



# PSL BYLAWS

2018

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## BYLAWS PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH LOUISIANA

### Prologue

*Joining Christ in the world, the Presbytery of South Louisiana strengthens congregations, empowers leaders, and impacts communities.*

## **ARTICLE I. CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND NAME**

- 1-1. This Council is a part of the Body of Christ, and shall be named the Presbytery of South Louisiana (PSL). It is a constituent of the Synod of the Sun and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) whose duties and powers are specified in the *Book of Order*.
- 1-2. The Presbytery of South Louisiana shall give oversight and care to its church professionals, its constituent congregations, and its own accepted mission as defined by PSL.

The Presbytery and all of its agencies shall be governed in their meetings by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), these Bylaws, the Manual of Operations of the Presbytery, and, where none of these apply, by the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE OF THE BYLAWS**

- 2-1. The Bylaws shall establish the basic organization of the Presbytery and provide for its functioning, both during and between meetings.

## **ARTICLE III. MANUAL OF OPERATIONS**

- 3-1. The Manual of Operations shall establish rules for the relationships between the Presbytery's various officers and agencies and for its internal operating procedures. The Coordinating Council shall be responsible for recommending changes to the manual. The Coordinating Council shall report to the next stated meeting of the presbytery, at which time the Presbytery shall vote on implementation of the change.
- 3-2. Rules contained in the Manual of Operations may be suspended by a vote of the Presbytery.

## **ARTICLE IV. PRESBYTERY AS A COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH**

- 4-1. The Presbytery of South Louisiana shall meet in stated session three times annually and in special meetings when called according to provisions of the *Book of Order*.
- 4-2. Regional meetings may be called by the Coordinating Council to examine candidates for the ministry. The obligation to attend regional meetings shall apply to those teaching elders and ruling elder commissioners who reside within a 50-mile radius of the venue of the meeting. All meetings shall be open to those persons subject to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery.
- 4-3. A quorum for a stated meeting of the Presbytery shall be ten percent (10%) of the teaching elders on the roll and ten percent (10%) of the ruling elder commissioners. The quorum for a special meeting shall be any three teaching elders and the ruling elder representatives present, provided that at least three churches in the presbytery are represented by ruling elders.
- 4-4. The last stated Presbytery meeting of the year shall be the annual meeting.

## ARTICLE V. PRIMARY AREAS OF FOCUS

- 5-1. The Presbytery of South Louisiana shall maintain four (4) primary areas of focus, each of which shall be supported by the appropriate commissions and committees. Committee descriptions are in Article X of these Bylaws.
  - 5-1A. *Vital Congregations*: Supporting congregations through training, workshops, evangelism resources, church growth resources and support for church transformation and new-church development.
    - 5-1A1. Committee on Ministry
    - 5-1A2. New Worshiping Communities Committee
  - 5-1B. *Development of Church Leadership*: Providing opportunities for spiritual formation and vocational discernment for children, youth and adults.
    - 5-1B1. Committee on Preparation for Ministry
    - 5-1B2. Spiritual Formation Committee (and subcommittees)
  - 5-1C. *Connecting Congregations*: Linking congregations through shared mission.
    - 5-1C1. Nominating Committee
    - 5-1C2. Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Resiliency Committee
    - 5-1C3. Mission Committee (and subcommittees)
    - 5-1C4. Presbyterian Women
    - 5-1C5. Regional Gatherings
  - 5-1D. *Presbytery Activities*: The general administration of the Presbytery, including personnel, finances, property and communications.
    - 5-1D1. Permanent Judicial Commission
    - 5-1D2. Personnel Committee
    - 5-1D3. Finance Committee
    - 5-1D4. Communications Committee
    - 5-1D5. Committee on Representation

## ARTICLE VI. PRESBYTERY OFFICERS

- 6-1. The Presbytery shall elect a Moderator of the Presbytery when the nominating committee reports at each annual meeting. The Moderator shall take office on the following January 1 and shall serve until the next Moderator takes office. The Moderator shall serve in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Order*, these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.
- 6-2. The Presbytery shall elect a Moderator of the Coordinating Council when the nominating committee reports at each annual meeting. The Moderator of Coordinating Council shall ordinarily succeed the following year as Moderator of the Presbytery; however, this nomination shall be at the discretion of the nominating committee. The term of office shall begin the following January 1. The Moderator of the Coordinating Council shall serve in accordance with provisions of these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.
- 6-3. The Presbytery shall elect a Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council when the nominating committee reports at each annual meeting. The Vice Moderator of

the Coordinating Council shall ordinarily succeed the Moderator of the Coordinating Council; however, this nomination shall be at the discretion of the nominating committee. The term of office shall begin the following January 1. The Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council shall serve in accordance with provisions of these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

- 6-4. The offices of Moderator of the Presbytery, Moderator of the Coordinating Council, and Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council shall, ordinarily, be filled alternately by teaching elders and ruling elders.
- 6-5. The Presbytery shall elect a Stated Clerk to serve a term of three (3) years when the nominating committee reports at every third annual meeting. The Stated Clerk shall serve in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Order*, these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.
- 6-6. The Presbytery shall elect a Treasurer to serve a term of three (3) years. The Treasurer shall serve in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.
- 6-7. The Presbytery may elect a Recording Clerk and a Parliamentarian, each to a term of one year. The Coordinating Council shall nominate to the Presbytery candidates for election to these positions.

