

**STANDING RULES
OF THE PRESBYTERY
OF
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA**



Presbytery of WNC

Including All Approved Revisions through January 31st, 2026

STANDING RULES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

I. PRESBYTERY

A. Name. The Presbytery shall be known as the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

B. Constitution. The Presbytery shall always operate in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution (Book of Confessions and Book of Order) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It shall have the right to adopt Standing Rules (as a manual of administrative operations/ bylaws) that are in harmony with that Constitution.

C. Relationship to Higher Governing Bodies. The Presbytery is subject to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), as provided in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

D. Geographical Area. The geographical jurisdiction of the Presbytery includes the 23 counties of: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey. The Presbytery may be divided into geographical regions, which may serve as units for pastoral care, training, worship, and other useful purposes.

E. Incorporation. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation according to the laws of the State of North Carolina. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina Corporation shall meet at the same time and place, and in the announcement of the meeting, "Presbytery of Western North Carolina" shall designate both its functions.

F. Members. All enrolled Ministers of Word and Sacrament (also known as Teaching Elders), as certified by the Stated Clerk, shall be members of the Presbytery.

II. OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY

A. The Officers of the Presbytery shall be the Moderator, Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect), Stated Clerk, and Treasurer.

B. Moderator's Election and Term. Each year at the third stated meeting of Presbytery, the Coordinating Ministry of Presbytery shall present a nominee for Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect). The name of the nominee will be announced in the docket packet mailed/e-mailed prior to the meeting and will be placed in nomination at the meeting. The Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) shall take office on January 1 following his or her election. On the next January 1, the Vice-Moderator shall become the Moderator being formally recognized at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. The Moderator shall serve in that office for one year, or until his/her successor takes office.

C. Moderator's Duties. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of Presbytery and perform all the duties prescribed in the Book of Order.

D. Vice-Moderator's Duties. The Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) shall carry out the Moderator's duties when so requested by the Moderator, or when deemed necessary by the Coordinating Ministry.

E. Stated Clerk's Duties. The Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Presbytery and serve the Presbytery as

its constitutional officer. The Stated Clerk shall perform those duties and functions prescribed in the Book of Order and those agreed upon by the Coordinating Ministry. He or she shall annually arrange for the records of all Sessions to be reviewed. Subject to the approval of the Coordinating Ministry, the Stated Clerk may appoint an Assistant Stated Clerk, whose term of service shall be the same as the Stated Clerk's. Should an investigating committee be necessary, the Stated Clerk and the chairs of the Coordinating Ministry and the Commission on Ministry, with consultation of the General Presbyter, shall together appoint one, following the Rules of Discipline in the Book of Order. The Stated Clerk shall be elected for a term set by Presbytery and is eligible to be re-elected.

F. Treasurer's Duties. The Treasurer shall be elected by Presbytery and have oversight of the finances of Presbytery and is responsible for ensuring that the financial policies and procedures are followed. The Treasurer shall oversee receipt and disbursement of the funds of Presbytery as authorized, keep detailed account of all receipts and disbursements, report them to the Coordinating Ministry at each of its meetings, and to Presbytery annually, and work with any financial campaign approved by Presbytery. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term set by Presbytery and is eligible to be re-elected.

III. MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

A. Stated Meetings. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina shall ordinarily hold four stated meetings each year, some of which may be a part of celebrative events. The time and place shall be set by the Coordinating Ministry. In the scheduling of meetings, consideration shall be given to varied geographical locations throughout Presbytery and to work patterns of participants in the meetings.

B. Special Meetings. The Moderator may call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of three teaching elders and three ruling elders, all elders being of different churches. Should the Moderator be unable or unwilling to act, the Stated Clerk may, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both Moderator and Stated Clerk are unable or unwilling to act, any five teaching elders and five ruling elders, all elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting. The synod may direct the Presbytery to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. The notice of a special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each teaching elder and to the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.

C. Meetings and Invitations. Invitations to host meetings shall be received and acted on by the Coordinating Ministry. Meetings, whether stated or special, may be held in-person or by virtual means. The decision about which means is to be used is made by the Coordinating Ministry and communicated to all teaching elders and each session in as timely a fashion as circumstances allow. Quorums for electronic meetings shall be the same as those described for in-person meetings. If a written ballot is required or requested at a virtual meeting, a tally of the phone votes combined with the results of a published poll shall suffice. All actions taken in meetings whether held in-person or virtually are fully authoritative, requiring no subsequent ratification.

