

**THE BYLAWS  
of the PRESBYTERY OF OHIO of the  
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Approved April 7, 1995

Revised 10-20-95

Revised 10-20-00

Revised 10-18-03

Revised 10-21-05

**PREAMBLE**

The general powers and duties of the Presbytery are clearly stated in *The Standards of Government, Discipline and Worship of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*. These Bylaws of the Presbytery of Ohio comprise only such rules as are necessary to facilitate the proper handling of its business. These rules must not be in conflict with the Constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

**ARTICLE I - STATED MEETINGS**

- A. Stated meetings of Presbytery shall be two each year to be held as follows: the Stated Spring Meeting on the first Friday and subsequent Saturday of April (except when these dates immediately precede Easter, at which time the previous Friday and Saturday are appointed) and the Stated Fall Meeting the third Friday and subsequent Saturday of October; the meetings shall conclude no later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, except by action of Presbytery.
- B. Any minister of Presbytery who is unable to attend a Stated Meeting of Presbytery shall request in writing to be excused.
- C. Meetings shall be held at the churches of Presbytery according to the rotation specified in the Instruments IV. When a congregation is received into Presbytery, it shall automatically be placed in the rotation one year away from the closest stated meeting of its

reception. If this placement is inconvenient, the church shall be placed on the rotation according to the Clerk's discretion.

- D. These meetings shall be opened with a devotional service conducted by the Moderator or an ordained minister of Presbytery appointed by him.
- E. The session of the host church shall constitute a Committee on Arrangements, and its duty shall be to provide for the hospitality of the Presbytery. The pastor of the host church shall be chairman and shall report at the opening session of Presbytery.
- F. For special meetings, see F.O.G. XIV:7.
- G. All noncommissioned elders of the regional church are granted the privilege to sit with Presbytery in all meetings, opened and closed, as corresponding members with the entitlement to deliberate and advise. (F.O.G. XIV:9)
- H. All elections of officers and committee members will be held at the Fall Stated Meeting unless otherwise needed to fill vacancies at other times.
- I. Vacancies will be filled by election except where noted in these Bylaws.
- J. Committees and individuals intending to submit a written report to a particular stated meeting as listed in the docket of the Instruments shall make every effort to submit its written report to the stated clerk and to the website manager in electronic form (if possible) no later than two weeks prior to the date of the stated meeting. The website manager shall make every effort to post the reports to the opcpoh.org website by no later than one week prior to the stated meeting.

## **ARTICLE II - OFFICERS**

- A. The officers of the Presbytery of Ohio shall be a moderator, elected for a one-year term, a stated clerk, elected for a two-year term

every odd year, an assistant clerk, elected for a two year term every even year; and a treasurer, elected for a one year term, all elected by a majority ballot .

B. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings and administer all the affairs of Presbytery designated to him, in accordance with the Form of Government XVIII.

C. The Stated Clerk shall:

1. Send notices of stated meetings in ample time.
2. Submit dockets.
3. Refer to the appropriate committee(s) within seven days of receipt all business that has been presented to him between meetings, assign all correspondence for reading at the appropriate point on the docket.
4. Keep a record of the transactions of the Presbytery in permanent form on numbered pages; and send a photo- copy of the minutes to each member, to licentiates, and to those under care.
5. Number and file all papers referred to in the minutes and correspondences of the clerk, protecting them from fire or loss. All minutes and important documents preserving the history of this presbytery will be periodically transferred to microfilm or electronic media and transferred to the archives in the care of the denominational historian.
6. Produce at the stated meetings of Presbytery the records of Presbytery, the Constitution of the Church, and the last published minutes of the General Assembly.
7. Communicate officially any acts of Presbytery to the parties whom they may concern, including appointments to committees or special duties.
8. Keep a copy of the *Bylaws of Presbytery* constantly corrected to date as they may be altered or amended by act of

Presbytery, and supply every member with the most current copy.

9. Certify, upon request, the standing of all ministers and/or ruling elders on the roll of Presbytery.
10. Prepare a statistical report for the presbytery to be presented at the spring meeting.
11. Submit his annual statistical report to the Statistician within the time requested, and take steps to see that statistical reports are submitted to the Statistician by churches within Presbytery when he is informed by the Statistician that they are overdue.
12. Perform all duties in accordance with the Form of Government XIX.
13. Deliver to his successor all the records of Presbytery.

**D. The Assistant Clerk shall:**

1. Take the minutes of the meetings on behalf of the Stated Clerk.
2. Keep a roll of the members of Presbytery (all ministers, ruling elders, and their addresses).
3. Record those present at each meeting.

