

Handbook for Clerks of Session

A compilation of policies and expectations from the Book of Order and Robert's Rules of Order

Prepared by the Polity and Government Committee

of the Presbytery of San Jose

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Handbook for Clerks of Session

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Introduction

Welcome to the office of Clerk of Session! You have joined a unique and important group of people in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Book of Order (G-3.0104) mandates that each Council (governing body) of the PCUSA have a moderator and a clerk. Clerks of Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly are called Stated Clerks. Those serving Sessions are called Clerks of Session.

As clerk, you will record a good deal of history of your church. Future generations will learn what your church did to further Christ's mission in the world by reading the minutes you write. It follows then, that it is important that you keep accurate records of all the proceedings in the session meetings and in congregational meetings.

This manual has been prepared to provide Clerks of Session with information and examples to assist them in their work.

In this Handbook for Clerks of Session, as in the *Book of Order*:

- SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE signify practice that is mandated,
- SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended,
- IS APPROPRIATE signifies practice that is commended as suitable,
- MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required.

If you have any questions, or need assistance, please contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.



Roles of the Clerk of Session

The primary role of the clerk of session is to maintain and preserve the records of the church, including the minutes of session and congregational meetings and the rolls and registers. Clerks may assist the moderator in agenda preparation or serve as a sounding board for the moderator. An important role of the clerk is to assist the pastor by keeping the pastor informed and providing information to the pastor as requested. Other assistance will be determined by the relationship between the pastor and the clerk and by the needs of the pastor. (G-3.0104)

The clerk may never assume the role of Moderator either of the Session or of the Congregation.

Responsibilities

Before a Meeting

1. Be familiar with the responsibilities of the session as described in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0201).
2. Bring all official correspondence to the attention of the pastor/moderator and the session, and respond as directed by the session.
3. Keep a list of unfinished business, including all matters referred to a committee or a staff member for later report to session, and remind the appropriate persons(s) if not reported in a timely manner.
4. Receive and submit communications from/to other governing bodies.
5. Assist the moderator in preparing the agenda for session meetings, as requested.
6. Notify the session or congregation of special meetings, describing accurately the business that will be transacted. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for adequate notice (G-1.0501, G-1.0502, G-3.0203).

During a Meeting

1. Keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the session (G- 3.0107).
2. Keep the roll of session membership and attendance (G-3.0201, G-3.0203).
3. Be prepared to respond to questions of parliamentary procedure in meetings if requested. (Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, except in those cases where the *Book of Order* provides otherwise (G-3.0105). Copies of *Robert's Rules of Order* and the latest *Book of Order* should be available at meetings.)
4. Serve as secretary for meetings of the congregation (G-3.0104, G-1.0505,) seeing that the minutes are received by session and are inscribed in the permanent session minute book. (See Congregational Meetings, page 9.)

After a Meeting/Long-Term and Occasional Work

1. Arrange for the careful preservation of session records, making recommendation to the session for the permanent safekeeping of its records (G-3.0107).
2. Maintain and preserve rolls and registers required of session (G- 3.0204). (See Rolls and Registers, page 12-13.)
3. Be sure that the annual statistical form (see Page 16) requested by the General Assembly is completed accurately and reported to the PCUSA by the deadline noted.

4. Submit the session minute book to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for annual review when requested. (Appendix E has a checklist as an aid for the review of Session minutes.) Also, be sure to return other paperwork requested by the Presbytery Stated Clerk by the deadline noted.
5. Furnish extracts from the minutes when required by another governing body of the church (G-3.0104).
6. Assist the pastor/moderator in church officer training when requested.
7. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the pastor/moderator or the session such as communications with the congregation regarding session actions.

Incorporation and Bylaws

1. Maintain a current copy of the congregation's Articles of Incorporation and ensure they are up to date. Also, ensure the church has active status for their Incorporation with the State of California. (See <https://BusinessSearch.sos.ca.gov/> to view business information and <http://pbd/cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdf/be-records-requests.pdf> to order a copy of Articles of Incorporation.)
2. Maintain the current Bylaws of the congregation and ensure they are regularly reviewed as defined in the congregation's Bylaws.



Guidelines for Session Minutes

Minutes of each session meeting must include:

1. The type of meeting: regular/stated or special/called.
2. The name of the church, the place, date and time of the meeting.
3. The full name of the moderator of the meeting.
4. The opening and closing of each meeting with prayer (G-3.0105).
5. The roll, listing elders present, absent and excused; the clerk, moderator and other staff present or excused; others present and their identity. (Use first and last names.)
6. The affirmation of a quorum (G-3.0203). The session or the bylaws of the congregation set the quorum for the session. A suggested quorum of the session might be the pastor or other presiding officer and one third of the elders but no fewer than two, except for the reception and dismissing of members, when the quorum could be the moderator and two members of the session. (This reflects the quorum set in the *Book of Order* prior to 2011.) Unless the quorum is lost during the meeting, the Clerk's certification of a quorum at the beginning meets this requirement; if the quorum is lost, the minutes should report that the Clerk advised Session and its Moderator of that fact.
7. The approval of the agenda. (In case of a special/called meeting, the call to the meeting stating the purpose becomes the agenda.)
8. All motions and amendments, if any, and whether they passed or failed. You are to record the disposition of ALL motions. Details of discussion should not be recorded, except when needed to give a sense of the action. Do not record names of those making and seconding motions. Record motions as moved, seconded and passed; you do not need to record numbers for and against unless directed to do so by the session.