D. Docket. The Moderator and the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the General Presbyter, shall together prepare the proposed docket for each meeting of Presbytery, which shall be approved by the Coordinating Ministry. Copies of the proposed docket shall be sent electronically or be mailed to all teaching elders, clerks of sessions, and others as requested ordinarily ten days before each meeting. There shall be a worship service during each meeting that shall include the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Moderator of Presbytery shall be responsible for contacting and inviting a person to

preach at each worship service of Presbytery, with the concurrence of the Coordinating Ministry. The preacher may be, but is not necessarily the pastor of the host church. Ordinarily, the pastor and session of the host church participate in this worship service. Memorials for church professionals and ruling elders who have died in the preceding twelve months shall be included in the worship service of one stated meeting each year.

E. In order to ensure fairness and access to all necessary information, any new business to be dealt with at a Presbytery meeting, not arising from a Presbytery ministry, team, or commission, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in the packet no later than thirty days before the scheduled meeting of Presbytery. By a two-thirds affirmative vote, however, Presbytery may decide to consider other new urgent business, if brought to the Stated Clerk before the beginning of the Presbytery meeting. This new business shall be referred to the Bills and Overtures Committee for report later in that meeting.

F. There shall be no distribution of materials at Presbytery meetings without prior approval from the Coordinating Ministry.

G. Rules of Procedure. The rules that shall govern all the transaction of business in all meetings of Presbytery shall be in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), these Standing Rules (bylaws), and the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

H. Attendance and Voting. Each Minister of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) shall attend each meeting of Presbytery, and each congregation shall be represented by at least one ruling elder at each meeting. Congregations are entitled to ruling elder commissioners based on the following active membership (BO: G-1.0402), as shown on the most recent statistical report published by the General Assembly.

- 0 - 250 members - 1
- 251 - 750 members - 2
- 751 - 1250 members - 3
- 1251 - 1750 members - 4

Honorably retired teaching elders shall be welcome at all meetings, but their necessary non-attendance shall be excused.

To ensure approximate parity in numbers between ruling elder and teaching elder commissioners:

1. All members of the Coordinating Ministry and Commission on Ministry shall have voice and vote (if ruling elders).
2. All ministry, team, and commission chairs shall have voice and vote (if ruling elders).
3. All Commissioned Pastors in active service shall have voice and vote.
4. All Certified Christian Educators, Certified Associate Christian Educators, and, in addition, other Christian Educators who have
 - earned at least a bachelor's degree (or its equivalent)
 - served in one or more educational ministries under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery (or one of its Sessions) for a minimum of two (2) years, and
 - been examined and recommended to Presbytery by the Faith Formation Team shall have voice and (if ruling elders) vote, provided that these privileges shall end, pursuant to G-

2.1103, when such persons are no longer serving in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery (or one of its Sessions).

5. All ruling elder commissioners to the Synod Assembly and to the General Assembly shall have voice and vote as long as their terms last.

6. All exempt staff of Presbytery shall have voice.

7. All racial/ethnic congregations and other congregations designated by the Coordinating Ministry shall elect an additional ruling elder commissioner.

8. All Ministers of Word and Sacrament (or Teaching Elders) who are enrolled with the presbytery shall have voice and vote.

I. The quorum for stated meetings of Presbytery shall be at least fifty commissioners including twenty Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elders) and ruling elders commissioned by at least twenty sessions. The quorum for special meetings shall be half of the above.

J. Corresponding Members and Visitors. The Presbytery may give voice but no vote to any of the following:

- Official representatives from the Synod or the General Assembly.
- Teaching or ruling elders from another presbytery, a Reformed Church in communion with the Presbyterian Church (USA), or any other Christian church.
- Or those others approved by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of Presbytery.

Other visitors are welcome to attend as observers, unless the Presbytery, for good reason, votes to go into executive session.

IV. PRESBYTERY COORDINATING MINISTRY

A. Purpose. The Coordinating Ministry shall ensure that the priorities of Presbytery are carried out by the ministries, teams, or commissions, as well as the staff of Presbytery, and that these priorities are reflected in the Presbytery budget. It shall coordinate the many parts of Presbytery to contribute to the life and witness for Christ of the whole Church. It shall foster positive attitudes within the Presbytery and encourage its members to engage in regular prayer regarding the mission of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, the Synod of Mid-Atlantic, the General Assembly and the whole Presbyterian Church (USA). The Coordinating Ministry is the servant of Presbytery and has only those powers provided by these Standing Rules or authorized by Presbytery.