**E. Treasurer**

1. He shall receive all money due or collected by the Presbytery, shall make distribution thereof on its order, and shall make a record of all transactions.
2. He shall present his annual report at the Stated Spring Meeting of Presbytery, the fiscal year ending December 31, and shall have his records available for audit by February 15.
3. He shall receive from each standing committee no later than September 1, each year, its proposed budget, detailing estimated expenses, for the coming year.
4. He shall submit to Presbytery a proposed budget at the Stated Fall Meeting to be effective January 1 of each year:

- a. All expenses, which can reasonably be estimated for the ensuing year, shall be itemized in the budget.
  - b. A per capita amount of the budgeted askings to be requested from the churches of Presbytery shall be calculated based on the most recent available communicant membership data for each church of Presbytery provided by the Stated Clerk.
5. He shall make every effort to keep the standing committees informed quarterly or more often, upon request, of their particular budget status.

### **Article III. STANDING COMMITTEES**

#### **A. Candidates and Credentials**

1. Shall consist of three ministers and two ruling elders divided into two classes, each to serve for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in the odd-numbered years, and two ministers and one ruling elder shall be elected in even-numbered years.
2. Shall supervise the taking under care of candidates for the gospel ministry, shall assign parts of trial for licensure and ordination, and shall conduct examinations for the same in accord with Form of Government XXI, XXII, and XXIII.
3. Shall examine and report on the credentials and testimonials of the ministers applying for admission into Presbytery.
4. Shall examine and make recommendations concerning the resignation of a minister without another charge to ministerial work and demissions from the ministry.
5. Shall supervise the examination of ruling elders of churches seeking to be received into the presbytery in accordance with F.O.G. XXIX:b.2.c.

#### **B. Church Extension and Home Missions**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and two ruling elders divided into two classes, each to serve for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in the odd-numbered

years, and one minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in the even-numbered years. The Regional Missionary, if any, shall be an ex-officio member.

2. Shall have the oversight of new locations for churches within the bounds of the regional church.
3. Shall conduct survey work within the bounds of the regional church, reporting to Presbytery on desirable locations for new churches.
4. Shall confer with churches seeking admission into the Presbytery.
5. Shall oversee the work of the Regional Missionary, if any.
6. Shall present all requests for funding approved by Presbytery to the General Assembly committee.
7. None of the above shall be understood as intruding into local session's authority to initiate and oversee its own mission works. However, pursuant to #6 above, the Committee shall have authority to request reports from local churches to accompany requests for funds.

**C. Diaconal Ministries**

1. Shall consist of three members, one minister or ruling elder and two deacons, whose terms shall be for three years; one term expiring each year.
2. The duties shall be:
  - a. To act as liaison between local diaconates and the General Assembly Committee.
  - b. To investigate appeals and to recommend to Presbytery those of need in local churches whose needs cannot be met locally.
  - c. To raise funds from the churches of Presbytery to meet particular needs that come to their attention.
  - d. To keep a roll of active deacons of Presbytery, and to make such a roll available to Presbytery.

**D. Fraternal Relations**

1. Shall consist of two presbyters divided into two classes, each to serve two years.
2. Shall arrange for the exchange of fraternal delegates with neighboring presbyteries and classes of denominations with which the General Assembly exchanges fraternal delegates.
3. Shall promote closer relations and fellowship with neighboring presbyteries, classes, and churches of denominations with which the General Assembly exchanges fraternal delegates.

**E. General Assembly Liaison**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder, divided into two classes each to serve for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in odd-numbered years, and one minister shall be elected in even-numbered years.
2. Shall receive all documents requesting a response sent down by General Assembly and all proposed constitutional amendments at each Fall Stated Meeting.
3. Shall propose to Presbytery courses of action, supplying the response requested by the General Assembly at each Spring Stated Meeting, or earlier if the General Assembly requests an earlier response.
4. Shall report to the Presbytery on the status of members of Presbytery serving as chaplains.

**F. Judicial**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder, divided into two classes, each to serve two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected to serve in odd-numbered years, and one minister shall be elected in even-numbered years in October. Vacancies shall be filled by election.

2. Shall aid Presbytery in fairly but expeditiously disposing of appeals and complaints.
3. Shall act in advance of or during a Presbytery meeting to receive appeals and complaints, shall gather, summarize, and/or index the relevant documents and data, and recommend the whole order of the proceedings, but not the disposition of the appeals and complaints.
4. Shall give aid, upon request from individuals and/or sessions, in formulating complaints and appeals which may come before Presbytery.
5. When possible, shall seek pastorally to resolve disputes surrounding complaints and appeals before such complaints and appeals are brought before Presbytery, and in so doing shall correspond with the Visitation Committee.

