stated Meeting: The Facilitating Committee was given the responsibility to approve agenda items or speakers not directly related to the courts of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- 84th Stated Meeting: The position of Pastor of Spiritual Formation was created and added to the section on the Shepherding Committee.

90th Stated Meeting: Changes were made to require that Presbytery stated meetings include a worship service. The previous requirement that meetings include a seminar or discussion on a theological or ministerial topic was struck from the Standing Rules.

97th Stated Meeting: A new paragraph was added to ensure that Session records are reviewed annually.

102nd Stated Meeting: Amendments were adopted concerning the positions and duties of Recording Clerk and Treasurer, the timing of the Presbytery agenda, the Presbytery's parliamentary authority, the instigation of judicial process against teaching elders, and the election of appellees and respondents.

103rd Stated Meeting: Editorial revisions throughout the Standing Rules proposed at the 102nd Stated Meeting as well as the rules regarding Presbytery meetings held by electronic internet videoconference were adopted.

110th Stated Meeting: Amended the Standing Rules pertaining to the LDC by adding 6-7.9 allowing the committee—by the unanimous vote of those present—to act as a commission and grant permission for an ordained minister in good standing from another presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America to move on to the field to which he has been called before he is examined and received by Presbytery in cases it deems necessary to do so.

111th Stated Meeting: Created Review of Session Records Committee by adding 6-6.13 to ensure that presbytery fulfills the requirement of *BCO* 40-1 in accordance with its authority granted in *BCO* 13-9 (b) by calling for, receiving, and reviewing the records of the Sessions of the Nashville Presbytery and reporting the results of the review to the presbytery.

112th Stated Meeting: Renamed the Church Planting Committee as the “Church Multiplication Committee.”

114th Stated Meeting: amend NP Standing Rules so that the regular time for the April meeting will ordinarily be the last Tuesday in April.

115th Stated Meeting amend NP Standing Rules to add the Relational Health Committee as a standing Committee.

121st Stated Meeting: amended 6-13 to clarify the duties of the Review of Session Records Committee.

122nd Stated Meeting: amended 6-7 to add 6-7-10 setting the quorum for meetings of the Leadership Development Committee at six (6) members, including no fewer than one (1) ruling elder.

124th Stated Meeting: amend NP Standing Rules to establish the Strategic Communications Commission as a standing Commission; Chapter 7 vacated.

125th Stated Meeting: amendments were adopted concerning the composition and duties of the Judicial Business Committee; adopted new Chapter 7 entitled “Investigations, Charges, Cases Without Process, and Session Irregularities” to replace previously vacated Chapter 7.

127th Stated Meeting: amendments were adopted concerning the composition and duties of the Review of Session Records Committee (*NPSR*, 6-13); adopted new Chapter 11 entitled “Review of Session Records”; renumbered the previous Chapter 11: “Suspension and Amendment of Standing Rules” to become Chapter 12.