B. Membership. The Coordinating Ministry shall be composed as follows:

1. Voting Members

- Immediate Past Moderator of Presbytery, who shall serve as chair for one year and as President of the Corporation.
- Moderator of Presbytery, who shall serve as vice-chair for one year and as Vice-President of the Corporation.
- Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) of Presbyter, who may serve as secretary.
- Treasurer, who shall serve as Treasurer of the Corporation.

- A Liaison from each of the Ministries (Equipping Disciples, Strengthening Congregations, Engaging in Mission, Coordinating Ministry, and Supporting Leadership)
- Chair of Personnel Team
- Moderator or her designee of the Presbyterian Women of Presbytery.
- Six at-large members, nominated by the Nominating/Representation Team (giving due consideration to geography and experience, with equal number of teaching and ruling elders) and elected by Presbytery, serving three-year staggered terms (two on, two off each year). These may be nominated and elected for an immediate second three-year term, after which they may not serve on the Coordinating Ministry for at least one year before being eligible again.

2. Non-Voting Members*

- General Presbyter
- Stated Clerk, who shall serve as Secretary of the Corporation.
- Any staff of Presbytery chosen by the General Presbyter

C. Leadership Team. The chair (Moderator of Coordinating Ministry), vice-chair (Moderator of Presbytery), Vice-Moderator of Presbytery, Secretary of Coordinating Ministry, two at-large members elected from the Coordinating Ministry, the General Presbyter, and the Stated Clerk shall form a leadership team for the Coordinating Ministry, whose duties shall be to

- Make preparations for each meeting of the Coordinating Ministry
- Submit recommendations to the Coordinating Ministry
- Carry out assignments given by the Coordinating Ministry
- Take appropriate action on urgent matters that cannot wait for the next Coordinating Ministry meeting, such action to be reported at the next meeting

D. Functions: The Coordinating Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To lead Presbytery in setting appropriate goals in accord with its Mission Statement.
2. To coordinate the mission and programs of Presbytery.
3. To review the work of all ministries, teams, and commissions of Presbytery, offering helpful advice as warranted.
4. To approve the proposed annual budget prepared by the Finance Team, ensuring that Presbytery's priorities are reflected therein, for submission to Presbytery; and to make adjustments to the budget approved by Presbytery, provided that such are reported to the next meeting of Presbytery.
5. To refer work to, and to hear recommendations from, the ministries, teams and commissions of Presbytery.
6. To approve the proposed docket for the Presbytery meetings prepared by the Moderator and Stated Clerk, in consultation with the General Presbyter, and have oversight of worship at Presbytery meetings.

7. To serve as the Board of Trustees of the Presbytery Corporation, with the right to designate some of their members to exercise that responsibility on behalf of the Coordinating Ministry.
8. To consider requests from congregations regarding the exercise of their property rights under G-4.0206 in the Book of Order and recommend appropriate actions to Presbytery.
9. To recommend persons for the Nominating/Representation Team of Presbytery, and for the offices of Vice-Moderator (Moderator-elect) and if necessary, Moderator.
10. To approve the appointment of persons by the Nominating / Representation Team to fill vacancies in cases of emergency (subject to ratification by Presbytery).
11. To act as a hearing board in personnel matters which may be appealed from the Personnel Team.
12. To refer actions of the General Assembly and Synod to ministries, teams and commissions for study and interpretation.
13. To keep Presbytery informed of its work through reports at each meeting.
14. To review Presbytery's fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in the Book of Order (G-3.03).
15. To authorize celebrations of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at retreats, camps, conferences and special gatherings under the jurisdiction of Presbytery.
16. To recommend personnel policies to Presbytery for all its employees, which shall embody the inclusiveness required in the Book of Order.
17. Between meetings of Presbytery, to act on behalf of Presbytery in urgent matters by a two-thirds majority vote, provided that a full report of such action is given to Presbytery at its next meeting.