## **ARTICLE VII. PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF PRESBYTERY**

- 7-1. The Presbytery's professional staff shall consist of a General Presbyter and such associates as shall be necessary to accomplish the work of the Presbytery. The Personnel Committee shall compose job descriptions for the General Presbyter and any associate staff and shall submit these to the Coordinating Council and Presbytery for approval. The job descriptions shall be approved at a stated meeting of Presbytery.
- 7-2. The General Presbyter shall have oversight and administrative responsibility for all professional and office staff activity.
- 7-3. The general requirements of the professional staff of the Presbytery shall be:
  - (1) to be mobile, visible and accessible to the constituency;
  - (2) to work in accordance with the program approved by the Presbytery;
  - (3) to exhibit pastoral concern for the churches and church professionals;
  - (4) to combine church-related experience and administrative ability that enables the leadership of constituent churches and Presbytery structures to carry out the mission of the Church as part of the Body of Christ;
  - (5) to encourage and support all church professionals, including those who serve in specialized ministries and those classified as honorably retired.

## **ARTICLE VIII. THE COORDINATING COUNCIL**

- 8-1. The Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of South Louisiana shall provide visionary leadership for the Presbytery, aligning vision and mission, discerning future direction and defining outcomes that shape short-term and strategic planning. The Coordinating Council shall authorize actions that are required to be

- made between meetings of Presbytery, except those defined in the Bylaws as requiring Presbytery action. The Coordinating Council shall be responsible for conducting annual visits with all clergy and member congregations to determine what shifts and changes should be included in strategic plans. The Coordinating Council shall entrust the committees defined in Article X of these Bylaws and in the Manual of Operations to determine means of achieving their assigned outcomes, utilizing task teams and subcommittees to carry out defined tasks. The Coordinating Council shall facilitate collaboration between committees.
- 8-2. To fulfill this function, the Coordinating Council shall include the Presbytery committees defined in Article X of these Bylaws, and those committees defined in the Manual of Operations as committees of the Coordinating Council.
  - 8-3. Voting members of the Coordinating Council shall be the Moderator of the Presbytery, Moderator of the Coordinating Council, Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council, chairs of the Presbytery committees defined in Article X of these Bylaws, persons specifically identified in the Manual of Operations, and the region conveners mentioned in 10-7F (below). The Moderator of the Coordinating Council shall serve as chair. In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council shall serve as chair.
  - 8-4. Advisory members of the Coordinating Council shall be the Stated Clerk, General Presbyter, Treasurer, Recording Clerk, Parliamentarian, and staff of the Presbytery, and representatives of higher councils, including one (1) Commissioner to Synod.
  - 8-5. All actions of the Coordinating Council shall be in accordance with the *Book of Order* and will support the prerogatives of the Presbytery as a Mid-Council of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Any action of the Coordinating Council is subject to the will and authority of the Presbytery.
  - 8-6. The quorum for action by the Coordinating Council shall be a majority of its voting members.
  - 8-7. Special Meetings of the Council and Committees of Presbytery and or council may be conducted electronically. Electronic votes shall be acceptable means by which business of Council and Committees of Council may be conducted. Minutes shall be kept and approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
  - 8-8. The Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of South Louisiana, as constituted in these Bylaws shall be the Board of Directors for the corporation, with officers of the Coordinating Council serving as officers of the corporation. The Coordinating Council, acting on behalf of the Presbytery, shall have the power to buy, sell and mortgage. When such action is necessary between stated meetings, it shall be reported at the next stated meeting. The Presbytery shall be a Louisiana non-profit corporation as devised by Louisiana Revised Statute Title 12, Chapter 2. The corporation shall be organized within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for religious, charitable and educational purposes, and none of the properties owned by said corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member of said corporation. The name of the corporation shall be “The Presbytery of South Louisiana” and it shall be domiciled in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and its registered agent shall be the Stated Clerk of Presbytery. The corporation shall be organized on a non-stock membership basis with members of the Presbytery of South Louisiana constituting the membership of the corporation.

