

## **THE PRESBYTERY OF CIMARRON**

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

### **THE STANDING RULES<sup>1</sup>**

#### **ARTICLE 1. DEFINITION AND ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. The Presbytery of Cimarron is a council constituted under the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) within the State of Oklahoma, counties of Kay, Noble, Pawnee, Payne, Logan, Grant, Garfield, Kingfisher, Alfalfa, Major, Blaine, Woods, Woodward, Dewey, Harper, Ellis, Beaver, Texas, and Cimarron. The presbytery has the responsibility and power to provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard, provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received, and nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. (G-3.0101a, b, c)

Section 2. Membership consists of all teaching elders received into presbytery, at least one ruling elder commissioner from each church, and certified Christian educators (G-2.1103b). For each installed teaching elder in a congregation, there shall be a ruling elder commissioner. Each ruling elder elected as an officer of the presbytery or elected moderator of a committee, commission, or task force of the presbytery shall be enrolled as a member of presbytery for their term of office (G-3.0301). Membership shall also consist of temporary and corresponding members.

- a. Temporary membership may be granted on a yearly basis by a majority vote of the presbytery at the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry and Preparation, and is granted to those serving specific congregations on a contractual basis, but are not Teaching Elders in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Temporary members shall have both voice and vote.
- b. Corresponding membership may be granted to members of other presbyteries, denominations, or Presbyterian Church (USA)-affiliated organizations who are present at presbytery meetings. Members shall be seated each meeting by a motion from the presbytery floor. Corresponding Members shall have voice, but no vote.

Section 3. The Presbytery of Cimarron is incorporated under the laws of the State of Oklahoma.

Section 4. The fiscal year shall correspond with the calendar year.

Section 5. The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the activity of God in the world as described in G-3.0301a, b, c.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to 'governing body' have been changed to 'council,' 'minister/clergy' to 'teaching elder' and 'elder' to 'ruling elder.'

## **ARTICLE 2. MEETINGS**

Section 1. Stated meetings of presbytery shall be held three times a year, normally in February, May/June, and October, and shall include worship and celebration of the Lord's Supper. The meetings shall begin at a time and place designated by Council. The February meeting will be the stated annual meeting.

Section 2. Adjourned meetings may be held at such time as determined by presbytery while in session.

Section 3. Special meetings of presbytery may be held when necessary. The moderator or the Stated Clerk shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, all being of different churches. Notice of such meeting shall be sent not less than 3 days in advance to each teaching elder and the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business shall be transacted. The Council shall confer about whether the called meeting will be conducted via conference call or in a face-to-face meeting.

Section 4. Emergency cancellations or changes of date, place, or time of stated meetings shall be authorized by Council. [Cf. Article 5, Sections 3 and 6]

Section 5. The place of meetings shall be determined by Council; churches are encouraged to extend an invitation to host presbytery as they are able.

Section 6. The quorum for each presbytery meeting shall be 5 teaching elders and 5 ruling elders from 5 different congregations.

Section 7. Attendance at Stated Meetings of presbytery shall be governed by the following:

- a. Teacher Elders and Ruling Elder Commissioners shall attend all presbytery meetings.
- b. In the case of providential hindrance, a request for an excused absence for all or part of the meeting, including clear indication of the reason for making the request, shall be made to the Stated Clerk prior to the meeting for which the request is made.
- c. All requests for excused absences and for early departures shall be given to the committee on Attendance, which shall be appointed by the Moderator of the meeting. Said committee shall report back to presbytery just prior to adjournment and make recommendation to presbytery as to whether or not the excuse should be granted. The presbytery shall then take appropriate action. Teaching elder and ruling elder commissioners who are absent without excuse shall be recorded and notification shall be made to the individual and appropriate clerks of session.
- d. An official record of attendance by teaching and ruling elders shall be maintained by the Stated Clerk. As stated in the Standing Rules (Article 7, Sections 2 and 3), the status of involvement of both teaching and ruling elders/sessions shall be taken into account when nominations to serve as Commissioners to higher councils are under consideration.

Section 8. Meetings of presbytery, council, committees, commissions, and task forces may be conducted via conference call, with minutes taken and actions reported to the appropriate body at the next stated meeting.

### **ARTICLE 3. GENERAL RULES**

Section 1. The presbytery shall be governed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order, and guided in deliberations by Roberts Rules of Order (most recent edition) (G-3.0105).

Section 2. Promotion of for-profit services or businesses, or announcements which will bring direct personal financial profit to the person involved, shall be considered inappropriate at presbytery meetings.