V. MINISTRIES AND TEAMS

A. The Presbytery shall have the following Ministries in accordance with its Mission Statement. These Ministries should include, but are not limited to, the following tasks:

SEE, We Are the Body Of Christ
We Covenant to...
Strengthen Congregations
Equip Disciples
Engage in Mission

- 1. Coordinating Ministry** (Permanent Judicial Commission, Nominating/Representation Team, Personnel Team, Finance Team, Property Team)
- 2. Supporting Leadership Ministry** (Commission on Ministry, Examinations Team, Validated Ministry Team, Sexual Misconduct Response Team, Preparation for Ministry Team, Commissioned Pastor Team, Church Leadership School)
- 3. Strengthening Congregations Ministry** (Church Vibrancy Team, Youth Team/Youth Council, Faith Formation Team, Campus Ministry Team)
- 4. Equipping Disciples Ministry** (New Worshipping Communities Team, Digital Church Team,

Community Outreach Team, Peace and Justice Team, Disability Inclusion Team)

5. Engaging In Mission Ministry (Hunger Programs Team, Self-Development of People Team, PWNC Disaster Assistance Team, Housing Team, Guatemala Team, Malawi Team)

B. General Regulations:

1. Subject to the approval of Presbytery, the Coordinating Ministry shall determine the general responsibilities and the number of members of each Ministry.
2. Working with the Coordinating Ministry, each Ministry shall determine the teams it deems necessary, as well as the number of members and the duties of each.
3. Equipping Ministry, Strengthening Congregations Ministry, and Engaging in Mission Ministry shall be composed of three members, each on a staggered three-year term. The member in their final year of service shall serve as the liaison to the Coordinating Ministry. These ministry members shall be nominated by the Nominating/Representation Team and elected by presbytery. All teams and team leaders under these ministries shall be recruited and appointed by the ministry itself. Normally, no more than half of each team should be teaching elders.

Coordinating Ministry is defined by its section of these Standing Rules. Supporting Leadership Ministry shall be made up of representatives of the constituent teams and commissions. All members of its teams and commissions shall be nominated by the Nominating/Representation Team (with the exception of the SMRT) and elected by presbytery.

4. Normally, those members elected to teams or ministries shall serve a three-year term, may be re-elected, but may not serve more than six consecutive years, after which they may not serve on the same body for at least one year before being eligible again.
5. All ministries and teams should report to Presbytery through the Coordinating Ministry to enable it to coordinate activities in Presbytery. The Coordinating Ministry may not alter any ministry or team report, but may offer advice to Presbytery concerning recommendations.
6. Ministries and teams shall develop and implement plans and programs that carry out their goals as adopted by Presbytery and evaluate and report to Presbytery their activities annually. Ministries and teams may meet in-person, by telephone conference, emails, web-based conferencing or other suitable methods.
7. Ministries and teams shall be encouraged to be creative and to explore new avenues of ministry with accountability to Presbytery through the Coordinating Ministry.
8. Ministries and teams shall annually submit their budget requests to the Finance Team. They shall carry out their responsibilities within the approved budgets, unless an overrun is approved in advance by the Coordinating Ministry.
9. Ordinarily, a person may serve on only one Presbytery ministry, team or commission at the same time. Normally, there should not be more than one representative of any one church on the same Presbytery ministry, team, or commission at the same time (except congregations having more than two hundred active members may have more than one representative on the same entity).
10. Ministry and team chairs will contact any elected member after three meetings in a year have been missed (without a reasonable excuse approved by the team) and inquire as to their ability and willingness to serve at this time, and will advise the member that a further unexcused

absence will result in removal from the team. It will be the responsibility of the chair to inform the Nominating/Representation Team when members have missed half of the meetings and the Nominating /Representation Team shall replace such members as soon as possible.

11. Terms of office for chairs shall be one year, with no chair serving more than two consecutive terms. Each electable chair shall be nominated specifically for that position by the Nominating/Representation Team, but still be from the total membership entity. In extenuating circumstances, an additional year as chair may be recommended to Coordinating Ministry.

12. Ministries and teams are encouraged to suggest to the Nominating/Representation Team suitable persons for new members and new chairs.

13. Each ministry may, on its own initiative, create one or more on-going teams for long-term or short-term projects. When such a team has completed its assignment, it shall cease to exist. The membership and statement of purpose of all teams shall be reported to the Coordinating Ministry within a month after their formation.

14. Each ministry and team shall keep accurate minutes. Copies of all minutes, and reports should be submitted to the Coordinating Ministry on a regular basis.

15. The quorum for each ministry or team or commission shall be a majority of its members.

VI. NOMINATING/REPRESENTATION TEAM

The Nominating/Representation Team shall consist of fifteen (15). It shall be broadly representative of the member churches of the Presbytery. Ordinarily, one-third of its members shall be ministers, one-third laywomen, and one-third laymen (youth to be included among the laity). **There shall be racial/ethnic representation of up to twenty-five percent, whenever possible.** Nominees for vacancies on the Nominating/Representation Team and its moderator shall be made to Presbytery by the Coordinating Ministry.

