

1 **BYLAWS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY**

2 adopted 2/13/2016, editorial change 'Standing Rules' to 'Manual of Administrative Operations' 5/20/2017

3
4 The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), constituted on January 19,
5 1965, is the result of the merger of the former Presbytery of Binghamton and the Presbytery of
6 Susquehanna. It includes the New York State Counties of Broome, Delaware, Chenango, Cortland, and
7 Tioga (except for the Town of Spencer), the Towns of Dryden, Lansing, Groton, and Caroline in
8 Tompkins County, the Towns of Butternuts, Laurens, Maryland, Milford, Morris, New Lisbon,
9 Oneonta, Otego, Pittsfield, Unadilla and Worcester in Otsego County, as well as any villages or cities
10 in the bounds of any of the above-named Towns.

11 These bylaws are in all matters subject to the Book of Order and the Book of Confessions, which
12 together are the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Book of Order consists of the
13 Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (F), the Form of Government (G), Rules of Discipline (D), and
14 Directory for Worship (W). In these bylaws, the foregoing letters followed by numbers are citations in
15 the Book of Order. In matters concerning the corporation these bylaws shall be subject to the Laws of
16 the State of New York.

17 **I. MISSION, ORGANIZATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESBYTERY**

- 18 A. The Presbytery exists to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more
19 faithful participants in the mission of Christ.
- 20 B. The work of Presbytery shall be carried out by the Presbytery Cabinet, committees,
21 teams, and commissions mandated by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), any
22 entities required by New York State Law, and/or the Presbytery. These regularly organized
23 groups are further defined by the Manual of Administrative Operations of the Presbytery of
24 Susquehanna Valley.
- 25 C. Specific responsibilities of the Presbytery which may not be delegated are the:
- 26 1. Election of Officers, committee chairs, commissions, and members of
27 committees so designated by the Manual of Administrative Operations
 - 28 2. Adoption of a mission and administrative budget including the per capita
29 apportionment.
 - 30 3. Organization and dissolution of congregations
 - 31 4. Final examination and approval of Candidates for Ordination (G-2.0704) (G-
32 2.0805)
 - 33 5. Voting on amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
 - 34 6. Amendment to these Bylaws

35 **II. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERY**

- 36 A. Ruling Elders
- 37 1. Each congregation shall be represented by one or more Ruling Elder(s) elected
38 by its Session as provided in the Book of Order (G-3.0202(a) and G-3.0301)
39 (i.e. Commissioners).
 - 40 2. Each Ruling Elder elected an officer of the Presbytery, a chair of a standing
41 committee, or a member of the Presbytery Cabinet shall be enrolled as a member
42 of the Presbytery for the term of office, whether or not elected by his or her
43 Session. Ruling Elders commissioned to limited pastoral service (G-2.10) shall
44 also be enrolled for the term of their commission to particular congregation(s).

- 45 B. Teaching Elders
46 All Teaching Elders (also called Ministers of Word and Sacrament) enrolled in the
47 Presbytery are members of the Presbytery.
48 C. Corresponding Members
49 Teaching or Ruling Elders from other councils or governing bodies may be invited to sit
50 as corresponding members, with voice, but without vote.

51 **III. MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY**

- 52 A. Stated Meetings
53 Ordinarily, there will be four stated meetings of the Presbytery held each year, on a
54 quarterly schedule. The dates of these meetings will be determined by the Presbytery
55 Cabinet. Notification and meeting information shall be provided to Teaching Elders and
56 Clerks of Session in a timely fashion.
57 B. Special Meetings
58 Special meetings shall be called by the Moderator at the request, or with the
59 concurrence, of two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elder Commissioners each being
60 from a different congregation. Should the Moderator be unable to act for any reason,
61 the Vice Moderator shall, under the same requirements, issue the call. If both the
62 Moderator and the Vice Moderator are unable to act, any three Teaching Elders and
63 three Ruling Elders, the Ruling Elders being of different congregations, shall have the
64 power to call a meeting. Notice of such special meetings shall be at least 10 days in
65 advance to each Teaching Elder of the Presbytery and to each Clerk of Session. In the
66 notice the purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and no business other than that named
67 in the notice is to be transacted.
68 C. Annual Corporate Meeting
69 The first stated meeting of the year shall serve as the annual meeting of the corporation.
70 D. Quorum
71 Any six Teaching Elders and any six Ruling Elder Commissioners present, who
72 represent at least six congregations, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to
73 business. (G-3.0304)
74 E. Business
75 Business for the meetings of Presbytery shall ordinarily be determined by the Cabinet.
76 F. Election of Officers and Persons to Various Roles
77 1. The election of officers and persons to various roles within Presbytery shall take
78 place at the final stated meeting of the year and shall assume their
79 responsibilities at their first meetings of the New Year.
80 2. A Treasurer of Presbytery shall be elected and serve at the pleasure of the
81 Presbytery.