Minutes of each regular/stated session meeting must include:

1. The approval of the minutes of the previous regular/stated meeting and any special/called meetings, with corrections if any. Final minutes to go into the permanent file should have the corrections.
2. Clerk's report may include correspondence, announcements, and report of the serving of the Lord's Supper, in addition to listing of baptisms, marriages, deaths, changes in membership rolls. (See also Appendix E: Session Records Review Sheet for additional ideas of items you may wish to track and report on throughout the year.)
3. Reports of pastor, other staff, treasurer, and committee chairpersons should be summarized in the minutes. A carefully selected inclusion makes the minutes a more valuable historical record of the church. The clerk has wide discretion, but should be sure that the inclusion represents the wishes of the session.
4. Be especially careful and diligent in recording all actions taken to hire, compensate, evaluate, discipline, or terminate non-ordained staff.
5. When a previous action of the session is referred to, the date of the meeting at which it occurred should be given.

When appropriate, include the following:

1. The approval of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
2. The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be reported at the next succeeding regular meeting. Include the sacrament administered to those unable to attend public worship. (W-3.3616e)

3. The administration of the Sacrament of Baptism at the next succeeding regular meeting, giving the full name of adults baptized including the maiden name of married women; the record of infants baptized, noting the name of the child, date of birth, and the names of the parents (including the mother's maiden name) or the one rightly exercising parental responsibility (W-2.3014).
4. The full name of applicants for church membership (in the case of married women, include maiden name) and the manner of their reception (G-1.0303):
 - a. By profession of faith and baptism
 - b. By re-affirmation of faith
 - c. By letter of transfer, giving the name of the church including city and state, from which received
5. The full name of the church including city and state to which a certificate of transfer is granted and the full name of the person transferred with the date of transfer.
6. Record the approval of job descriptions for employed personnel, both clergy and non-clergy.
7. Name of elders elected to be commissioners to meetings of the Presbytery, and the exact period for which elected (G-3.0202).
8. Record that commissioner(s) to a Presbytery meeting made a report on that meeting to the session. The report may be summarized.
9. When the session finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline should be carefully studied by a committee of the session and if discipline is administered, the minutes of the session must contain a record of the proceedings which will enable the Presbytery to know who was disciplined, why and how.
10. In case of a sale, mortgage, gift or lease of property, the session records must show:
 - a. Name, address and legal description of the property
 - b. Name of buyer/lessee
 - c. Sale price
 - d. Loan amount purpose and terms, including the name of the lender
 - e. Lease terms and liability insurance
 - f. Approval of the session
 - g. Concurrence of the Presbytery for leases of 5 years or more or for use of the Sanctuary (G-4.0206).

The following shall be included each year:

1. Approval of the annual budget.
2. Approval of the distribution of the church's benevolences.
3. The annual review with each pastor of the adequacy of compensation.
4. The recommendation to be made to the congregation for changes or for no change in the terms of call for each pastor.
5. The annual review by the personnel committee (or other responsible body appointed by the session) of the adequacy of compensation of all paid staff.
6. Whether new officers have received training and been examined (G- 2.0402).
7. The ordination and/or installation of elders and deacons at the next succeeding meeting.
8. That property and liability insurance has been obtained (G-3.0112).
9. An Annual Audit or Review of Financial Records (G-3.0113). (See Appendix C for more information.)
10. Record changes during the year in the Session, the Board of Deacons and the Trustees through death, resignation, or removal.
11. The Annual Report produced by the church may be introduced by reference. Care should be taken that the Annual Report is preserved as part of the permanent records of the church.
12. Report that a Safe Church Policy has been adopted and that all required persons have been trained.



Recording Actions in Session Minutes

1. Be especially careful and diligent in recording all actions taken to hire, compensate, evaluate, discipline, or terminate non-ordained staff.
 - When the Session hires a non-ordained member of the staff, enter into the minutes that an employment agreement or contract exists and where it may be found. Upon the annual review of the person's compensation, record any changes as follows: "On the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the hourly rate of pay for the Custodian _____ was increased from \$10 to \$12.50, effective January 1, 2010."
 - Record the completion of every evaluation of non-ordained staff, and where these evaluations are filed, that the Personnel Committee reports to Session. In every instance where the evaluation indicates less than satisfactory performance, record any remedial course of action that the Personnel Committee proposes.
 - In the event that termination of an employee is recommended, record the Personnel Committee's report that the relevant provisions of the personnel policies have been followed. Be clear in the record that the Session, acting in a legal meeting with a quorum present, voted to terminate the employee. The record must not indicate that any individual, or any entity other than the full Session, took this action. Record any severance agreement or terms in full.
2. Record actions taken which affect the member status of any member following one of these examples:
 - Session acted to delete the names of these Active members from the church's rolls (G-3.0204a): Henri Blank, Phoebe Blank, and William Suratt.
 - Upon their request, Session deleted these names (G-3.0204a): Warren Hilmey, Ruth Hilmey, and Kenneth Clinton.
 - Session granted a letter of transfer to Christopher and Judith Boatwright, who are joining Anywheretown United Methodist Church: the request for the letter came from the church's pastor. (G-3.0204a).
3. Do NOT record the names of those making/seconding motions. Unless asked to do so, do not record the numerical outcome of votes taken, or the names of those who voted in opposition.
4. The minutes of all Session and congregational meetings, and all other official records, including the records provided to Session by the Deacons and/or the Trustees, if any, are the property of the Session. The Clerk is responsible for their safekeeping.

