

# Standing Rules

## Presbytery of the Midwest – Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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## **Preamble**

The general powers and duties of the presbytery are clearly stated in the Standards of Government, Discipline and Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This code of standing rules for the Presbytery of the Midwest comprises only such rules as are necessary to facilitate the proper handling of its business. These rules must not be in conflict with the standards of the church as a whole. All cases which arise that are not provided for in these Standing Rules or in the Constitution of the OPC shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

## **Article I – Meetings**

### **A. Stated Meetings**

1. Stated meetings of presbytery shall be two each year, to be held as follows: the spring meeting on the third Friday morning of March, to conclude no later than 12:00 noon the following Saturday; the fall meeting the second Friday and Saturday after Labor Day. The pastor of the host church, together with the moderator and stated clerk, shall be the committee on arrangements.
2. All ministerial members of the presbytery, except for those who have been honorably retired or who are currently serving on a foreign mission field are expected to attend stated meetings. Every church is expected to send at least one ruling elder commissioner to stated meetings. Ministers who cannot attend, except for those named above, and sessions who cannot send a delegate will request in writing, giving reasons to have their absences excused, and presbytery shall act on absences and requests for excuse.
3. Each standing committee, except for the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee shall submit a written report for each stated meeting.
4. The treasurer shall submit a written report for each stated meeting. Other officers submit written reports as circumstances require.
5. Standing committees, special committees, officers, and any others providing written reports for the stated meeting shall submit those reports to the stated clerk at least 21 days prior to the stated meeting allowing distribution to the presbyters before the meeting. Exceptions can come to the floor only with a three-fourths vote.
6. Requests to handle miscellaneous business items at the meeting must be submitted to the clerk in writing before the docket is approved; other such business will be presented at the discretion of the moderator.

## B. Special Meetings

1. When special meetings of the presbytery as provided for in the Form of Government, Chapter XIV, 7, are requested, the call for the meeting shall contain an explanation of the emergency nature of each docket item.
2. Normally candidates (licentiates and ministers) will be examined and calls to ministry in or by the presbytery will be considered only at stated meetings of presbytery. The examination of candidates and/or consideration of calls will be docketed for special meetings only under as follows:

A congregation requesting a special meeting for this purpose will furnish in writing to the moderator or stated clerk (who shall forward these to the Candidates and Credentials Committee) the candidate's name, current address, telephone number, current position or occupation, relevant information on his family, a copy of the candidate's resume and letters of reference, a summary of oral testimonials, reasons this particular man is being proposed to the congregation as a candidate, and the terms of the proposed call.

## C. All Meetings

All those ruling elders of this presbytery who are present without having been appointed commissioners are hereby seated as corresponding members. In addition, presbytery may, on motion, seat others as corresponding members so long as they meet the requirements of the Form of Government, XIV, 9.

## **Article II – Officers**

### A. Officers

1. A moderator shall be elected at the fall stated meeting, to begin his year of service at the opening of the spring meeting and continue until the opening of the following spring stated meeting.
2. The most recently retired moderator of presbytery shall be designated as the vice-moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the vice-moderator, and anyone appointed by the moderator to convene that meeting, the most recently retired moderator present shall preside until a moderator is elected.
3. A stated clerk shall be elected at the spring meeting of every even numbered year, to serve for a period of two years. The stated clerk shall receive \$250.00 annually.
4. An assistant clerk shall be elected at the spring meeting of every odd numbered year, to serve for a period of two years. In the case of a vacancy in the stated clerk's office, the assistant clerk shall assume the functions of interim stated clerk until a successor can be elected. The assistant clerk shall receive \$150.00 annually.

5. An archivist shall be elected at the spring meeting of every even numbered year, to serve for a period of two years. The archivist shall receive \$150.00 annually.

## B. Duties

1. The moderator's duties shall be:
  - a. to arrange for appropriate devotional exercises at the opening of each stated meeting preside at each meeting and make all necessary appointments.
  - b. to appoint a parliamentarian at each stated meeting.

He shall be able to use his own discretion to limit debate on any issue, unless his decision is overruled by a two-thirds vote.