## **ARTICLE IX. PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

- 9-1. The Presbytery shall create a Permanent Judicial Commission composed of seven (7) teaching elders and ruling elders subject to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery. In the cases transmitted to the Permanent Judicial Commission, the commission shall have the powers prescribed by, and administered in accordance with, the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*. In particular, the Rules of Discipline set forth in the *Book of Order* shall govern.
- 9-2. Three members of the commission shall be teaching elders and three shall be ruling elders; the seventh member may be either a teaching or ruling elder. The term of each member shall be six years, with election in three classes and one third of the members retiring every two years. No elder who has served for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until four years have elapsed. No more than one elder from any congregation may serve on the commission.
- 9-3. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall meet at the call of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.
- 9-4. The quorum of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be a majority of the members, except that the quorum for a presbytery commission for a disciplinary case shall be a majority of the membership other than the two members assigned responsibilities under D- 10.0204 or D-10.0303.
- 9-5. When a church or session is a party to a case, no teaching or ruling elder of that church shall participate in the trial or appeal of that case.
- 9-6. When a case has been transmitted to the Permanent Judicial Commission, the Presbytery shall take no further action.

## **ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES OF THE PRESBYTERY.**

- 10-1. COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
  - 10-1A. The Presbytery shall elect a Committee on Ministry to serve as pastor and counselor to the teaching elders of the Presbytery, to facilitate relations between congregations, teaching elders, and the Presbytery, and to settle difficulties on behalf of Presbytery when possible and expedient. The committee shall review and approve pastoral support grants and mentor new church professionals.
  - 10-1B. This committee shall consist of equal numbers of teaching and ruling elders, with a membership of at least six. Its quorum shall be established by the Presbytery and shall be at least a majority of the membership of the committee. Membership shall be for a term of three years, and replacement of a member whose term has not expired shall for the remainder of that term. Members shall be ineligible to serve more than two consecutive terms or portions of terms.
  - 10-1C. The committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws, Manual of Operations and the *Book of Order*.

10-2. NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- 10-2A. The Presbytery shall elect a New Worshipping Communities Committee to encourage the formation of new worshipping communities and support existing communities in the Presbytery of South Louisiana.
- 10-2B. Membership of this committee shall consist of at least six members with at least one representative from each of the four regions of the presbytery, as defined by the Committee on Ministry. Each new worshipping community will send a representative to the committee who will serve *ex-officio* unless also elected by the presbytery. The General Presbyter shall serve *ex-officio* on the committee.
- 10-2C. The committee shall be divided into three classes of as equal number as possible. Terms shall ordinarily be for three years. Members who have served six consecutive years will be ineligible to serve for one year.
- 10-2D. This committee shall serve the presbytery in accordance with these By-laws, the Manual of Operations and the *Book of Order*.

10-3. COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

- 10-3A. The Presbytery shall elect a Committee on Preparation for Ministry to ensure that those who feel God's call to be ordained as teaching elders receive full and proper preparation for their work.
- 10-3B. Through this committee, the Presbytery shall enter into a covenant relationship with those preparing to become teaching elders. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.
- 10-3C. This committee shall be responsible for Commissioned Ruler Elder training.
- 10-3D. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with the *Book of Order*, these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

10-4. SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMITTEE

- 10-4A. The Presbytery shall elect a Spiritual Formation Committee to support all Christian Education initiatives of the Presbytery through coordination of the confirmation retreat, oversight of campus ministry, and resourcing summer programs for children and youth, and any other initiatives consistent with PSL's vision and mission.
- 10-4B. This committee shall also be responsible for coordination of Presbytery retreats for spiritual formation and vocational discernment.
- 10-4C. Membership of the Spiritual Formation Committee shall consist of one representative of each of the four regions of the Presbytery, as defined by the Committee on Ministry, plus the chair of each subcommittee as recommended by the Nominating Committee.
- 10-4D. Components of the Spiritual Formation Committee shall be:
  - 10-4D1. Young Adult Volunteers Committee
  - 10-4D2. Feliciana Retreat Center Management Team
  - 10-4D3. Cursillo Subcommittee
  - 10-4D4. Campus Ministry Committee
  - 10-4D5. Christian Education Committee



10-4E. The Spiritual Formation Committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

#### 10-5. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

10-5A. The Presbytery shall elect a Nominating Committee composed of persons from all (4) geographical areas of the Council, as defined by the Committee on Ministry, and broadly representative of the member churches of the Council. Committee membership shall be nine members, four Teaching Elders and five Ruling Elders or vice versa; four of the nine shall be male and five shall be female, or vice versa. The Coordinating Council shall, annually (and at other times necessary to fill vacancies), submit its recommendations for membership on the Nominating Committee.