Nuts & Bolts of Session Minutes

The method of recording session minutes is somewhat dependent on local custom or circumstances. The following is a suggested procedure:

1. Clerk takes notes for the minutes at the meeting.
2. Clerk writes the minutes.
3. Clerk makes copies and distributes before the next meeting.
4. At the next meeting, minutes are either approved as received, or corrected. Corrections should be made to the minutes before they are put into permanent form.
5. Clerk enters approved minutes in the session permanent minute book.
6. If using a computer, printing must be done using laser printer and archival quality paper.
7. There should be no erasures, whiteout, strikethroughs or footnotes; no separate sheets of paper with written or printed matter on them, or sticky notes. Do not use paper clips or rubber bands. These could compromise the integrity of the acid-free paper.
8. The exception to the above is the annual statistics report, which should be inserted each year. (It can be photocopied onto acid free paper.)
9. When binding reports, if the minutes do not take up the full page, the blank part of the page shall be marked out with a diagonal line or x.
10. The records of each meeting are to be signed in ink by the clerk or the moderator.

In the rare instance of a session meeting in executive session, the responsibility of the clerk is only to report any actions of the session which took place during the regular meeting time. If, during executive session, it is determined that any action needs to take place, executive session shall be ended and the vote shall take place during the regular meeting and properly recorded by the clerk.

Congregational Meetings

Minutes of all congregational meetings shall be included in the session record book along with session minutes in one chronological order.

An annual meeting of the congregation is required (G-1.0501). Special meetings must/shall be called by the Session as necessary; when requested in writing by one-fourth of the members on the active role; and when Session is directed by presbytery to call a meeting. See G-1.0502 *Calling a Congregational Meeting*.

G-1.0503 states that Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to the following:

- electing ruling elders, deacons, and trustees.
- calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.
- changing existing pastoral relationships, by such means as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution.
- buying, mortgaging, or selling real property.
- requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption.
- approving a plan for creation, amendment or dissolution of a joint congregational witness.

Adequate notice shall be given. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for minimum notification requirements and give notice at regular services of worship prior to the meeting (minimum common practice is two Sundays notice with the meeting on the second Sunday).

Minutes of congregational meetings shall include:

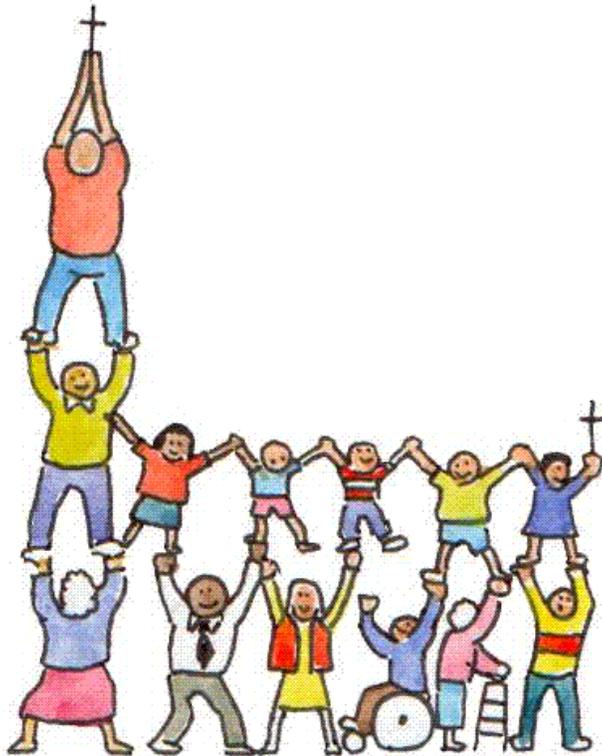
1. Whether the meeting is regular/stated or special/called.
2. If it is a special/called meeting, the minutes shall include the call to the meeting. The business to be transacted is limited to those items listed in the call for the meeting. [G-1.0501]
3. Name of the church.
4. Date, time, and place of the meeting.
5. First and last name of the moderator.
6. Presence of a quorum. Indicate the number of active members needed to satisfy the quorum requirement (G-1.0501), and record the actual number of active members present. (Congregations shall provide by rule the quorum necessary to conduct business. The quorum must be specified in the bylaws of the congregation.) If a quorum is not present as the meeting begins, notify the Moderator; the members present may recess and seek a quorum, or the Moderator may adjourn the meeting. In the absence of a quorum, absolutely no votes are to be taken.
7. Opening and closing of the meeting with prayer.
8. A record of all actions, whether adopted or lost.
9. Both the moderator and the clerk must attest/sign (in ink) congregational meeting minutes.