Section 3. The presbytery has a sexual misconduct policy that applies to all members and employees of the presbytery as well as anyone who participates in a presbytery event. Each teaching elder member of presbytery will review and sign a statement that they have read and agreed to abide by this policy.

### **ARTICLE 4. OFFICERS**

Section 1. The officers of presbytery shall be: the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk, Executive Presbyter, Moderator of Council, and Treasurer.

Section 2. The Moderator shall be nominated for election by presbytery's Nominating Committee and elected and installed at the fall Stated Meeting for a term of 1 year, and shall assume office at the adjournment of the fall meeting. His/her duties shall be those prescribed in G-3.0104. The Moderator shall serve as Moderator of Council. The Moderator may serve up to two consecutive one-year terms.

Section 3. The Vice-Moderator shall be appointed by the Moderator, confirmed by the presbytery, and serve the same term of office as the Moderator of presbytery. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator in the absence of or at the request of the Moderator, and shall perform other such duties as requested by the Moderator.

Section 4. The Stated Clerk shall be a ruling or teaching elder nominated for election by presbytery's Nominating Committee and elected at a fall Stated Meeting for a three year term (G-3.0104). He/she is eligible for re-election to an indefinite number of terms. An annual performance and compensation review shall be conducted by Council. The responsibilities of the Stated Clerk are to:

a. Meetings of the Presbytery of Cimarron

1. Act as parliamentarian for meetings of presbytery.

2. Record the actions of the presbytery, present for approval the minutes of previous presbytery meetings, and circulate these minutes for action at the next presbytery meeting. Review, edit, and approve the work of the Recording Clerk (if used).
3. Work with the presbytery Council, the Moderator and the Executive Presbyter to prepare an agenda for meetings of presbytery, and to communicate the agenda, time, and place for meetings of presbytery to all churches and individuals as appropriate.
4. Present all matters sent to the Clerk for presbytery action
5. Ascertain the presence of a quorum and records voting members present, and those speaking as well as others attending.
6. Notify members of their appointments, and such other duties as presbytery may assign.

b. Other Meetings

1. Attend meetings of presbytery's Council without vote and record proceedings of Council meetings.
2. Work with Council Moderator and Executive Presbyter to prepare an agenda, communicating time and place of Council meetings to its members.
3. Represent the presbytery in an advisory capacity on the Nominating Committee and the Commission on Ministry and Preparation.
4. Attend Meetings of the General Assembly, Stated Clerk's Association, and other polity meetings offered by the denomination, expenses to be covered by the Stated Clerk's budget.

c. Office Functions

- a. Keep the presbytery rolls of membership and attendance, preserve presbytery records, and furnish extracts from these records when required by another council of the church.
- b. Assist the Executive Presbyter in communication with presbytery, synod, and General Assembly offices.
- c. Provide information as needed to Investigating Committees, Administrative Commissions, Permanent Judicial Commissions, and other agencies which have a right to such information.
- d. Maintain a record of the Stated Clerk's office expenditures.

e. Facilitate presbytery communication.

Section 5. A Recording Clerk may be appointed by the Stated Clerk. His/her duties shall be to record the minutes of the meetings of the presbytery and to assist the Stated Clerk as desired.

Section 6. The Executive Presbyter shall be a ruling or teaching elder nominated for election by presbytery's Nominating Committee and elected at a fall Stated Meeting for a three [now five] year term. He/she is eligible for re-election to an indefinite number of terms. An annual performance and compensation review shall be conducted by Council. The duties of this office are to:

- a. represent the presbytery and coordinate activities and communication between the Presbytery of Cimarron, other presbyteries, and higher councils, and attend other denominational functions as appropriate.
- b. assist in communications among local churches and the presbytery.
- c. work with the presbytery Council, Moderator, and the Stated Clerk to prepare an agenda for meetings of presbytery, communicating agenda, time, and place of meetings to all churches and individuals as may be appropriate.
- d. represent the presbytery in an advisory capacity on the Council, Nominating Committee and the Commission on Ministry and Preparation.

Section 7. The Treasurer shall be nominated for election by presbytery's Nominating Committee and elected at the fall Stated Meeting for a three-year term. He/she is eligible for re-election to an indefinite number of terms. An annual performance and compensation review shall be conducted by Council. An assistant treasurer shall also be elected at the fall Stated Meeting for a three-year term. He/she shall be authorized to serve in the absence or incapacity of the Treasurer. The duties of the Treasurer (and Assistant Treasurer) are to:

- a. Keep and report formal records of all presbytery financial transactions.
- b. Prepare financial reports for each Stated Meeting of presbytery, and for the General Assembly as required, with a full financial report of the previous year to the February Stated Meeting of presbytery.
- c. Receive and disperse funds entrusted to the Treasurer. Administer the financial transactions of presbytery according to the adopted budget and any specific actions of presbytery.
- d. Invest presbytery funds as directed by Council and reported to the presbytery.
- e. Receive per capita funds from local churches and remit the General Assembly portion to the Office of the General Assembly.
- f. Provide advice and/or training to church treasurers as needed.