10-5B. The Nominating Committee shall annually (and at other times necessary to fill vacancies), submit to the Presbytery its nominations for Moderator of the Presbytery, Moderator of Coordinating Council, Vice Moderator of the Coordinating Council, and other officers of the Presbytery as provided in Article VI of the Bylaws. It shall nominate chairs and members of the Presbytery committees (except the Nominating Committee), members of the Coordinating Council, board members of other agencies of the Presbytery, and commissioners and delegates to the Synod and General Assembly.

10-5C. When a vacancy occurs in any of the positions for which it recommends nominees, the Nominating Committee shall, if possible, nominate a replacement at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

10-5D. The Nominating Committee shall endeavor to encourage qualified persons to participate in the work of the Presbytery.

10-5E. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws, the Manual of Operations and the *Book of Order*.

#### 10-6. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, RECOVERY, AND RESILIENCY COMMITTEE

10-6A. The Presbytery shall elect a Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Resiliency Committee which shall be responsible for disaster planning and preparation, the coordination of disaster response by the Presbytery, and the oversight of long-term recovery.

10-6B. This committee shall consist of one member from each region of the Presbytery, as defined by the Committee on Ministry, and its chair shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee.

10-6C. This committee shall solicit advice and counsel from all appropriate resources, either for long-range planning or emergency situations.

10-6D. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws and the Manual of Operation.

#### 10-7. MISSION COMMITTEE

10-7A. The Presbytery shall elect a Mission Committee which shall be responsible for encouraging and coordinating Presbytery mission activities. These activities include, but are not limited to local, regional,

domestic, and foreign missions that can encompass work activities, education events, social justice events, and new trends identified by Mission Committee members.

10-7B. It shall be responsible for envisioning new missions, supporting constituent congregations in their mission outreach, assisting in partnering congregations or interested groups in mission activities, partnering with Synod in mission activities, developing pathways for funding mission activities through grants and donations.

10.7C. (formerly 10.7F.) The committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with the Book of Order, these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

#### 10-8. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

10-8A. The Presbytery shall elect a Personnel Committee which shall support the General Presbyter in his/her responsibility as head of staff.

10-8B. The committee shall inform the Coordinating Council regarding staffing requirements, job descriptions and personnel policies.

10-8C. The committee shall write and evaluate job descriptions, prepare budgets, and provide oversight and evaluation of Presbytery professional staff.

10-8D. The committee shall ultimately be responsible to the Presbytery.

10-8E. The committee shall consist of five members: three laypersons, one of whom is experienced in personnel matters, and two teaching elders.

10-8F. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

#### 10-9. FINANCE COMMITTEE

10-9A. The Presbytery shall elect a Finance Committee which shall encourage generous support of the church's mission and shall administer the offerings, gifts and assets of the Presbytery.

10-9B. The committee shall prepare an annual budget proposal for submission to the Coordinating Council for formulation before presentation to the Presbytery.

10-9C. The committee shall consist of five members: Four laypersons and one teaching elder, OR three laypersons and two teaching elders, with emphasis on individuals who are experienced in financial administration, insurance, real estate law, investments, and the worldwide mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

10-9D. The committee shall be authorized to establish a subgroup responsible for property maintenance.

10-9E. The committee shall assign one of its members to serve on any Administrative Commission dealing with property issues.

10-9F. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

#### 10-11. COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

10-11A. The Presbytery shall elect a Communications Committee which shall

be responsible for oversight of electronic and printed communications, website, public relations strategy, branding, marketing, and media relations.

- 10-11B. The committee shall report to the Coordinating Council and to Presbytery as appropriate.
- 10-11C. The committee shall consist of no fewer than five members, some of whom are experienced in applicable communications specialties.
- 10-11D. The committee shall serve as advisory to the Stated Clerk who shall be the sole communicator to the public as representative of the Presbytery of South Louisiana of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 10-11E. This committee shall serve the Presbytery in accordance with these Bylaws and the Manual of Operations.

#### 10-12. COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

- 10-12A. Presbytery shall elect a Committee on Representation in accordance with the *Book of Order*.
- 10-12B. This committee shall advise the Presbytery regarding implementation of principles of unity and diversity, and consult with the Presbytery on employment of personnel in accordance with these principles.
- 10-12C. The committee shall, in carrying out its function, have the right to advocate candidates to the Nominating Committee or the Coordinating Council prior to election or approval of any nominees, as provided in the *Book of Order*.
- 10-12D. The committee shall consist of seven members reflecting the diversity of the Presbytery: three laypersons, two teaching elders and two ruling elders.
- 10-12E. The Committee on Representation shall report annually to the Presbytery.

### ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

- 11-1. These Bylaws shall be amended by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a stated meeting of the Presbytery, provided each proposed amendment has first been reviewed by the Coordinating Council and has been included with the published agenda of said stated meeting. Should the vote to approve the Bylaw change be less than two-thirds the amendment(s) shall require a second reading and vote at the following stated meeting of the Presbytery.