The annual called/stated congregational meeting shall include:

1. Action by the congregation on each pastor's terms of call.

Minutes of the meeting of the congregation or corporation at which the annual financial reports are made should indicate, at least:

1. Report of a full financial review of the financial records (G- 3.0205) (See Appendix C.)
2. A complete, itemized report of income and expenditures for the year
3. The complete, itemized proposed budget adopted by the session for the coming year.
4. Details of the status of loans from the General Assembly, Synod, or Presbytery, if any are outstanding



Electronic Meetings

Email voting is a means of casting votes through email or other commonly used but individually addressed electronic tool. **Email voting is limited** to action items believed to be routine and not controversial. In the event that any two members of the council object to taking an Email vote on the motion, the matter shall either be postponed until the next regular meeting or a special meeting must be convened.

Procedures for Email Voting

1. The Moderator must authorize and present the motion for session's vote.
2. Any necessary background material must accompany the motion.
3. The Moderator shall set a deadline for response and provide for an option to stop the email vote to call for a meeting to consider the matter.
4. There shall be a quorum of members responding using the "respond all" option so that all may see each vote.
5. The motion is approved when at least three-fourths of the quorum have responded in the affirmative.
6. The clerk's written report of the action must be confirmed and included in the minutes of the next scheduled meeting of the council (session).

Virtual meetings are those meetings conducted via electronic video and/or audio teleconference. Participants are able to see and/or hear and actively debate one another in a manner that approximates a regular physical meeting. Ordinarily, any business appropriate to a physical meeting may also be addressed via electronic meeting.

These meetings will conform as closely as possible to the procedures for physical meetings, including the taking and approval of minutes. *Robert's Rules* makes provision for electronic meetings, but each council (session) choosing to make use of the option must adopt a policy that preserves uniformity in proceedings and accountability in reporting actions taken by electronic means. Adoption of the policy should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting during which it was adopted, and a copy maintained in the council's (session's) Manual of Operations.

Procedures for Electronic Meetings

1. The Moderator will give reasonable notice to all members, including the date, time and set-up procedures.
2. The Moderator must furnish an agenda including motion(s) for action to be taken.
3. There shall be a quorum of members participating in the meeting.
4. Minutes shall be taken as for a physical meeting, and shall be submitted for approval at the next electronic or physical meeting.

Rolls and Registers

Rolls

The Rolls of the church should contain information about those who are members of the local church. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain, or to oversee the maintenance of the Rolls as required in G-3.0204a.

Names of members shall be placed upon, removed, or deleted from the rolls of the church only by order of the Session (G-3.0204a)

There shall be rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.0401, G-1.0402 and G- 1.0403. The session shall delete names from the roll of the congregation upon the member's death, admission to membership in another congregation or presbytery, or renunciation of jurisdiction. The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member so requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.

An **Active Member** is one who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of the particular church, and participates in the church's work and worship (G-1.0402).

Record name, date received into membership, and method of reception. Record date of removal from the particular role and whether by death, transfer to another church, (placed on inactive roll, if one is maintained), or removed.

A **Baptized Member** is one who has received the Sacrament of Baptism but has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. (G-1.0401, W-2.3012).

Record the name, date of baptism (if known), church where Sacrament of Baptism occurred. Names should be removed from this roll when a profession of faith is made, or when the person moves from the community.

An **Affiliate Member** is one who is an active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is located. Affiliate membership must be renewed every two years. An example of an affiliate member would be a college student living in your community while attending school. (G-1.0403).

Record name, date of affiliation, name of home church, date of renewal, date of return to home church.

The session may choose to maintain other roles. If it does, then the rules for maintaining these roles shall be determined by the session, recorded in the minutes of the session, and kept in a Manual of Administrative Operations.

Roll Books

Roll books usually provide double pages for a chronological roll by date of reception into membership with columns for name, how received, name of church from which member transferred if that is the manner of reception, date of deletion from the active roll and reason—by death, inactivity, or transfer, in which case the name of the church to which the member is transferring is listed.

Pages may be provided in the same binder for an alphabetical listing of members along with the membership number that is assigned in the chronological roll. Many find it easier to keep the alphabetical listing electronically, printing the list, along with the member number, at least annually.

Pages also may be provided for Baptized, Affiliate and Other rolls in the same binder.

Pages containing columns for the information requested may be obtained through Cokesbury (800) 672-1789, <http://www.cokesbury.com>.

Registers

Registers are historical records and need to be carefully maintained. It is the responsibility of the clerk of session to maintain or oversee the maintenance of registers as required in G-3.0204.

All registers should be kept in the same binder, or in the binder with the rolls. The binder used may be a loose-leaf notebook or a bound book. Pages for each register listed may be obtained through Cokesbury Book Stores (800) 672-1789, <http://www.cokesbury.com>. You may obtain a sample page for each register and create your own register pages on acid free paper.

The session shall maintain the following registers:

The **Register of Infant and Adult Baptisms** shall include name, parents' names, date and place of birth of those being baptized.

The **Register of Elders** shall include each elder's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service, and record of removals.

The **Register of Deacons** shall include each deacon's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service, and record of removals.

The **Register of Pastors** shall include the names of pastors, co-pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates serving the church, with dates of service.

The session may maintain the following register:

The **Register of Marriages** shall include marriages of members of the church, all marriages conducted by the ministerial staff of the church no matter where performed, and all marriages performed on church property.