Section 8. If the Stated Clerk, Executive Presbyter, and/or Treasurer are not Volunteers in Mission, they shall receive a salary as determined by the presbytery, upon recommendation of the Council. All officers may submit budgets for their estimated expenses, which are to be approved by presbytery.

Section 9. The Moderator of Council shall moderate all Council meetings and perform other such duties as requested by Council or presbytery.

Section 10. The Council shall constitute the Board of Trustees. (G-4.0101)

Section 11. In the event, of the death, incapacitation, or removal from the bounds of presbytery of any officer, other than the Moderator of presbytery, the Moderator shall appoint a successor to serve until the next Stated Meeting. At that Stated Meeting, a successor for the remaining term of such officer shall be elected or confirmed.

## **ARTICLE 5. PRESBYTERY COUNCIL**

Section 1. The Council of presbytery shall consist of the presbytery Moderator, one teaching elder and one ruling elder at large. Council shall also include as advisory members the Stated Clerk, Executive Presbyter, and Treasurer. At-large members are elected at a fall meeting and elected for two-year, staggered terms.

Section 2. The Council shall meet between Stated Meetings of presbytery.

Section 3. The Council shall prepare the agenda for presbytery based on written reports from presbytery groups and organizations, and recommend place and time of meeting.

Section 4. The Council shall act as the coordinating body, appoint and supervise the work of task forces, provide for ecclesiastical tasks of presbytery, and make interim committee and commission appointments when necessary, always subject to the approval of presbytery at its next stated Meeting.

Section 5. The Council shall nominate to presbytery at its fall Stated Meeting the Moderator of the Committee on Nominations.

Section 6. The Council will be responsible for preparing the presbytery budget, reviewing treasurer's reports and arranging annual financial review.

Section 7. Other duties of the Council shall be approved by presbytery.

## **ARTICLE 6. COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, and TASK FORCES**

Section 1. The presbytery may designate committees, commissions, and task forces as are necessary to perform the work of presbytery. Presbytery shall elect Moderators and members of these groups at the fall Stated Meeting. Within each committee, commission, and task force, every effort shall be made to maintain an appropriate balance of ruling and teaching elder representation, but moderators must be ruling or teaching elders. Terms of office shall be for three years and shall consist of three classes, unless otherwise provided for in these Standing Rules. No one shall serve on a specific committee or commission for consecutive terms either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. Vacancies shall be filled at the next subsequent meeting of presbytery.

Section 2. **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY AND PREPARATION**

a. The mission of the Commission on Ministry and Preparation is two-fold: 1) to act as counselor, pastor, and advisor to teaching elders, commissioned pastors, certified Christian Educators, and congregations of the Presbytery (G-3.0301, G-3.0307) and 2) to guide, nurture, and oversee those in process of discerning a call to and preparing for ministry as teaching elders, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators. (G-3.0307)

b. The membership of this commission shall consist of three teaching elders and three ruling elders elected by presbytery. Presbytery's Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk shall serve as advisory members. The Moderator shall be elected yearly by presbytery.

c. This commission shall meet bi-monthly for regular Stated Meetings and shall report to Presbytery. Dates for Stated Meetings shall be determined by the incoming commission, with confirmed dates communicated to all sessions in January. A Stated Meeting may be canceled by the Moderator if no business has been brought to the Commission's attention at least one week in advance. A quorum shall be four voting members.

d. The first set of responsibilities assigned to this commission is to teaching elders, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators, and for relations with presbytery's congregations. Detailed guidelines are contained in the most recent version of the PC(USA) Advisory Handbook for Ministry Committees/Commissions, Office of Vocation. The Commission will:

1. Consult regularly with each teaching elder and ruling elder commissioned to particular service of presbytery, report to presbytery annually the type of work in which each teaching elder and ruling elder commissioned to particular service is engaged, and require an annual report from every teaching elder performing work not under the jurisdiction of presbytery or a higher council of the church.

2. Counsel with churches regarding calls for permanent pastoral relationships, visiting and counseling with every Pastor Nominating Committee. Advise the Committee regarding the merits, availability, and suitability of any candidate or teaching elder considered for nomination, and shall have the privilege of suggesting names to the committee. The Pastor Nominating Committee shall receive and consider the Commission's counsel before extending a call. A call

extended to a previously ordained teaching elder must be approved by the Commission before a congregational meeting is held. Before a call is extended to a candidate for ordination, the presbytery shall examine the candidate for ordination and/or installation before a congregational meeting is held. In the case of a church receiving aid in supporting a pastor, the Commission shall confer with the church and that agency before it shall recommend that a call be extended to the teaching elder.