82 **IV. ELECTED OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY**

83 The officers of the Presbytery shall be: Moderator and Stated Clerk (G-3.0104). In addition
84 the Presbytery shall elect a Vice-Moderator, Chair of Cabinet, and a Treasurer.

- 85 A. The Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year and installed at the final stated
86 meeting of the year for a term of one year beginning the following January. It shall be the duty
87 of the Moderator to:
88 1. serve as presiding officer of the Presbytery, with vote and to be an ex-officio
89 member of all committees, without vote

- 90 2. exercise the office in accordance with the Constitution
91 3. serve as a member of the Cabinet with vote, and to serve as chair of the Cabinet
92 in the absence of the Chair
93 B. The Vice-Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year and installed at the final
94 stated meeting of the year with a term of one year beginning the following January. It shall be
95 the duty of the Vice-Moderator to:
96 1. serve in the absence or at the request of the Moderator, and to be a member of
97 Presbytery Cabinet with vote
98 2. exercise the office in accordance with the Constitution
99 3. serve as a member of the Cabinet with vote, and to serve as chair of the Cabinet
100 in the absence of the Chair and Moderator
101 C. The Cabinet Chair shall be elected for a term of one year and installed at the final stated
102 meeting of the year with a term of one year beginning the following January. It shall be the
103 duty of the Cabinet Chair to:
104 1. serve as Chair of Presbytery Cabinet
105 2. serve in the absence or at the request of the Moderator or Vice-Moderator
106 D. The Stated Clerk (G-3.0104) shall be elected for a three-year term and shall be eligible
107 for re-election. It shall be the duty of the Stated Clerk to:
108 1. be the official correspondent within Presbytery and among other councils or
109 governing bodies
110 2. be the secretary and custodian of the minutes and records of Presbytery and
111 Cabinet
112 3. attend meetings of General Assembly and Synod
113 4. be an advisor on constitutional and parliamentary matters
114 E. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-
115 election. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:
116 1. receive and disburse all Presbytery funds , including invested funds (such duties
117 may be delegated, i.e. to hired bookkeeper)
118 2. provide a financial report at each meeting of the Presbytery and Cabinet
119 3. oversee the work of the Bookkeeper in consultation with the chair of the Finance
120 Committee.

121 **V. The Presbytery Cabinet**

- 122 A. The Presbytery Cabinet is responsible for overseeing and coordinating Presbytery
123 mission, guidance, operations, and shall serve in the role of the Board of Trustees for the
124 Presbytery. The Cabinet shall report at each regular meeting of the Presbytery all items of
125 business transacted by it. Its decision shall be immediately operative wherever power has been
126 conferred, except in corporate matters where the Cabinet is obliged to act as Trustees
127 B. Presbytery Cabinet Membership shall consist of:
128 1. Nine (9) Ruling and Teaching Elders with vote:
129 a) Moderator;
130 b) Vice-Moderator;
131 c) Cabinet Chair;
132 d) Six members-at-large
133 2. Advisory members without vote:
134 a) Stated Clerk
135 b) Treasurer

136 c) Other members of the Presbytery and staff so designated in the Manual of
137 Administrative Operations.

138 C. The Officers of Cabinet shall be the Cabinet Chair, the Presbytery Moderator, the
139 Presbytery Vice-Moderator, and the Stated Clerk of Presbytery who shall serve as Secretary.