Permanent Storage of Records

1. For permanent record keeping, electronic storage in place of paper storage, **is not acceptable** because there is no way to attest by signature to the accuracy and correctness of the documents and because of long term storage and accessibility problems.
2. Because official church records are to be held in perpetuity, the only ways that are acceptable for keeping these records are printed with a laser printer or copier on acid-free paper, or on microfilm.
3. Minutes may be kept in bound books or in loose-leaf binders. When those in loose-leaf binders are to be stored, store the pages in archival boxes.
4. It is important that pages be numbered consecutively, both sides of the page, including any attachments. It is especially important for loose pages or pages kept in a loose-leaf binder to be numbered. If a page or section of a page is intentionally blank, mark it with a stamp that says “Intentionally Left Blank” or mark with a large X.
5. Acceptable numbering schemes are:
 - a. A one-up numbering system beginning at as early a time as possible.
 - b. A one-up numbering system that starts over at the beginning of each year. In this case, consider some system, such as a note in a header or footer, which keeps track of the year.
 - c. Pre-numbered pages in a bound book.

From the Book of Order: Each council shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. Minutes and all other official records of councils are the property in perpetuity of said councils or their legal successors. When a council ceases to exist, its records shall become the property of the next higher council within whose bounds the lower council was prior to its cessation. The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body's records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). G-3.0107

An OGA comment on a proposed (and defeated) amendment in 2003 that would have allowed digital records:

Currently there is no archivally permanent electronic format. Even if the medium (tape, disk, CD-ROM, etc.) survives for longer than a few years, there is no guarantee that the hardware and/or software to read it will have survived as well. Only acid-free paper and properly processed microfilm are considered permanent at this time.

While any records that are identified in the Book of Order as permanent, including session minutes and registers, can be created on a computer, the record copy must be printed out on acid-free paper, stored securely, and can eventually be transferred to microfilm. Records copies of minutes should be printed out and signed at the time of their creation, and, at a minimum, registers should be printed out annually.

The Presbyterian Historical Society will preserve records for congregations. See their web site <http://www.history.pcusa.org/>

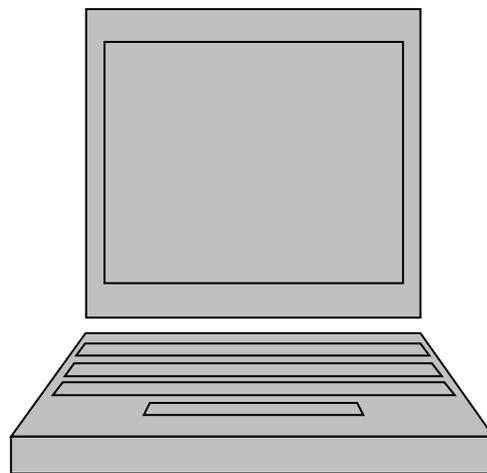
Paper vs. Electronic Rolls

For many of the reasons that appropriate paper records of Session minutes are required, a chronological paper record of rolls and registers shall also be kept. Electronic records are useful for managing current membership records but cannot be the permanent record.

Paper rolls are chronological and should have the full name, date joined, and how joined (letter of transfer, profession, reaffirmation) as a minimum. If by letter, record the name of the church. The roll should record the date of removal from the roll and the reason. A one-up roll book number system makes it possible to cross-reference alphabetical lists with chronological lists.

These are the minimum items for an electronic roll, too. We suggest adding to an electronic roll the information that the Annual Statistical Report asks for, such as gender, racial/ethnic identity, disability (if applicable), and date of birth (for calculating ages).

Many old roll books contain a section for adding member names in an alphabetical order, at least by the first letter of the surname. That function may best be done via an electronic roll. Print an alphabetical list, with roll book number, at least annually, and keep this alphabetical list with the paper Roll Book.



Annual Statistical Reports

Introduction

Each year the Office of the General Assembly asks each church to fill out and return annual statistical reporting forms for the previous calendar year. One person should be responsible for seeing that the reports are completed and filed; often that person is the clerk. Introductory pages provide very helpful information and resources for additional help if needed. These forms are typically filled in online, but the presbytery office will provide help for those churches that are unable to do this online.

The Presbytery of San Jose Stated Clerk will send information to each Clerk on how to do these reports.

- Session Annual Statistical Report: This report, to be filed online by a specified date, provides information on each church. The presbytery is required to report this information to the General Assembly. Information may be entered online as often as you like for a period of time prior to the deadline date or until the “Submit” button is pressed.
- Clerk’s Annual Questionnaire (CAQ): This report is submitted on-line to a different web address, has a different deadline date and different information each year, and unlike the statistics report must be completed in one online session. The CAQ is the only means national entities of the church have to gather information about specific programs and activities in all congregations of the PC(USA). The information gathered is very important to the offices asking questions on the CAQ and can be useful to others as well. You will most likely need to confer with the pastor or other church staff members or committees to fill out this form, so making paper copies and sharing them with those most likely to be knowledgeable about the various sections will be very helpful.

It is suggested that you print out these forms in order to read all of the instructions and to look for changes from previous years. Use the printouts to record statistics you will report. It is easiest to enter statistics online from a completed written copy.