2. The vice-moderator shall perform all the functions of the moderator in the moderator's absence.
3. The stated clerk shall
  - a. Keep a roll of the permanent members of the presbytery and the roll of non-ministerial members of the regional church.
  - b. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting.
  - c. Keep a record of the transactions of presbytery in permanent form on numbered pages.
  - d. Number and file all papers referred to in the minutes, preserving them from loss.
  - e. Send notices for all meetings of the presbytery in accordance with the Form of Government, chapter XIV:7.
  - f. Refer promptly to the appropriate standing committee all pertinent matters submitted to him between meetings.
  - g. Produce at the stated meetings of presbytery its records, the standards of the church and the latest published minutes of the general assembly.
  - h. Submit a docket for each stated meeting.
  - i. Write a letter of appreciation to the host church of each stated meeting.
  - j. Call attention to all acts of the general assembly of which he has received official notice, and to all other communications which may come into his hands.

- k. Communicate officially any acts of presbytery to the parties whom they concern, and provide copies (electronically or otherwise) to each minister and clerk of session.
- l. Keep a copy of the standing rules constantly corrected to date, and provide (electronically or otherwise) each minister and session which may come under jurisdiction of presbytery a copy of the same.
- m. Certify, upon request, the standing of all ministers on the roll of presbytery.
- n. Perform such other duties as may rightfully fall upon the stated clerk.
- o. Deliver to his successor all Presbyterian records promptly and in good order.
- p. Keep on file a copy of “Presbytery Policies and Guidelines on Pastors’ Salaries” as presbytery’s official policy guide and standard, and provide copies to presbyters or sessions which request them.
- q. Send and receive calls pertaining to elders and congregations in the presbytery.
  - (1) Upon receipt of a call from another presbytery, the stated clerk shall send notification of this fact to both the minister who has been called and to his session.
  - (2) When a minister receives notification that a call directed to him is in the hands of the stated clerk, he shall be requested to consult with his session on the matter and to decide within two weeks.
  - (3) If the minister expresses his desire to accept a call, if and when such a call is presented to him, the session shall call a congregational meeting at which the congregation will be asked to concur with him in requesting the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship.
  - (4) When the minister expresses his desire to accept a call, and the congregation concurs with him in requesting the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship, a meeting of presbytery shall be called as soon as possible to review the situation. If the call is found in order, it shall be placed into the hands of the minister who shall state his intentions. The presbytery, if it feels it is advisable, shall then dissolve the pastoral relationship and appoint a moderator for the session.
  - (5) When a minister expresses his desire to decline a call, the stated clerk shall immediately send notification of this fact to the presbytery from which the call originated.
  - (6) In case a congregation refuses to concur with its pastor requesting the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship, and the pastor still desires to accept a call, a

meeting of presbytery shall be called as soon as possible to review the situation. If the call is found in order, it shall be presented to the minister who shall state his intentions. The presbytery then shall hear both the pastor and the representatives of the congregation and shall render its decision.

4. The assistant clerk shall

- a. Record the transactions of all stated meetings of the presbytery, prepare them for inscription in the permanent minute book, and place them in the hands of the stated clerk for distribution and inscription.
- b. Serve as treasurer
  - (1) Receiving and disbursing funds as directed by the presbytery. He shall open and maintain one presbytery account at a bank of his choosing. The assistant clerk, the stated clerk, and one other presbyter of the assistant clerk's choosing shall be signatories on the account, with only one signature required on checks.
  - (2) Making a financial report at each meeting of the presbytery.
  - (3) Submitting the books by February 1 to the Auditing and Budget Committee for annual audit.
- c. Inform the OPC's Committee on Pensions of the name and address of each licentiate or minister who is received into the presbytery.
- d. Perform such other duties as the presbytery or stated clerk may request.