VII. COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

A. Purpose and Authority: The purpose of the Commission on Ministry is to enable the presbytery to fulfill the responsibilities and powers assigned the presbytery by G-3.0301, 3.0303, 3.0306, and 3.0307, and may function as a commission of the presbytery when engaged in carrying out the following functions:

- Examining and receiving Ministers of Word and Sacrament into membership or temporary membership in the presbytery;
- Approving calls and changes in terms of call;
- Creating or dissolving pastoral relationships in a church;
- Approving contracts for temporary pastoral positions;
- Approving commissioned pastor contracts;
- Validating ministries;
- Appointing ordination and installation commissions;

- Appointing session moderators;
- Setting minimums for terms of call and contracts;
- Settling difficulties (respecting G-2.0901);
- Giving permission for ministers not serving a congregation to celebrate the sacraments;
- Dismissing a minister in good standing from the presbytery;
- Approving ministers to the status of Retired;
- Visiting congregations reported to be affected with disorder, inquiring into and offering support to settle difficulties.

All such actions are reported to the next meeting of the presbytery. In cases of disagreement, appeals can be made to the next presbytery meeting.

B. Membership: The Nominating/Representation Team shall nominate and the Presbytery shall elect a COM of no fewer than eighteen (18) members with teaching elders and ruling elders in nearly equal numbers as possible. Members shall be divided into three equal classes. Members shall normally be elected to a three-year term and may be re-elected to a second full or partial term. No member may serve more than six consecutive years.

C. Subteams: The Nominating/Representation Team shall nominate and the presbytery shall elect members of the COM Subteams of Examinations and Validation of Ministry. COM shall determine the number of members needed. Members shall be divided into three equal classes. Members shall normally be elected to a three-year term and may be re-elected to a second full or partial term. No member may serve more than six consecutive years.

VIII. PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

A. Purpose and Authority. The Permanent Judicial Commission has the powers prescribed by and conducts proceedings according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as found in the Book of Church Discipline.

B. Membership and Officers. The Nominating/Representation Team shall nominate and the Presbytery shall elect a Permanent Judicial Commission of no fewer than seven (7) members with teaching elders and ruling elders in nearly equal numbers as possible. Members shall be divided into three equal classes. Members shall normally be elected to a six-year term and may be re-elected to a second full or partial term. There shall be no more than one member from any one church on the commission. The Commission shall elect it's own moderator and clerk from its membership.

C. Procedure and Responsibilities. Membership, procedure, powers and responsibilities are those contained in the Book of Order, the Church Discipline.

IX. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESPONSE TEAM

A. Definition and Purpose. The SMRT is charged with providing pastoral care, support, and advocacy where needed in cases involving accusations of sexual misconduct within the Presbytery. The purpose of the SMRT is to assure that an expeditious, professional, objective, effective, and caring response is made by the Presbytery to charges of sexual misconduct. This team shall not investigate allegations or in

any way function as an investigating committee for disciplining members or officers but shall confine itself to coordinating a process that shall meet the specific needs of the accuser and their family (if any), the victim (if not the accuser) and their family (if any), the accused person and their family (if any), employing entities, congregations, and councils.

B. Membership. There shall be at least six members of the SMRT, each appointed for a three-year term by the COM. The Team shall elect its own Moderator. It shall be composed, as nearly as possible, of an equal number of clergy and ruling elders. Members may serve no more than six consecutive years.

C. Activation. The SMRT shall be activated whenever an allegation of sexual misconduct is received by the Stated Clerk, or when deemed appropriate by the COM Moderator in consultation with the Stated Clerk.

X. PRESBYTERY STAFF

Presbytery shall hire staff as required to fulfill its mission and responsibilities. The General Presbyter shall be head of staff. Staff shall be responsible to Presbytery, reporting through the Coordinating Ministry, and not be responsible to a single ministry, team or commission. Coordinating Ministry, with the guidance of the Personnel Team, shall determine all support and resourcing from staff for ministries and commissions and teams. The "Personnel Manual of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina " provides guidelines and policies for hiring, supervising and terminating staff, and for the provision of salary and benefits.

XI. AMENDMENT

These Standing Rules for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina shall be periodically reviewed by the Coordinating Ministry, with any changes recommended to Presbytery. Such proposed amendments may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any stated meeting of the Presbytery.

Presbytery of WNC Approved Revisions October 2025

Further Revisions Approved January 2026