The Statistical Report

The Statistical Report has basic questions regarding the life of the church. It is divided into categories: 1) **membership statistics**; 2) **congregational life questions**; and 3) **financial data**. The report form should be available in a downloadable workbook that provides a clear explanation for each item; filling out the form on paper provides a draft from which figures can be transferred to the online form. Remember that this information can be recorded online over a period of time until the deadline set by the presbytery.

Both the total active membership and the financial data for recent years are available on the General Assembly’s website for all churches that complete the report. Go to <http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends> and enter your church’s user name, shown on the front of the instructions, to access this information.

The “Instructions for Completing the On-Line Session Annual Statistical Report” opens with two pages of “Frequently Asked Questions” that can solve a lot of problems and should be read carefully. Included are a phone number and an e-mail address for obtaining help in completing the report.

Annual Review of Session Records

References from the *2015-2017 Book of Order*:

- Each session shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. G-3.0107
- Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body's meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction. In reviewing the procedures of the lower council, the higher body shall determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church. It shall also determine whether lawful injunctions of a higher body have been obeyed. (G-3.0108a)

Practical application of the Presbytery's responsibility to review session records generally means that there will be one or two opportunities for clerks to gather to review each other's records each year, typically in March. See Appendix E: Session Records Review Sheet.



Appendix A – Book of Order Quick Directory

Issue	Location	Pastor	Session	Elders	Deacons	Congregation	Presbytery
Selection of Hymns	W- 1.4005	P					
Selection of Scripture	W-1.4005	P					
Sermon	W-1.4005	P					
Leading Prayer	W-1.4004-.4005	PED		PED	PED		
Assisting in Worship	W-1.4003			EDC	EDC	EDC	
Administration of the sacraments	W-2.3011 W-2.4012	Done by	Approved By				
Provide Pastoral Care	W-6.3002 G-2.0501, 2.0301, 2.0201	PED		PED	PED		
Marriages	W-4.9003 W-1.4004-.4006	Done by	Overseen By				
Moderate Session	G-1.0504 G-3.0201	P					
Moderate Congregation	G-1.0504	P					
Congregational Discipline	G-1.0102	PS	PS				
Receive Members	G-1.0303		S				
Dismiss Members	G-1.0402 G-3.0201c		S				
Admit to Lord's Table	W-2.4012		S				
Supervise CE and Approve Curriculum	G-3.0201c		S				
Supervise Deacons and Trustees	G-2.0202		S				
Supervise Congregational Organizations	G-3.0201		S				
Examine, Ordain, Install officers	G-2.0402		S				
Appoint Commissioners to Presbytery	G-3.0301		S				
Set Time and Place for Worship	W-1.4004f		S				
Music and drama during worship	W-1.4005	P					
Use of the Church Building	G-3.0201c		S				
Proceedings of the Session	G-3.0203	P/S &Pres	P/S & Pres				P/S & Pres
Peoples offering	W.2.5003	PS	PS				
Financial Decisions, Recording	G-3.0113		S				
Membership Rolls (Baptism, Active, Death, etc.)	G-3.0204a		S				
Call and Election of Pastor	G-2.08 et. al.	P/C/ Pres				P/C/Pres	P/C/Pres
Election of Elders and Deacons	G-2.0401-.0407					C	
Congregations Nominating Committee	G-3.0111					C	
Elect Treasurer/Church Finances	G-3.0205		S				
Approve Annual Budget	G-3.0205		S				
Approve Terms of Pastors Call	G-2.0804	P/C/ Pres				P/C/Pres	P/C/Pres
Approve dissolution of Pastors relationship	G-2.09	P/C/ Pres				P/C/Pres	P/C/Pres
Church Property	G-4.02		S			S/C/Pres	S/C/Pres

P=Pastor **E**=Elders individually **S**=Session as a whole **D**=Deacons **C**=Congregation **Pres**=Presbytery

Appendix B – Parliamentary Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of parliamentary procedures is three-fold:

- To facilitate the flow of business
- To allow the majority to accomplish its will
- To protect the rights of minority views and opinions

Book of Order G-3.0105

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution. Councils may also make use of processes of discernment in their deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body.

Role of the Clerk

The moderator rules on points of procedure, not the clerk. The role of the clerk, therefore, is to assist the moderator and to advise and provide counsel, usually upon request. However, the more knowledgeable a clerk is of parliamentary procedures, the more time will be saved and procedural logjams will be prevented.

Size of Governing Body

The size of the body will determine the degree of formal parliamentary procedures. The smaller the size of the session or congregation, the more informal it will be; the larger the body is, the more formal it will become and more exact in its procedures.

Some Basic Parliamentary Procedures

A. Motions

1. I move that...or I recommend that...
2. The maker of a motion has the privilege of the floor immediately following the seconding of the motion (if a second is required).
3. During debate, speakers should indicate at the beginning whether they are speaking “for” or “against” the motion.

B. Items Not Needing a Second

1. Report from a committee
2. Nominations
3. A question of privilege
4. A call for division in voting
5. Moving of the previous question or calling for the question

C. Amendments

1. Amend by: insert or add; strike out (consecutive words); substitute (normally applied to a whole paragraph or resolution).
2. A “substitute motion” is an amendment.
3. There may be only one amendment to the main motion at one time (known as a first degree amendment).
4. There may be only one amendment to the (first degree) amendment pending at any one time (known as a second degree amendment.)
5. An amendment is not in order if it is the same as voting in the negative.
6. Once an amendment has been made, discussion must be confined to the amendment until a vote is taken on that particular amendment.
7. Once a motion has been amended, the motion as amended must then be voted on.
8. There is no provision in Robert's Rules for a “Friendly Amendment.” The only way a motion can be modified without a vote, after it has been stated by the Chair, is with the unanimous consent of the members present.