3. Counsel with churches regarding advisability of calling a pastor designated for a particular term of service in consultation with the congregation.

4. Counsel with sessions regarding invitations for temporary pastoral services when the church is without a pastor, and provide lists of teaching elders and ruling elders commissioned for particular service who have been trained to supply vacant pulpits. Concurrence of the presbytery through this commission is required when a session invites someone to serve in a temporary capacity. The terms of temporary pastoral relationships are to be specified in a written agreement, signed by the pastor, the session, and a representative of this commission. Temporary pastoral relationships in this presbytery are interim pastor, supply pastor, and ruling elder commissioned to particular service.

5. Make recommendations to presbytery regarding the services of teaching elders in non-installed ministries. Every request by a teaching elder or a candidate for the presbytery's approval of a task appropriate to the ministry, though not a pastoral relationship to a particular church, shall be made by the teaching elder or candidate through the commission and shall be reported by it to the presbytery with recommendation for presbytery's action.

6. Provide for implementation of equal opportunity employment for teaching elders and candidates, commissioned pastors and certified Christian educators without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability.

7. Approve and present calls for services of teaching elders, approve examinations of teaching elders transferring from other presbyteries, dissolve pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the presbytery, and dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries, with the provision that all such actions be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

9. Visit with each session of the presbytery at least once every 3 years, discussing with them the mission and ministry of their congregation and encouraging their participation as session and congregation in the life and work of the presbytery and the larger church.

10. Serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting peace, unity, and purity of its churches, especially as regards relationships between teaching elders and their churches. It shall mediate differences and reconcile persons, so that difficulties



may be corrected by the session of the church, the welfare of the church be strengthened, and the unity of Christ's body be manifested.

11. Exercise discretion in determining when to act on difficulties reported in a church. It may approach and counsel the session as to appropriate actions to correct difficulties. It may offer to mediate in case the session is unable to settle problems peaceably. It may act to correct difficulties if asked by the parties concerned, or if granted such authority by the presbytery for the specific case. When so doing, the commission shall hold sufficient hearings as provided in the Rules of Discipline.

e. The second set of duties of this commission is to act as guide, nurturer and overseer of those preparing to become a teaching elder, commissioned pastor, or certified Christian educator, entering into covenant relationship with them, their sessions and congregations. (G-3.0307, G-2.0601) Detailed procedures are contained in the most recent version of the PC (USA) Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry. The Commission will:

1. Instruct sessions on their role in the inquiry, candidacy, and certification process.
2. Assign each inquirer, candidate, commissioned ruling elder and prospective Christian educator a mentor for support through the process.
3. Exercise responsibility for spiritual growth and support of inquirers, candidates, ruling elders seeking to be commissioned, and prospective Christian educators, give guidance in regard to courses of study, familiarity with the Bible and Confessions, practical training and educational plans including choice of institutions, field education, and financial planning.
4. Conduct an annual assessment of the inquirer's, candidate's, ruling elder's, or Christian educator's progress, reporting such to the session as well as the presbytery at its next meeting.
5. Conduct the final assessment of a candidate's readiness to be examined for ordination, pending a call, to be reported to the presbytery and to a calling presbytery. Conduct a final assessment of a ruling elder's preparation for commissioning, and a Christian educator's certification, in order that they might seek a church position.
6. Remove an individual's name from the roll of inquirers and candidates, withdrawing them from the covenant relationship, in consultation with the session, and reporting such action to the presbytery at its next meeting. If such removal is not at the inquirer's or candidate's request, the commission will make reasonable attempt to give the candidate or inquirer opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal. (G-2.0609)
7. Evaluate the need and authorize distribution of scholarship funds for theological education as they are available.

