

# **PRESBYTERY OF WABASH VALLEY BYLAWS**

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## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Section 01 We shall be governed and guided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), these Bylaws, the standing rules, and the manuals of operation for the Presbytery of Wabash Valley, which shall contain policies and procedures adopted by the Presbytery. In cases of conflict, the documents shall govern in the order named.
- Section 02 **The Spirit of Transformation.** We remain open to God’s Spirit of Transformation as we continually work at achieving God’s mission for our presbytery and the world.
- Section 03 **The Spirit of Stewardship.** We are committed to God’s Spirit of Stewardship as we generously use the resources of time, talent and possessions which God has entrusted to us as individuals and as a community of faith.
- Section 04 All individuals acting in the ministry and mission of the presbytery shall act for the best interest of the presbytery and disclose any potential personal interests.
- Section 05 All meetings relating to the mission and ministry of the presbytery shall allow for deliberative discussion before making decisions. The use of technology for meetings will be detailed in the standing rules.
- Section 06 For reasons of community discernment and unity of the body, business shall only be conducted when a quorum is present.

### ARTICLE II - CONSTITUENCY

- Section 01 **Geographic Bounds** The Presbytery of Wabash Valley is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) having common boundaries with the counties of Benton, Boone (with the exception of Zionsville), Carroll, Cass, Clinton, DeKalb, Elkhart, Fountain, Fulton, Howard, Huntington, Jasper, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Miami, Montgomery, Newton, Noble, Porter, Pulaski, St. Joseph, Starke, Steuben, Tippecanoe, Wabash, Warren, White, and Whitley—all within the State of Indiana.
- Section 02 **Purpose**
- a. The presbytery affirms its belief in the particular congregation as the cornerstone of the life of the Church.
  - b. The presbytery also seeks to be responsive to the needs and desires of particular ministries in determining, achieving and evaluating its mission.

Section 03 **Assembly Membership**

- a. Membership of the Presbytery Assembly shall consist of all ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament received into membership by the presbytery, all commissioned lay pastors (if authorized in their commission), and at least one elder from each congregation within the bounds of the presbytery, as allocated in the Standing Rules.
- b. Every elder duly elected to serve as an officer, member of council, committee moderator, ministry team moderator, executive or associate executive presbyter, General Assembly or synod commissioner, or an appointed moderator of an administrative commission, or a certified Christian educator serving in an education ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery shall be enrolled as a member of the presbytery for tenure of the office.
- c. Voting rights of the Presbytery Assembly members are defined by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Standing Rules.

**ARTICLE III - ELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, REMOVALS AND RESIGNATIONS**

Section 01 **Elections**

- a. Nominations.
  - 1. The nominating committee shall present one candidate for each open position.
  - 2. Members of the nominating committee may be presented as a candidate if that person has been excused from committee discussion and decision regarding specific position candidate presentation.
  - 3. Nominations from the floor must have the consent and state the qualifications of the nominee for the position.
- b. Elections.
  - 1. If there is a nomination from the floor which places more than one person in nomination for a position, a ballot vote is required.

Section 02 **Appointments** All positions that do not require election shall be appointed by the officers of the presbytery and reported to the presbytery assembly and to the council.

Section 03 **Resignations**

- a. Resignations should be made in writing to the stated clerk.
- b. Resignations become effective upon being received by the stated clerk, who will report all resignations to the appropriate committees/ministry teams and the electing/appointing body.

**ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

Section 01 The officers of the presbytery shall be the presbytery moderator, the presbytery vice-moderator, the moderator of council and the stated clerk.

**ARTICLE V - DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 01 **Moderator**. The moderator shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Presbytery Assembly in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Bylaws, Standing Rules and Manual of Operations and Policies of the presbytery, and the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*
- b. Perform other administrative duties as requested by the presbytery.

Section 02 **Vice-Moderator**. The vice-moderator shall:

- a. Serve in the absence of the presbytery assembly moderator or on behalf of the presbytery assembly moderator when delegated to do so by the presbytery assembly moderator.
- b. Serve in the absence of the moderator of council or on behalf of the moderator of council when delegated to do so by the Council Moderator.
- c. Perform other administrative duties as requested by the presbytery.

Section 03 **Moderator of Council**. The moderator of council shall:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the Presbytery Council in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Bylaws, Standing Rules and Manual of Operations and Policies of the presbytery, and the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- b. Perform other administrative duties as requested by the Presbytery.

Section 04 **Stated Clerk**. The stated clerk shall:

- a. Assist the presbytery in its proceedings, keeping advised of the requirements of the *Book of Order*, the Bylaws, Standing Rules, the Manual of Operations and Policies of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley and the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* in order.
- b. Perform other administrative duties as requested by the presbytery.

**ARTICLE VI - PRESBYTERY STAFF**

Section 01 **General Presbyter**.