D. The Substitute Motion

The substitute motion is a form of amendment applied when the desire is to amend a motion in several different, non-consecutive places. It also is used when the text to be amended is longer than a paragraph.

The procedure to follow is:

1. The Moderator calls for amendments to the main motion (sometimes called “perfecting the motion”). The amendments may be debated. Nothing else is in order. If there are no amendments, the Moderator may declare the motion perfected.
2. The Moderator calls for amendments to the substitute motion. The amendments may be debated. Nothing else is in order. If there are no amendments, the Moderator may declare the motion perfected.
3. The Moderator puts the question: “Shall the substitute motion be substituted for the main motion?” At this time, the merits of the main motion and the substitute motion may be debated and no further amendments are in order.
4. Moderator takes a vote on the question in #3.
 - a. If the question is approved, the main motion disappears and the substitute motion is before the assembly for debate and vote. Substantive amendment is out of order. Editorial amendment is in order.
 - b. If the question is defeated, the substitute motion disappears and the main motion is before the assembly for debate and vote. The main motion may continue to be amended.

E. Stop Debate and Order an Immediate Vote

1. Move or call for the previous question
2. Not debatable
3. Vote must be taken to determine whether the body is ready to stop debate
4. 2/3 vote required to stop debate

F. Tie Vote

1. General
 - a. Motion is lost
 - b. A member may request a second vote
2. Congregational Meetings
 - a. The moderator shall put the question a second time
 - b. If there is a tie vote again, the motion is lost.

G. Desiring a Count

1. Following a voice vote or show of hands, any member may call for a division of the house. Vote will be taken by rising - if agreed to by a majority.
2. Actual count then must be taken

H. Routine Business

1. Motion without controversy or question may be adopted by common consent.
 - a. The motion is made.
 - b. The Moderator asks, "Are there any questions?"
 - c. The Moderator asks, "Are there any objections?"
 - d. The Moderator states, "So ordered."
2. If there are any objections or debate at all, the regular voting methods must be used.

I. Question of Privilege

1. May interrupt speaker on floor
2. May interrupt motion or debate on a motion
3. Object - to get the attention of the moderator at once
 - a. To ask a question
 - b. To attend to some matter of business that cannot wait

J. Other dispositions of Motions

1. Motion to table moves the motion to later in the same meeting.
2. Motion to postpone
 - a. definitely—to a specified meeting in the future
 - b. indefinitely—to no specific time
3. Commit or refer—sends to a committee for further refinement of the motion
4. Reconsider—may be moved by one who voted for the measure.

Appendix C – Sample Letter about Membership

CHURCH LETTERHEAD

Date

(Inside address)

Dear _____

We have missed you in worship and other activities of this church for more than a year and are wondering whether you still consider yourself in relationship with this congregation. We encourage you to return to active participation in the ministry of our church, and to receive its spiritual nurture. If you have moved to another community of faith, we would like you to let us know. If a pastor or someone else from the congregation can be of service to you, we would like to know that also.

Please let us hear from you, by a phone call, or by email, or by returning the enclosed postcard, marked to show your wishes.

Sincerely

[signed] Clerk of Session

SAMPLE POSTCARD TO BE RETURNED

Please check the appropriate comment and return to the church.

- I/We want to remain active in the life of _____ Church and will make a commitment to attend worship.
- I/We are now attending another church. Please remove us from the rolls of _____ Church.
- I/We would appreciate a call from the pastor.

Name

Appendix D – A Full Financial Review Defined

The *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church requires the following:

A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be conducted every year by a public accountant or committee of members versed in accounting procedures. Reviewers should not be related to the treasurer(s). Terminology in this section is meant to provide general guidance and is not intended to require or not require specific audit procedures or practices as understood within the professional accounting community. (G-3.0113)

Therefore, a financial review is required for every church organization or group which has a treasury, and which receives and disburses funds. Groups within the local church whose financial transactions must be reviewed might include the General Operating Fund, Benevolence Fund, Memorial Fund, Wills and Endowments, Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Building/Maintenance Fund, Choir, Youth, Church School, Presbyterian Women etc. This review benefits the treasurers, the contributors and those who benefit from expenditures ... giving assurance that donations are used as the donor intended, for the benefit of the specific group, and as a witness to the Lordship of Christ.

The persons making the full financial review do not need to be C.P.A.'s, but there should be some understanding of accounting procedures. Look for persons who have some experience in business accounting. Remember that those doing the financial review must not be related to the Treasurer(s).

To be available for review are financial ledgers, records of all forms of income, deposit slips and bank account records, withdrawal slips and canceled checks, authorization of payments, copies of invoices and expense vouchers, and a balance sheet. Financial records from relatively small groups would require less validation; but it is important that each report a *Beginning Balance, Income, Expenses, and a Closing Balance*.