### Section 3. **COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**

a. The mission of the Committee on Nominations is to recruit and locate qualified individuals willing to serve the presbytery, thus providing opportunities for service by individuals and congregations within the presbytery. The goal is that all churches, teaching and ruling elders participate in the decision-making process of the presbytery.

b. The membership of this Committee shall consist of three persons: one teaching elder, one female and one male ruling elder. The Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the Moderator of the Committee on Representation shall serve as advisory members. Nominations to serve on the Nominating Committee shall come from the Council of presbytery and their elections shall be by presbytery at the fall stated meeting. The Moderator shall be elected yearly by presbytery.

c. This committee shall meet at least once per year, prior to the September Council meeting, with other meetings as needed. A quorum shall be two of the three elected members.

d. Duties are to:

1. Solicit nominee suggestions from local churches for ruling elders or laypersons for specific vacancies, providing churches with a brief description of the function and responsibilities of each committee.
2. Examine the qualifications of the suggested nominees.
3. Provide a slate of prospective committee and commissions members to be voted upon at the fall Stated Meeting of presbytery, including persons to serve as Moderators.
4. Make nominations for vacancies occurring during the year.
5. Follow procedures to select Commissioners to General Assembly and the synod (Section 7):

### Section 4. **COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION**

a. The Committee on Representation shall consist of one man and one woman, either ruling or teaching elder to be nominated by Council and elected by presbytery. They shall be responsible for assuring that presbytery conforms to the principles outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103.

### Section 5. **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

a. Special committees may be appointed by the Moderator to perform a specific function at a particular meeting of presbytery, such as auditing the Treasurer's reports, preparing

resolution, examining records of session, and any other committee authorized by presbytery.

## Section 6. SPECIAL COMMISSIONS

a. Special commissions for functions prescribed or authorized by the Book of Order may be adopted by presbytery at any meeting. Each special commission shall have written procedures, establishing basic objectives and responsibilities. Any subsequent revisions shall be approved by the presbytery.

## Section 7. TASK FORCES

a. Task Forces may be formed by members (of churches or presbytery) who have a strong interest in a particular ministry area. Task forces are encouraged to focus on specific objectives and to form partnerships with similar groups in the denomination and/or area of ministry with ecumenical partners. Membership shall be approved by the presbytery for the duration of the task force. Task forces should report regularly on their accomplishments to the presbytery. The continuing viability of a task force will be reviewed annually by the presbytery and a task force will be disbanded when all goals are accomplished, when the presbytery shifts its focus to other areas, and/or when the task force work is adopted by a standing committee of the presbytery. Task forces may submit budget requests to Council to cover their expenses and projects.

# ARTICLE 7. COMMISSIONERS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SYNOD

Section 1. Nominations for Teaching Elder Commissioners shall be made by Nominating Committee considering: a) the date of the teaching elder's enrollment in this presbytery, b) the date of his/her last attendance at a General Assembly, c) a nominee who has no more than one unexcused absence from presbytery meetings since the last General Assembly, and d) a nominee who fulfills his/her presbytery committee/commission responsibilities.

Section 2. Nominations for Ruling Elder Commissioners shall be made by the Nominating Committee from names submitted by the sessions determined by rotation from a list of the active churches of presbytery. Nominations shall be made upon consideration of a ruling elder's activity in his/her home church and his/her interest in the work of presbytery and the General Assembly. **Note: An active church is one represented at two of the three Stated Meetings of presbytery in the previous calendar year and one which has paid its annual per capita assessment for the previous year or has just cause, endorsed by presbytery, for not making those payments.**

Section 3. Young Adult Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee from recommendations made by sessions of active churches. An application shall be made available to all churches in the presbytery.

Section 4. The presbytery shall elect Alternate Commissioners and Young Adult Advisory Delegates to General Assembly using the same criteria which apply to the elections of the Principal Commissioners and Advisory Delegates.

a. Special procedures relating to the selection of Commissioners to synod: Nominate one teaching elder commissioners and one ruling elder commissioner for terms set by the synod. Only teaching and ruling elders active in the life of presbytery shall be considered for nomination.

b. In addition to the nominations made by the Committee on Nominations, opportunity shall be provided for nominations from the floor of presbytery, being sure that nominees meet the requirements set forth above.

## **ARTICLE 8. AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION OF RULES**

Section 1. These Standing Rules may be amended at any Stated Meeting of presbytery by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing notice has been given at a prior Stated Meeting.

Section 2. Any of the Standing Rules may be suspended by a three-fourths vote of the members present.

Section 3. The references to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II, Form of Government come from the 2017-2019 version. To the extent these are adjusted or moved, the new version should apply<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>*The original Standing Rules were approved by the Presbytery of Cimarron on September 11, 1991. Subsequent amendments were made on February 13, 1996, September 9, 1997, June 4, 1999, and May 2, 2000. To conform to the new Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (USA) these Standing Rules were revised and approved by the Presbytery of Cimarron on October 9, 2012, then amended on October 7, 2014 and June 6, 2015.*

*The recent revision was adopted by the presbytery at its stated meeting on October 6, 2017 at First Presbyterian Church, Guymon, OK, and further amended February 12, 2019 at First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater, OK*

*Rev. Deborah Meinke, Stated Clerk*