140 D. Specific Responsibilities:

- 141 1. Develop a vision and strategy for the total mission of its congregations in its
142 district consistent with G-3.000.
- 143 2. Set annual priorities and establish a mission and administrative budget including
144 the per capita apportionment, subject to confirmation by the Presbytery.
- 145 3. Initiate, support, co-ordinate, and review the work of all committees, teams, and
146 commissions.
- 147 4. Provide encouragement, guidance and resources to its congregations.
- 148 5. Develop the agenda for meetings of the Presbytery.
- 149 6. Submit nominations for members of the Presbytery Committee on Nominations
150 to the Presbytery for election.
- 151 7. Maintain regular and continuing relationships to all councils of the church.
- 152 8. Evaluate the work of the Presbytery and the Manual of Administrative
153 Operations.
- 154 9. Carry out necessary actions of Presbytery between stated meetings.

155 E. Executive Team of Cabinet

- 156 1. The Executive Team of Cabinet shall consist of the Cabinet Chair, Moderator,
157 Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk, and any Presbytery member so designated by the
158 Presbytery. Its primary purpose shall be to plan the agenda for Cabinet and
159 promote communication. The Cabinet may delegate to it such powers as
160 necessary to promote the functioning and administration of the Presbytery
161 between Cabinet meetings.
- 162 2. The Executive Team of Cabinet will ordinarily act on the appointment of an
163 investigating committee (D-10.0201) or the appointment of a committee of
164 counsel (D-6.0302a), or the appointment of a response team; reporting any of
165 these actions to the next Cabinet meeting and subsequently to the Presbytery.

166 F. Subcommittees of Presbytery Cabinet

167 The Presbytery Cabinet may establish subcommittees that shall have their
168 membership and duties described in the Manual of Administrative Operations.

169 VI. Permanent Judicial Commission

170 A. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall act as a committee of the whole on cases
171 referred to it by the Presbytery. It shall elect a Moderator and a Clerk from among its members,
172 who shall serve until successors are elected.

173 B. Membership

- 174 1. The Presbytery shall elect, upon nomination from the Committee on
175 Nominations, Teaching and Ruling Elders numbering no fewer than seven and
176 no more than eleven in three classes to the Commission, each class having a six
177 year term of office. The number of ministers and elders on the commission shall
178 as nearly equal as possible. When the commission consists of an odd number of
179 members, the additional member may be either a Teaching or Ruling Elder. No
180 person who has served on a permanent judicial commission for a full term of six
181 years shall be eligible for re-election until four years have elapsed after the

- 182 expired six year term. No person shall serve on more than one permanent
183 judicial commission at the same time. (D-5.0105)
- 184 2. The provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) shall
185 govern its quorum and the procedure to be followed in the absence of a quorum
186 (Rules of Discipline, Chapter 5).
- 187 C. Duties
188 It shall be the responsibility of the Commission to consider all cases, whether remedial
189 or disciplinary, transmitted to it from the Presbytery in accordance with the “Rules of
190 Discipline” in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

191 **VII. INDEMNIFICATION**

192 If any action, suit or proceedings shall be brought against the Presbytery, Cabinet (Trustees),
193 committees, teams, commissions, members, commissioners, officers or staff as a result of any
194 action taken by those persons on behalf of Presbytery, the Presbytery shall defend and hold
195 harmless such persons against such action, suit or proceedings. However, if such action, suit or
196 proceedings is found to have resulted from gross negligence or criminal activity, the Presbytery
197 shall not be responsible to hold such persons harmless from any action, suit or proceedings
198 resulting from such action. The foregoing indemnification shall inure to the benefit of the heir,
199 executors and administrators of any such person.

200 **VIII. OPERATION AND AMENDMENTS OF THESE BYLAWS**

- 201 A. Robert’s Rules of Order
202 Robert’s Rules of Order (most recent edition) shall control the Presbytery in all matters
203 not covered by these Bylaws or in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).
204 Where it is more restrictive or specific the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church
205 (U.S.A.) and/or these Bylaws shall take precedence.
- 206 B. Amendments of the Bylaws
207 Amendments shall be submitted for a first reading at one Presbytery meeting, and then
208 may be adopted only by a two-thirds majority at the next meeting.