Unless a congregation and its income/expenses are very large, it is not necessary to have a professional audit made. A full financial review implies that the financial review committee has checked through the records, has spot-checked those records and has approved them, and has made suggestions for improvement to the Treasurer or Finance Committee. **The report of the financial review committee must be approved by the Session, and this approval must be recorded in the official minutes of that body.**

This report may be a simple statement such as: *"We have reviewed the financial statements of the various Funds of _____ Church and affiliated organizations for the year ending December 31, _____, as set forth in the _____ Annual Report of _____ Church. During the course of our review, nothing came to our attention that would require modification of these financial statements."*

There is additional information in the Church Treasurer's Manual on the Presbytery of San Jose website or contact the Presbytery Treasurer.

Appendix E – Session Records Review Sheet

Church Name _____ **Year(s)** _____

Clerk of Session who prepared this review sheet _____

Date: _____

Name(s) of Reviewer(s) _____

Date _____

Minutes and Registers Approved: () Without Exception - OR - () With Exception(s)

Narrative Questions - use additional pages as needed:

1. Did your congregation receive new members this last calendar year?
2. Does your congregation have any outstanding loans? If so, do your minutes reflect session discussion of the loans and plans for repayment?
3. Where do the minutes indicate that the session adopted a manual of operations that specifies the form and guides the work of mission? (G-3.0106)
4. How does the session review all committees and organizations of the church, including deacons? When did they do that this last year? Where is this included in the minutes? (G-2.02, G-3.0201c)
5. How does the session provide for education, nurture, and fellowship opportunities at your church? (G-3.0201c)
6. How does the session work to restore less active members to active participation? When did they do that this year? (G-3.0201c)
7. Are there mission stories from your congregation that you would like to share?

Session Records Review Sheet, Presbytery of San Jose
Revised 2019-01-08

Clerk's Comments to be filled in by Clerk of Session BEFORE the Review: Include page numbers or other identifying and pertinent information.

Reviewer's Comments to be completed by Reviewer DURING the Review.

Recorded Item	Reference	Clerk's Comments	Reviewer's Comments
Date, time, place of each meeting, and stated or special meeting, quorum present	G-3.0203		
Meeting at least quarterly.	G-3-0203		
Full names of ruling elders present, excused or absent.	Robert's Rules		
Full name of moderator	Robert's Rules		
Opened and closed each meeting with prayer	G-3.0105 W-3.6103		
Minutes approved by session	Robert's Rules		
Signature of Clerk of Session	Robert's Rules		
Financial report at each meeting or regularly	G-3.0205		
Session authorization of Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (at least quarterly) including home bound members.	G-3.0201b W-2.4010		
Approval of the Sacrament of Baptism and report of its administration	G-3.0201b W-2-3011		
Commissioner(s) to presbytery meetings elected by session	G-3.0202		
Report of Commissioner(s) given at next session meeting following each presbytery meeting.	G-0302		

Session Records Review Sheet, Presbytery of San Jose
Revised 2019-01-08

Items to be Recorded Annually in Minutes:

Recorded Item	Reference	Clerk's Comments	Reviewer's Comments
Training, examination of newly elected ruling elders, deacons	G-3.0201c		
Ordination and Installation of ruling elders and deacons	G-3.0201c		
Election of Church Treasurer(s) by Session	G-3.0205		
Election of Clerk of Session by Session	G-3.0104		
Report of annual review of compensation for pastor and all other staff	G-2.0804 G-3.0106		
Compliance with adoption a of a sexual misconduct prevention policy	G-3.0106		
Compliance with adoption of a child/youth protection policy	G-3.0106		
Compliance with training as outlined in Sexual Misconduct and Mandated Reporter Policy	Presbytery of San Jose		
Adoption a of a sexual misconduct, child/youth protection policy (Safe Church)	G-3.0106		
Session approval of budget.	G-3.0205		
Full financial review or audit	G-3.0113		
Insurance Review - adequate property and liability coverage, including officers	G-3.0112		
Session review of annual statistical report.	G-3.0202f		
Annual statistical report included with minutes.	Presbytery of San Jose		
Session composition with regard to racial ethnic members, women, men, age groups,	G-3.0103		

Session Records Review Sheet, Presbytery of San Jose
Revised 2017-11-6

Minutes of Congregational Meetings

Recorded Item	Reference	Clerk's Comments	Reviewer's Comments
Congregation met at least annually	G-1.0501		
Presentation of Session approved budget in minutes	G-3.0205		
Election of Nominating Committee by congregation	G-2.0401		
Election of elders, deacons, trustees (where applicable).	G-1.0503		
Minutes of all congregational meetings are approved and signed by clerk	G-1.0505 Robert's Rules		
Approval of Terms of Call of pastor(s) by the congregation and inclusion in the minutes.	G-1.0503		

Church Rolls and Registers:

Recorded Item	Reference	Y/N	Reviewer's Comments
Roll of Active Members maintained by Session	G-3.0204a		
Roll of Baptized Members maintained by Session	G-3.0204a		
Roll of Affiliate Members, if any, maintained by Session	G-3.0204a		
List of Ruling Elders and Deacons, with ordination date	G-3.0204b		
List of Pastors, Associates, with dates of service	G-3.0204b		
Record baptisms with date of birth and name of parents.	G-3.0204b		
Record of Marriages if session deems necessary	G-30204b		

Each Council shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. (G-3.0107)

Thank you very much for your work on this review.