

**FOR PRESENTATION AT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 23, 2012**

Amended at Congregational Meeting October 12, 2014 – “Session,” first par.

Amended at Congregational Meeting September 27, 2015 – “Session,” first
par.

Amended at Congregational Meeting October 23, 2016 – “Session,” first par.

BACKGROUND

The PCUSA denomination has adopted a new Form of Government (nFOG) that became effective on July 10, 2011. It is included in the newest edition of the *Book of Order* (2011-2013). This change produced several changes in terminology (e.g., minister of Word and Sacrament becomes teaching elder, elder becomes ruling elder, governing body becomes council). In general terms, nFOG makes the congregation the basic form of the church. There is increased flexibility in structures and procedures in a less regulatory environment. This allows councils to increase their focus on God’s work and how the church can most effectively participate in that work in each situation, rather than being focused on an increasingly lengthy and burdensome list of requirements.

One practical implication is the elimination from the *Book of Order* of a number of regulations related to congregational governance. It is recommended that congregations that do not already have a manual of administrative operations create one to codify policies and procedures no longer covered by the *Book of Order*.

The attached Manual of Administrative Operations has been developed by Session and is recommended to the congregation. Its adoption requires a two-thirds vote of the active members present and voting. For the most part, the policies and procedures in this document come from the plan of governance adopted by our congregation or from provisions in the former *Book of Order*.

MONTREAT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCUSA)

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

I. PURPOSE

The Montreat Presbyterian Church is a member church in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It has been called by God and organized by the Presbytery to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in worship and service to the needy, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. GOVERNANCE

This church's Congregation and Session shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), both its *Book of Confessions* and its *Book of Order*. Subordinate to that Constitution, these bylaws and then the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall provide specific guidance.

Meetings

The Session shall hold stated meetings monthly. Special meetings may be called in accord with BO: G-3.0203.

The Congregation shall hold its annual meeting on the last Sunday in January. The business at that meeting (in accord with BO: G-1.0503) should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Financial report for the preceding year
- Budget for the current year adopted by the Session (for information only)
- Any proposed changes in the terms of call for the pastor (s) in accord with BO: G-2.0804
- Nominating committee report for church officers and their election

- Election of members to serve on the current year's nominating committee
- Review of reports from the pastor (s), the Session, and all church organizations (for information only)

Special meetings of the Congregation may be called in accord with BO: G-1.05, which may cover any of the above business items not covered at the annual meeting.

Notice of Meetings

Reasonable notice, at least 24 hours except for emergency situations, shall be given of all special Session meetings.

Notice of Congregational meetings shall be given at regular services of worship on two successive Sunday(s) prior to each meeting, in accord with BO:G-1.0502. The meeting may be convened following the notice given on the second Sunday.

Quorum for Meetings

The quorum for Session meetings shall be the moderator and a majority of ruling elders in active service on the Session.

The quorum for Congregational meetings shall be the moderator and at least twenty five percent of its active members.

Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted in any meetings.

Incorporation

In accord with the laws of the State of North Carolina, the Congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed (BO: G-4.0101), if such has not already been

done. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the Congregation.

Membership

In accord with BO: G-1.03, the Session shall receive and nurture members of the church. The Session shall create and annually review rolls for all baptized members, active members, and affiliate members in accord with BO: G-1.04 & G-3.0204, also maintaining the required registers.

All members shall carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other (BO: G-1.0101).

Worship

The Session shall ensure that services of worship of God are regularly and reverently held in accord with BO: Directory for Worship and G-3.0201.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated monthly, as well as at other appropriate times, as the Session may decide.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in accord with the principles of BO: Directory for Worship.

Nominating Committee

In accord with BO: G-2.0401, the Congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

- There shall be five members.
- Two of the members shall be ruling elders currently serving on the Session, one of whom shall serve as chair of the committee.
- Three of the members, who are not ruling elders currently on the Session, will be nominated by Session.

- The committee will be elected at a congregational meeting.
- Normally, at least one of the members of the committee will have served on the immediate past nominating committee.
- The pastor shall be a member ex-officio, but without vote.
- The committee shall bring to the congregational meeting nominations for only the number of positions to be filled.
- The floor shall be open for additional nominations at the congregational meeting.
- Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just and inclusive in accord with BO: F-1.0403, and G-3.0103, .0104 & 2.0401.

Session

The Congregation shall elect six ruling elders distributed into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at a congregational meeting for a three-year term.ⁱ

If necessary, the nominating committee shall nominate a successor for a vacancy, to be elected by the Congregation for the unexpired portion of the vacated position's term.

No ruling elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years.*

A ruling elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session for a period of at least one year.*

**Note: These term restrictions may be waived by the Presbytery for specific situations (BO: G-2.0404).*

Those elected as ruling elder shall be prepared and examined by the Session in accord with BO: G-2.0402.

Records

The Session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accord with BO: G-3.0107 & 3.0204, and shall submit any requested records to Presbytery in accord with BO: G-3.0108.

Committees

The Session, in accord with BO: G-3.0201, shall establish, discharge, and review the actions of any desired committees and other organizations within the Congregation.

Amendments

Subject to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), any Articles of Incorporation, and state laws, these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the active members of the Congregation, present and voting, provided that the proposed changes have been published at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.

Manual Adopted at Congregational Meeting 09-23-12

ⁱ At a congregational meeting in 2014, the number of session advisors was reduced from three to one.

At a congregational meeting on September 27, 2015, a proposal was approved to reduce the size of the Session (gradually, through attrition) from nine to six ruling elders (plus moderator). The rationale was that it better reflected the size of the congregation.

At a congregational meeting on October 23, 2016, the congregation voted to amend this document by eliminating the office of session advisor altogether.