

**CHURCH BY-LAWS AND
MANUALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS
Policies and Procedures Guide for the Work of the Session**

The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context. Through the congregation God's people carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other. In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship, to offer care and nurture to God's children, to speak for social justice and righteousness, to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world. (G-1.0101)

The session is the council for the congregation and has responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session is charged to keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303), and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (G-3.0201)

Councils within our denomination are mutually interconnected. Each council has an expansive range of unique responsibilities; however, the life and ministry of each council is subject to review by the next higher council (G-3.0108). In this review, certain constitutional requirements must be addressed. What follows is a listing of those areas in which a presbytery is required to or justified in reviewing the work of the session of a congregation. The purpose of this review is for mutual awareness of and encouragement in mission. The value of review is in shared knowledge rather than meticulous compliance.

The Form of Government requires that "each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council" (G-3.0106). The following list does not intend to be exhaustive of all actions that might now be included in a session's Manual of Administrative Operations. It does seek to identify those instances in the Form of Government where specific policies or rules are required. In every case, a session should ask whether any existing policies of the session meet the expectations of a particular provision.

¹ Commended to the councils of the church by the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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| Reference | Constitutional Provision | Is there evidence of this, and where? |
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| <p>F-1.01 G-1.0101 G-3.0106</p> | <p>Each congregation is charged to “carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other.”</p> <p>Is there a mission and vision / purpose statement? Core values? Consultative mission strategy.</p> | |
| <p>G-2.03 G-2.04 G-2.05 G-3.02</p> | <p>Nurturing the faith of members & seeing to the proper preparation of persons for ordered ministry.</p> <p>How does someone become a member? What are the forms of membership? Expectations of members?</p> | |
| <p>G-3.0201</p> | <p>Session is directed to an expansive list of responsibilities.</p> <p>How does the session organize to do its work?</p> | |
| <p>G-1.0303 G-1.0304 G-1.0404 G-4.0101 G-4.0102</p> | <p>Members are to be trained, received, and nurtured.</p> <p>How is Christian formation practiced? Sunday School? Christian Education? Missions?</p> | |
| <p>G-3.0112 G-3.0113 G-3.0205 G-4.0101 G-4.0102</p> | <p>Certain corporate and financial practices and safeguards are defined.</p> | |
| <p>G-1.0303 G-3.0201b W-2.3011– .3014 W-2.4012</p> | <p>The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are acts of the whole church and authorized by a council. Is there a set schedule? Who plans and executes worship?</p> | |
| <p>G-3.0107 G-3.0204</p> | <p>What records are kept and how?</p> | |
| <p>G-1.05 G-1.0502</p> | <p>When does the congregation hold meetings? What is a quorum? How are they called? Public notice?</p> | |

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| F-1.0403 G-3.0103 | Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing its implementation of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation. | |
| F-1.0403 G-3.0103 G-3.0104 G-2.0401 | Elections in the congregation are to be fair, just, and inclusive. How are the elections done? What are the requirements for a nominating committee? | |
| G-2.0402 G-2.0403 G-2.0601 | Preparing and examining candidates for ordered ministry and ordaining or installing them. How is this done? | |
| G-2.0404 | Do Ruling elders and deacons serve for specific terms? | |
| G-3.0105 G-3.0106 G-3.0203 | Meetings conducted decently and in order. Does the bylaws or manual indicate that meeting will be conducted by Robert's Rules or some other form of parliamentary authority? | |
| G-3.0106 G-3.0109 | How are the Bylaws and Manual of administrative operations revised? Are there committees or commissions and are they defined? | |
| G-3.0106 G-3.0202 | Is there evidence of connection to the PC(USA) and the participation in the work of presbytery evident in the bylaws, as well as manual? | |
| RONR 11ed p.12-14 | Is the Constitution of the PC(USA) identified as the Constitution for the congregation? | |
| RONR 11ed p.12-14 | Is the incorporation of the church expressed? | |

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| <p>RONR 11ed p. 553-564</p> | <p>Who are the corporate officers? How are they nominated and elected, and terms? How are vacancies filled?</p> | |
| <p>RONR 11ed p. 553-564</p> | <p>When are the meetings of the corporation? Quorum? Who are members?</p> | |
| <p>RONR 11ed p. 553-564</p> | <p>Who are the trustees? What powers and authority do they have? Terms, and election processes?</p> | |
| <p>RONR 11ed p. 404-405, 482-483</p> | <p>Is there a provision in the bylaws for electronic meetings? If so, does it allow for members to deliberate, and right of a member to call for a face-to-face meeting? How are votes ratified?</p> | |
| <p>Required Policies: G-3.0106</p> | <p>Is there a sexual misconduct policy and a child protection policy?</p> | |