5. The archivist shall

- a. Have custody of all written records of the presbytery (except for the actual minute books) which are seven years old or older.
- b. Arrange to have all the records and reports preserved electronically, and an electronic copy of all records available at each stated meeting of the presbytery.
- c. Ensure minutes of past presbytery meetings are freely available (electronically or otherwise) to any presbyter.
- d. Provide electronic copies of all digital records of Presbytery to the current moderator and stated clerk for their exclusive use.
- e. Receive, process and respond to all requests submitted in writing for use of Presbytery records. Requests for records other than minutes of past meetings shall be evaluated by a committee of three comprised of the current moderator, stated clerk and archivist. They shall determine whether the request can be approved, and what

access should be granted. Such requests shall be reported together with the response to the request in the archivist's report at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

### **Article III – Expenses**

- A. Travel expenses of all presbyters traveling to and from presbytery meetings, committee meetings, and all other proper and necessary presbytery business shall be paid by the treasurer, upon submission of signed travel vouchers according to a formula adopted by the presbytery at its fall stated meeting. All ministers in attendance who labor in calls outside the geographic boundaries of the presbytery shall be reimbursed no more than as if driving from the furthest church in the presbytery.
- B. A one-time \$30.00 gift to be used for the purchase of materials instructive of the pastoral ministry will be given to each man coming under the care of or becoming a licentiate of the presbytery.

### **Article IV – Session Minutes**

Sessions shall submit sessional record books and a copy of those records (electronic or photocopied) to the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee (see Appendix C). The Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee shall review and sign sessional records (see Appendix D). All sessional records shall be made available to the Church Visitation Committee for its review during its visit to the church and at the presbytery meeting in which the sessional records are signed.

### **Article V – Standing Committees**

#### **A. Auditing and Budget Committee**

- 1. Shall consist of three members, none of whom are signatories on the Presbytery's accounts, each to serve for three years, one to be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
- 2. Shall propose to the Presbytery at each fall stated meeting a budget for the Presbytery's operating expenses the following year. Together with the budget the committee shall propose a travel expense mileage reimbursement rate and a per communicant member request from the churches for the support of that budget. Excluded from the Operating Budget will be the work of the Church Extension Committee, the Diaconal Committee, the Youth Committee, and the Camp Westminster portion of the Christian Education Committee's budget.

3. All officers and Standing Committees of the Presbytery shall submit their budget requests to the Auditing and Budget Committee at least six weeks prior to the fall stated meeting of the Presbytery.
4. During the course of any meeting of Presbytery, if the Presbytery creates a committee whose work may entail expenses, the matter of those expenses shall be referred to the Auditing and Budget Committee for consideration in making their fall budget recommendation to the Presbytery, or in recommending a possible amendment to the current year's budget and support request.
5. All treasurers of the Presbytery and of its committees that maintain their own treasuries shall submit their records annually to the Auditing and Budget Committee by the spring stated meeting of each year, and the Auditing and Budget Committee shall provide for an auditing report to be made to the Presbytery at each fall stated meeting.

#### B. Candidates and Credentials

1. Shall consist of five ministers and three elders, each to serve for three years, at least one of each to be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. Shall present all calls and make recommendations concerning them.
3. Shall receive and examine credentials of ministers of other denominations looking toward reception into the presbytery.
4. Shall assign parts of trial, review papers, and make recommendations to presbytery with regard to candidates seeking licensure or ordination.
5. Shall conduct the examination of all candidates for licensure and ordination in all branches of learning, including an examination in The Standards of Government, Discipline and Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These examinations shall be conducted in committee, except those which the Form of Government requires to be conducted on the floor of presbytery.
6. Shall conduct the required examinations on the floor of presbytery or assume responsibility for appointing others to conduct parts of such examinations.
7. Shall supervise those candidates under care of presbytery, making a report at the fall stated meeting.
8. Shall bring to and distribute at each regular meeting of presbytery an up-to-date list of names, addresses and phone numbers of men under care and licentiates.
9. Shall arrange for the theological examination (including all matters relevant to our standards) on the floor of presbytery of ministers coming to the Presbytery of the Midwest from other presbyteries.



