THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
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NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO PRESBYTERY MEETINGS

WELCOME!
Despite rumors to the contrary, many really do enjoy the time of fellowship and sharing when our Presbytery meets. However, if you have not been to such a meeting before, it may seem a little confusing at first. It is hoped that this guide will make your participation more meaningful. For at Presbytery meetings, we have good news to share, successes to celebrate, helpful resources to publicize, important (and some not so important) decisions to make, plans to approve, and a wonderful family of 101 congregations to get to know better.

WHAT IS A PRESBYTERY?
A Presbytery is the key governing body in our denomination. There are 173 Presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Ours includes all the PCUSA congregations with nearly 14,500 members in 23 counties in the western part of North Carolina. It consists of all the active Teaching Elders and at least one Ruling Elder from each congregation (larger ones have additional Ruling Elders). Various procedures ensure that there is approximately an equal number of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders; both are known as commissioners and they have an equal vote. It is vital that each congregation be represented by its Ruling Elder(s)!

WHAT DOES A PRESBYTERY DO?
A Presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the Church throughout its area. In partnership with Sessions, the mission of our Presbytery is to foster vital and faithful congregations to be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. By combining resources, Presbytery can help each church improve its ministry by assisting with the calling of pastors, teacher training, grants and loans, officer development, camping, mission trips, and many other support services.

WHEN DOES PRESBYTERY MEET?
There are four full-day stated (regular) meetings, generally towards the end of the months of January (Saturday), April (Tuesday at the Montreat Conference Center), July (Tuesday), and October (for either one or one-and-a-half days, sometimes at one of our churches or an appropriate conference center). Special meetings at other times can be called, and Presbytery committees meet throughout the year.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THIS MEETING?
All commissioners will receive, in advance, a packet of reports, proposed actions and background information. Other papers (generally called AAddenda@) will be handed out when you register. Please read these carefully, and be prepared, since these papers will only be referred to during the meeting before a committee chair (with some explanation) moves adoption of an action.

In general, these things will occur:

1. Celebration: We will worship together with hymns, prayers, Scripture, preaching and the Lord's Supper. We will also welcome new Teaching Elders, commission teams on mission trips (especially to Guatemala and Malawi), give thanks for special achievements, and pledge ourselves to better mission and witness. Join in the fellowship of committed Christians.
2. Information: You will learn about lots of events and opportunities to share with your Session and congregation: new programs, mission plans, available resources, etc. Be a good communicator when you are back home.

3. Education: You will hear from missionaries, as well as leaders of our colleges, children's homes, camps and other institutions; Presbytery officials and Teaching Elders joining our Presbytery. There is always much to learn.

4. Presbytery Procedures: Much is fairly routine: adoption of the docket (order of consideration), approval of minutes, receiving reports, etc. Several routine housekeeping matters are put together in a Consent Agenda (formerly referred to as the AOmnibus Motion), which is voted on as a unit (but you can remove any item for later discussion). Though rather unexciting, these matters are necessary.

5. Debate and Action: At most meetings, there will be a few items that deserve extensive discussion. Though each recommendation has been reviewed by a committee or the Administrative Board, it should nevertheless be carefully considered before you decide how to vote. If you do not understand what is happening, please ask the Moderator to explain the matter currently before the Presbytery. If you want to offer a motion, the Stated Clerk would be glad to help you draft it. Don=t worry about parliamentary procedure. Your role is to listen carefully, share in the debate, if you feel led to do so, and then vote as the Holy Spirit leads you to understand what is best for Christ's Church

It is a privilege and responsibility to help guide this part of the Church of Jesus Christ. ***Be prepared. Listen. Pray. Take notes. Report back home*.** Remember that you are helping our Presbytery in a much valued and vital way to build up the Body of Christ, to the greater glory of our Lord.

(Prepared by James Aydelotte, former Stated Clerk, with thanks to Providence Presbytery in South Carolina.)

PRESBYTERY MEETING DATES	
Tuesday, July 31, 2018	Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, NC (Host – Banner Elk Presbyterian Church)
Saturday, October 27, 2018	First Presbyterian Church, Hickory, NC
Saturday, January 26, 2019	First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, NC
Tuesday, April 30, 2019	Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC (Co-Host – Montreat Presbyterian Church)
Tuesday, July 30, 2019	Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church
Saturday, October 26, 2019	***NEED HOST LOCATION***
Saturday, January 25, 2020	***NEED HOST LOCATION***
Tuesday, April 28, 2020	Montreat Conference Center (Co-Host – Montreat Presbyterian Church)
Tuesday, July 28, 2020	***NEED HOST LOCATION***
Saturday, October 24, 2020	Waldensian Presbyterian

Sacred Trust Relational Boundaries Training

Saturday, November 3, 2018 (8:30AM - 12:30PM)

First Presbyterian Church, Morganton

For Pastors and Elders of the Presbytery: According to our presbytery's policy, clergy and elders involved in leadership are required to take sexual misconduct training once every four years.
For leaders of local congregations: The workshop is open for all local leaders who want to educate themselves about healthy boundaries.

Please contact the Presbytery Office to reserve a spot.

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