- a. The Presbytery Assembly, with the concurrence of the synod, shall elect and employ a general presbyter.
- b. The general presbyter shall fulfill the responsibilities set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the By-laws, Standing Rules and the job description as approved by the Presbytery Assembly.

- Section 02 **Other Staff.**
- a. Other staff with administrative, financial and/or program responsibilities may be added by the council in consultation with all appropriate presbytery committees and teams, and the synod.
  - b. Responsibilities and accountabilities for such additional staff members will be defined in the job description for each position as established by council.

**ARTICLE VII - PRESBYTERY ASSEMBLY**

- Section 01 **Responsibilities.** The responsibilities and powers of the presbytery are defined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). While these responsibilities and powers may be delegated, the following are so fundamental to its life that every member of the presbytery should be given the opportunity, at a duly called meeting of presbytery, to participate in the decision making process concerning:
- a. Development of strategy for the mission of the church in its area
  - b. Organization of new churches and to receive and unite churches
  - c. Division, dismissal, or dissolution of churches in consultation with their members
  - d. Control of the location of new churches and of churches desiring to move
  - e. Assumption of original jurisdiction in any case in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority
  - f. Maintenance of regular and continuing relationship to the higher governing bodies of the church, including electing commissioners to the synod and to the General Assembly.
  - g. Election of officers
  - h. Election of general and associate presbyters
  - i. Election of the members of council, standing committees, ministry teams and Permanent Judicial Commission
  - j. Action on overtures to and on proposals for Presbyterian Church (USA) constitutional changes
  - k. Examine and approve a candidate's qualifications for ordination as minister of the word and sacrament
  - l. Any power delegated by the authority of the assembly shall not be re-delegated
- Section 02 **Stated Meetings.** The Presbytery shall hold at least four (4) stated meetings each year as defined in the Standing Rules.
- Section 03 **Special Meetings.** Special meetings shall be called in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Standing Rules.
- Section 04 **Quorum.** The quorum for any meeting of the Presbytery Assembly shall be the moderator, stated clerk, ten minister members and ten elder commissioners.

Section 05 **Attendance**. Presbytery Assembly members shall attend all stated meetings of the presbytery unless excused. Permission to be excused from any meeting of the presbytery prior to adjournment shall be obtained from the stated clerk. An absence of an honorably retired member shall be considered excused.

## ARTICLE VIII - COUNCIL

### Section 01 **Membership**

- a. The Council is composed of the following voting members:
  1. Officers of the presbytery
  2. Moderators of the standing committees
  3. Moderators of the ministry teams, except the Visioning Team whose vice moderator will be a voting member of council
  4. Six members-at-large in three classes serving three year terms
- b. Ex-officio members, without vote, will be defined in the Standing Rules.
- c. When a voting member of council has had three (3) consecutive unexcused absences the member shall be deemed to have resigned. Such resignation will be announced by the stated clerk and reported to the nominating committee.

Section 02 **Meetings** The council shall meet every month the presbytery assembly does not.

### Section 03 **Special Meetings**

- a. Special meetings of the council shall be called by the moderator of council or if the moderator of council is unable to act by the stated clerk at the request of a standing committee, ministry team or three council members (a combination of ministers and elders).
- b. Notice of the meeting shall be given at least one week in advance, unless the officers of the presbytery determine the issue at hand requires more immediate action.

Section 04 **Quorum** The quorum for any meeting of the presbytery council shall be a majority of the elected voting members.

### Section 05 **Accountability and Authority**

- a. The council is accountable to the Presbytery Assembly.
- b. The council shall have all the general and specific duties provided for in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) between assemblies as allowed in G-11.0103v, except those listed in Bylaws Article VII Section 1. It is understood that the adoption of these Bylaws grants this authority to council.

**Section 06     Corporate Powers and Duties**

- a. The council shall have the powers and duties granted by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA):
  - 1. To receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the church;
  - 2. To accept and execute deeds of title to such property;
  - 3. To hold and defend title to such property;
  - 4. To manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the Church.
  - 5. In addition, to the extent not included in the above and not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the corporation shall have all of the general powers of a nonprofit religious corporation organized under the Indiana Not-For-Profit Corporation Act of 1991.
- b. All property, both real and personal, is held in trust for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the deed shall include the following language: “The premises herein conveyed shall be used, kept, and maintained by the grantee for Divine Worship and other purposes of the ministry of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The grantee holds the property in trust pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).”
- c. The council has final ownership of all the finances of the presbytery.

**ARTICLE IX - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS  
FOR STANDING COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS**

- Section 01     All committees and ministry teams shall report in writing to every stated council meeting and Presbytery Assembly.
- Section 02     The quorum of all committees and ministry teams shall be a majority of the elected voting members.
- Section 03     On common goals and shared recommendations, all standing committees and ministry teams will consult with one another, as well as with the general presbyter and presbytery officers.
- Section 04     Responsibilities outlined below will be detailed in the Standing Rules and Manual of Operations and Policies.