10. Shall observe the following time schedule for its conduct: all requests for licensure or ordination and papers are to be submitted to the committee at least one month before any given stated meeting.
11. Shall provide a means through which the presbytery:
  - a. shall implement its rightful oversight of its members, and provide an office through which members of the presbytery may seek counsel regarding their labors.
  - b. Shall receive annual reports required of ministers covered by FG XXVIII:4, and shall present their reports to the presbytery at regular meetings with any appropriate recommendations (as part of its regular report).
  - c. Shall inquire of members who fail to attend three consecutive stated meetings of the presbytery the reason(s) for such absence.
  - d. Shall recommend to the presbytery proper action against those who have become delinquent with respect to their presbyterial responsibilities.
  - e. Shall request those ministers who are members of presbytery without pastoral charge, residing outside the bounds of the presbytery (cf. Form of Government XIV, 1&2) to place themselves under the jurisdiction of the presbytery within whose bounds they reside, in order to promote mutual spiritual welfare among presbyters. This shall not apply to evangelists and missionaries in accordance with the Form of Government XXVII, theological professors, or denominationally employed persons.
12. Shall deal with other relevant matters referred to it by the presbytery.
13. Shall keep on file a copy of “Presbytery Policies and Guidelines on Pastors’ Salaries”; shall communicate with the sessions of vacant churches in order to remind them of their responsibility to be guided by the presbytery policies and guidelines, and to be involved with the preparation of their calls well in advance of their coming to the presbytery for approval; shall consult with candidates regarding the adequacy of the terms in a proposed call (Policies, II:C:3:b); and shall make copies of the policies and guidelines available to sessions or candidates as needed.
14. Shall develop and maintain a syllabus outlining the necessary requirements and duties for all those candidates coming under care, for licensure and ordination. This should include at a minimum: the required theological exams, language exams, required papers (including formatting particulars, content requirements, Etc.) and sermon requirements.

#### C. Christian Education

1. Shall consist of six presbyters divided into three classes, each class serving for three years, with one class elected each year at the fall meeting.

2. Shall promote the work of Christian education within the presbytery.
3. Shall conduct with the approval of presbytery, at least one Bible conference each summer.

#### D. Church Extension

1. Shall consist of three ministers and three elders divided into three classes. Each class shall consist of one minister and one elder, and each shall serve for three years. One class shall be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. Shall oversee the establishment of new churches within the bounds of presbytery.
3. Shall confer with churches seeking admission to presbytery.
4. This committee is authorized to both receive and remove nonministerial members of the regional church on behalf of presbytery.
5. Shall deal with all other relevant matters referred to it by presbytery.
6. Shall submit its books by February 1 to the Auditing and Budget Committee for annual audit.

#### E. Church Visitation

1. Shall consist of twelve presbyters divided into three classes, each class serving for three years, with one class elected each year at the spring stated meeting. Each class shall consist of two ministers and two elders: one minister and elder from the northern states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, or Michigan's Upper Peninsula) and one minister and elder from the southern states (Illinois, Iowa, or Missouri).
2. Shall meet jointly with sessions of each church of the presbytery either by scheduling regular visits or by receiving invitations from sessions. Church visitors shall usually be members of the church visitation committee. However, an alternate special visitation committee may be appointed which shall consist of one minister and two ruling elders. The visitation committee quorum shall consist of two members, at least one being a minister.
3. Shall ask questions and discuss the general health and well-being of the church, chiefly as it is included under the following heads.
  - a. The evangelistic and teaching ministry of the church.
  - b. The administration of the sacraments.
  - c. Administrative discipline.
  - d. Judicial discipline.

- e. Adequacy of the pastor's financial support.
  - f. Review of sessional minutes.
4. The church visitation committee (and special committees appointed by them) shall review with the session the spiritual life of the church, advising and encouraging the session concerning the spiritual welfare of the church. All matters of judicial discipline shall be reviewed. When it is deemed appropriate, and with the approval of the session, the committee may meet with members of the congregation.
  5. The church visitation committee shall report a summary of its visit, especially noting any issues which may be pertinent to the regional church, to the next stated meeting of presbytery, and upon approval by presbytery, shall send a copy of its report to the session involved.
  6. It shall have power to solicit funds from the churches of presbytery for the support of churches and chapels with special needs.
  7. The committee shall inquire as to the reason(s) if absences of elder commissioners from the stated meetings of presbytery continue for three consecutive stated meetings.