**G. Visitation and Sessional Records**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder divided into two classes, each to serve two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in odd-numbered years, and one minister shall be elected in even-numbered years. Additionally, Presbytery shall elect two alternates, one minister and one ruling elder, to be elected for two years in odd-numbered years in October. Alternates shall serve in the absence of a regular member, or when the church with which a regular member is associated is visited. The convener, in consultation with the other members, may secure other ministers or ruling elders to serve as alternates when a regular member or elected alternate is not available. Vacancies in the committee shall be filled by alternates, and the Moderator and Stated Clerk shall proceed to appoint new alternates to serve until the next Fall Stated Meeting. The quorum of this committee shall be two ministers and one ruling elder.
2. Shall visit all the churches of Presbytery and meet with each session annually.

3. Shall discuss with sessions the teaching ministry, the administration of the sacraments, and the discipline (both administrative and judicial).
4. Where sessions are found to have problems with which they need assistance, shall seek to be of help, and may determine to bring such problems to the attention of Presbytery.
5. Shall review the minutes of the sessions *during* their visits in accordance with the rules found in Presbytery's *Instruments*.
6. Shall report annually to Presbytery, both orally and in writing, the results of its visits with the sessions. Its report shall describe the general condition of each church under #3 above, the results of the examination of the minutes, and may also advise Presbytery of serious problems and irregularities which come to the attention of the committee.
7. The committee shall have no power to initiate any disciplinary process.
8. Shall report to the Presbytery on the status of all noninstalled ministers, ministers laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery and retired ministers (F.O.G. XXVIII).

#### **H. Youth Work**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder, divided into two classes, each to serve for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in odd-numbered years, and one minister shall be elected in even-numbered years.
2. Shall promote youth work by:
  - a. Conducting a Bible camp each summer, if possible.
  - b. Conducting spring and fall rallies each year.

#### **I. Foreign Missions**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and two ruling elders divided into two classes, each serving for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in the odd-numbered years,

and one minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in the even-numbered years. Elections shall fill any vacancies

2. Shall report to the Presbytery on the status of members of the Presbytery serving as missionaries.
3. Shall act as liaison between the churches of the Presbytery of Ohio and the General Assembly Foreign Missions Committee.
4. Shall promote prayer, awareness and interest in foreign missions to the churches of the Presbytery of Ohio through an annual missions conference if possible, and through other avenues, which the Presbytery may approve.

**J. Website**

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder divided into two classes, each serving for two years. One minister and one ruling elder shall be elected in odd-numbered years, and one minister shall be elected in the even-numbered years.
2. Shall appoint a website manager to establish and maintain the opcpoh.org website.
3. Shall establish and maintain guidelines and policies concerning the content of the opcpoh.org website as found in the Presbytery's *Instruments*.
4. Shall establish and maintain the operation of the opcpoh.org website by providing oversight and support for the website manager and prescribing his duties as found in the Presbytery's *Instruments*.

**Article IV. RULES OF ORDER**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern Presbytery in all cases in which they are applicable, and in which they are not consistent with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, these Bylaws, or any special rules of order the Presbytery may adopt.

#### **Article V. SUSPENSION OF THE BYLAWS**

In accordance with the rules of order, the provisions of any of these Bylaws, with the exception of this Article V, may be set aside temporarily by a two-thirds vote of Presbytery.

#### **Article VI. AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any stated meeting by a two-thirds vote of Presbytery, provided a written notice of the proposed amendment has been given at the previous stated meeting and is incorporated in the record of the minutes sent to the ministers and sessions of Presbytery.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

### **I. Docket**

- A. The business of the stated meetings of Presbytery shall normally be conducted according to the following docket:
- B. General
  - 1. Devotional service
  - 2. Constituting prayer
  - 3. Roll call
  - 4. Reading and approval of minutes
  - 5. Presentation and assignment of communications
  - 6. Adoption of the docket
  - 7. Report of the Stated Clerk
  - 8. Report of the Committee on Arrangements
  - 9. Reports of moderators of vacant churches
  - 10. Reports of standing committees
  - 11. Report of the Treasurer
  - 12. Reports of special committees
  - 13. Miscellaneous business
  - 14. Set place of next meeting
  - 15. Adjournment and prayer
- C. At the Stated Spring Meeting, the following shall also appear on the docket:
  - 1. Statistical report of the Stated Clerk
  - 2. Report of the Audit Committee
  - 3. Report of Committee to Examine Auxiliary Records
  - 4. Report of the Presbyterial Auxiliary
- D. At the Stated Fall Meeting, the following shall also appear on the docket:
  - 1. Election of officers and standing committees immediately after adoption of the docket
  - 2. Appointment of conveners of standing committees
  - 3. Appointment of the Audit Committee (two presbyters)
  - 4. Appointment of Committee to Examine Auxiliary Records