**ARTICLE X - STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Section 01 Committee on Ministry (COM)**

- a. The responsibility of the COM is to perform all duties required by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It shall also have the authority to act for the presbytery in the matters listed in G-11.0502h, G-14.0560-.0564 and G-14.0600. All such actions are to be reported to the next stated meeting of council and to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly.
- b. It shall consist of 15 members including a moderator and vice moderator, all elected by the Presbytery in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The membership of this committee shall strive to be representative of the Presbytery's diversity, specifically with regard to church size and geography.

**Section 02 Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)**

- a. The responsibility of the CPM is to perform all duties required by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in regards to the preparation of individuals for the office of minister of word and sacrament. It shall also have the authority to act for the presbytery in the matters of dismissing candidates, enrolling inquirers, and certifying candidates as ready for examination for ordination as listed in G-11.0103v. All such actions are to be reported to the next stated meeting of council and to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly.
- b. It shall consist of 9 members including a moderator and vice-moderator.

**Section 03 Committee on Representation (COR)**

- a. The responsibility of the COR is to perform all duties required by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- b. It shall consist of 7 members, including a moderator and vice-moderator, and shall conform to the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

**Section 04 Nominating Committee**

- a. The responsibility of the nominating committee is to present nominees for all elected offices and positions of the presbytery with the exception of stated clerk, general presbyter, associate presbyters and nominating committee members.
- b. It shall be composed of 9 members, including a moderator and vice-moderator, selected in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Standing Rules.

**ARTICLE XI - MINISTRY TEAMS**

- Section 01 The presbytery shall have the following ministry teams with their responsibilities defined in the Standing Rules. All recommendations are made to the council for action.

- a. **Geneva Center Ministry Team (GCMT)**
  - 1. Consists of 9 members including a moderator, vice-moderator and at least 1 youth.
  - 2. The purpose is to review and make recommendations for the ministry of Geneva Center.
- b. **New Ministry Development Team (NMDT)**
  - 1. Consists of 6 members including a moderator and vice moderator.
  - 2. The purpose is to recommend and implement new ministry development using a variety of sources including demographic studies and city or community growth projections
- c. **Personnel Ministry Team (PMT)**
  - 1. Consists of 6 members, including a moderator and vice-moderator.
  - 2. The purpose is to review and make recommendations relative to the personnel matters of the presbytery and its ministries.
- d. **Response Coordinating Team (RCT)**
  - 1. Consists of the moderator and vice-moderator of the presbytery, the moderator of council, the stated clerk, the general presbyter, and the moderator of COM's trauma response team, and as needed the moderator of any other essential committee or ministry team
  - 2. The purpose of the RCT is to timely coordinate presbytery's response to traumatic events in the life of the presbytery including public statements, proposals for Council or presbytery action, and coordination with discipline processes, disaster relief or other essential responses.
- e. **Stewardship Ministry Team (SMT)**
  - 1. Consists of 6 members, including a moderator and vice-moderator.
  - 2. The purpose is to review and make recommendations relative to being good stewards of God's resources including financial and property matters of the presbytery, which includes Geneva Center.
- f. **Transformation Ministry Team (TMT)**
  - 1. Consists of 6 members including a moderator and vice-moderator.
  - 2. The purpose is to nurture the transformation process of congregations seeking a renewed desire to proclaim the Gospel message.
- g. **Visioning Ministry Team (VMT)**
  - 1. Consists of 9 members including the general presbyter as moderator, a vice-moderator and the stated clerk.
  - 2. The purpose is to lead the presbytery through the process of developing and presenting to council for adoption long-term and short-term goals and to intentionally explore and make recommendations for new and creative ways the presbytery can fulfill its mission and achieve its goals.

Section 02 **Other Ministry Teams** Other ministry teams and task forces (as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order* as a special committee) may be established as necessary.

**ARTICLE XII - COMMISSIONS**

**Section 01 Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)**

- a. The purpose of the PJC is to fulfill all requirements outlined in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- b. It shall consist of 9 members.
- c. It shall elect from among its members a moderator, vice-moderator, and clerk.

**Section 02 Other Commissions**

- a. The functions of commissions are to be drafted by the officers of the presbytery in consultation with appropriate committees, ministry teams, and presbytery staff and presented to the presbytery assembly for approval; or to the council when the urgency of time requires such action.
- b. For the performance of functions set forth in G-9.0503a(1) an administrative commission membership shall be 5 members. (G-9.0504b(3))

**ARTICLE XIII - INCORPORATION**

**Section 01** In accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) this presbytery shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana.

**ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION**

**Section 01** These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of commissioners present only after written previous notice at two assemblies of the presbytery, presented at the first assembly for a first reading only and presented at the second assembly for vote.

**Section 02** These Bylaws may not be suspended.

(Approved November 23, 2010, effective January 1, 2011)