

Montreat Presbyterian Church Electronic Voting Policy

Amended August 18, 2015

This Electronic Voting Policy recognizes developments in technology that allow deliberating bodies to interact without gathering in one place. It does not replace the need for the session to physically gather for regular stated and occasional called meetings. **The purpose of the Electronic Voting Policy is to enable pressing or minor decisions to be made efficiently between stated meetings of the session, or at times when physical gathering is prohibited** by weather or other unavoidable circumstances beyond the session's control.¹

I. Stated or Called Session Meeting which a Member Is Physically Unable to Attend: The Session may allow a member to be considered present if technology such as Skype is available (i.e., allowing for that member's full conversational participation in the entire meeting). Under those circumstances, every member who cannot physically attend must have equal opportunity either to participate by such means, or to waive their right to participate in that specific meeting.

II. Session Decision Requested before Next Stated Meeting or When Gathering Is Logistically Inconvenient: The Session may use email voting in situations where a decision is required before the next session meeting, subject to the following rules and procedures.

- A. All email vote requests come from the clerk or moderator only. Session members may choose to use "Reply All" or respond privately to the clerk or moderator.
- B. Emails requesting a vote must contain any and all supporting documents. These documents must be in a form readable by all members.
- C. The clerk and moderator will ensure that session members without email access are contacted and advised of the vote. Those members may submit their vote to the clerk or moderator within the same time frame as the other session members.
- D. If a member has a question regarding the issue to be voted on, the answer to the question must be shared with all other members.
- E. All email vote requests must ask for an explicit response (yes, no, or abstention).

F. All members shall have a minimum of 24 hours to respond. The moderator should also announce, in the body of the email, a deadline for response. If electronic conversation is continuing past the response deadline, the deadline may be extended at the moderator's discretion, in agreement with the clerk.

G. Quorum rules shall apply: if less than a quorum have responded, the motion does not carry. If a quorum has responded, the votes will be counted accordingly; e.g., when a majority of the session members have responded affirmatively (after the minimum time for response has passed), and no one has offered a negative vote, the motion carries.

H. If any one member objects to the question being put to an email vote, the question may be postponed to the next stated or called meeting of the session. **The objection must be raised within 30 hours of the distribution of the email in which the question was originally placed before the session.**

I. Any decision made by email must be recorded in the minutes of the next regular session meeting. No separate second vote on the decision will be allowed.

Approved by the Session at its meeting on June 16, 2015.

ⁱ It remains an assumption of our theological polity that the Spirit acts on the gathered body of the disciples in session discernments. Therefore, there is no voting by proxy. Always meetings may be called in accordance with Book of Order provisions.