- E. Reports on matters in sections C. and D. shall come between items 10. and 11. on the docket.
- F. The fiscal year shall be January 1 through December 31

## **II. REVIEW OF SESSIONAL RECORDS**

- A. Rules for keeping Sessional records:
  - 1. The records of the session shall be legibly written or typed on numbered pages and placed in an official lock-type minutes book. Erasures, interlineations, and footnotes shall be avoided.
  - 2. The record shall state the time and place of meeting and the names of members present and absent.
  - 3. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer and that fact shall be noted in the minutes.
  - 4. The minutes shall be appropriately signed.
  - 5. The minutes of the meeting should inform the reader as to who was moderating the meeting.
  - 6. When previous actions of the session are referred to, the page on which it is recorded shall be cited.
  - 7. Material shall not be inserted into the record on separate, unnumbered pages.
  - 8. The records of the session shall be read and approved by the session, and the fact of such approval shall be entered into the minutes.
  - 9. All votes and proceedings which are necessary to give a complete history of the church shall be recorded, including statistical reports, election of elders and deacons, changes in the ruling eldership, reception and dismissal of members, times of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, baptisms of infants and adults, marriages, and deaths. Separate records shall also be kept of baptisms, marriages, and deaths.
  - 10. The full name of applicants for church membership shall be recorded; in the case of married females, the maiden name, and "the wife or widow of" shall be included; in the case of minors, son or daughter of; and in every case whether baptized.

11. All records of the reception of members by letter shall state from what church the member came; and the records of dismissal shall state to what congregation the member is recommended.
  12. Church sessions shall order the incorporation of the proceedings of congregational meetings with their own record so as to exhibit the actions taken and shall indicate the commitment made by the congregation each year for the support of its pastor, provision for his health insurance, and any changes in the terms of the call.
  13. Once each year and at the conclusion of the minutes of the meetings of said year, there shall be inserted in full the annual statistical statement which the session has made to Presbytery.
  14. The minutes shall record the appointment of an elder delegate and an alternate to Presbytery.
  15. All Sessional records shall be made available to the Church Visitation Committee for its annual visit.
  16. The session shall take note in its minutes of exceptions taken by the Presbytery to its minutes, together with the correction or explanations adopted by the session to rectify them.
- B. The findings of the Church Visitation Committee with respect to the minutes of each session shall be reported to Presbytery under the following categories:
1. Notations: Typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation, non-prejudicial misstatements of fact, and failure to provide sufficient information or identification.
  2. Exceptions: Violations of Presbytery's "Rules for keeping Sessional records", and actions which appear not to conform to the Constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### **III. REVIEW OF AUXILIARY RECORDS**

The rules for the keeping of the auxiliary records shall the rules for keeping minutes, section 47, found in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. A Committee to Examine Auxiliary Records shall be appointed annually at the Fall Stated Meeting. Any matters of

importance or interest to Presbytery not previously reported by the Presbyterian Auxiliary shall be reported by this committee at the Spring Stated Meeting.

#### **IV. WEBSITE GUIDELINES & POLICIES**

##### **A. Content**

1. Shall consist of information pertinent to the ongoing business of the Presbytery, including, but not limited to, the following: Dockets, Minutes, Committee Reports, Directory of Churches and Mission Works, List of Officers, List of Committees and their Membership, Directory of Ministers and Ruling Elders, Schedules and Upcoming Meetings.(such information to be password protected at the Website Committee's discretion)
2. Content other than that listed in V. A. 1. above must be approved by the Website Committee.
3. Essays and articles' section must include the following qualification: "The views expressed by this author do not necessarily represent the official views of the Presbytery of Ohio or the Orthodox Presbyterian Church."
4. Shall consist of links to the official denominational website (opc.org), and links to websites of the local churches of the Presbytery (where applicable)
5. Other links must be approved by the Website Committee.

##### **B. Operation**

1. Shall be managed by the website manager who shall be subject to the Website Committee and its established website guidelines and policies.
2. The website manager's duties shall include the following:
  - a. To post to the website content subject to the guidelines and policies noted in A. above.

- b. To establish and maintain a relationship with a web hosting service provider on behalf of the Website Committee for the Presbytery.

## **V. ROTATION OF CHURCHES**

Pittsburgh  
North Dayton  
Pickerington  
Franklin  
Indiana  
Mansfield  
Morgantown  
Dayton  
Hollidaysburg  
Nashua  
Grove City  
Sheridan  
Sewickley  
Columbus  
Harrisville  
Johnstown