#### F. Diaconal

1. Shall consist of two deacons and two presbyters one of whom shall be a minister, and these will be divided into three classes. Each deacon must be in separate classes and each presbyter must be in separate classes. One class shall be elected each year at the spring stated meeting
2. Shall have authority to aid local diaconates.
  - a. Local diaconates shall contact the committee when need arises.
  - b. Any actions taken by the committee must involve all committee members. Decisions made by the committee may be made by telephone or letter, and members will be reimbursed for expense incurred.
3. Shall have authority to seek aid from the denominational committee on diaconal ministries in meeting local needs.
4. Shall seek to discover cases of pastors in need and give them aid as they are able, if they judge that circumstances warrant such aid. Any pastor may request aid directly from the committee.
5. Shall establish a bank account.
  - a. A treasurer shall be elected by the committee, and need not be a member of the committee.

- b. Each local congregation shall be asked to contribute periodically to maintain an approximate balance of \$1000 in the account.
  - c. In cases of extreme need the committee shall appeal to the local congregations for additional funds.
6. Shall present its books for auditing by February 1 to the Auditing and Budget Committee for annual audit.

#### G. Ecumenicity

1. Shall consist of two ministers and one ruling elder, each to serve for three years, one to be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. Shall arrange for the exchange of fraternal delegates with corresponding classes and presbyteries of those denominations which have ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC and whose classes and presbyteries overlap those of the Presbytery of the Midwest.
  - a. Fraternal delegates will be exchanged no more than once a year with any classis or presbytery.
  - b. Presbyteries or classes corresponding to the location of stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Midwest will be given primary consideration for this exchange process.
3. Shall be responsible for developing closer ties with other denominations.
4. Shall conduct studies to clarify for presbytery the biblical principles of church unity.
5. Shall gather information to help presbytery clarify similarities and differences between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the denominations specified in article V:G:2 of these standing rules.

#### H. Foreign Missions

1. Shall consist of at least four presbyters, at least one of whom shall be a minister, each to serve for three years. One class shall be elected each year at the spring stated meeting. Each Hub of the churches participating in the Hub-Spoke program shall have one representative on the presbytery's Foreign Missions Committee.
2. Shall promote interest and support for foreign missions among the congregations of the presbytery.
3. Shall confer with the denominational committee for foreign missions regarding the needs of the missionaries.

4. Shall deal with all other relevant matters referred to it by the presbytery.
5. Shall meet at least annually.

#### I. Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records

1. Shall consist of three ministers and three ruling elders, each to serve for three years, one of each to be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. Shall be authorized to assign sessional records to similar subcommittees appointed by it so that each record shall be examined by one minister and one ruling elder. The committee shall make a written report to the presbytery of recommendations to each record examined after conference, if possible, with a representative of each affected session.
3. Shall report to the presbytery on absences and requested leaves of absence with recommendation on whether each requested leave of absence should be granted.
4. Shall inform ministerial absentees and sessional absentees of presbytery's actions on their absence and/or their request for excuse. If any minister or session is absent, with or without leave, for three consecutive stated meetings, this committee shall inform the Candidates Committee (in the case of a ministerial member) or the Visitation Committee (in the case of a sessional representative).

#### J. Overtures and Papers

1. Shall consist of three ministers and two ruling elders, each to serve for three years, in three classes, two classes with a minister and a ruling elder, and a third class with a minister. One class shall be elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. Shall review, report, and, if necessary, make recommendations to Presbytery at Stated meetings, and, when necessary, at Special Meetings on each communication referred to it by the stated clerk, the moderator, or Presbytery.

#### K. Youth

1. Shall consist of six presbyters to include at least three ministers. These shall be divided into three classes, each class serving for three years, with one class elected each year at the spring stated meeting.
2. This committee shall be responsible for developing and promoting programs which will foster youth evangelism, edification and inter-church fellowship.

3. This committee shall oversee Presbytery youth camps and conferences. In addition this committee shall encourage, publicize and coordinate youth camps and conferences not directly overseen by the presbytery.

L. Elections shall be conducted as follows:

1. Nominations shall be from the floor and elections shall be by ballot, except when the number of nominees does not exceed the number of vacancies.
2. When the presbytery initially forms the classes of a committee, the nominee(s) with the highest majority shall be elected to the longest term, and the nominee(s) with the third highest majority to the shortest term.
3. In case of resignation, death, or removal from the jurisdiction of the presbytery, an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.
4. Service on each committee shall be limited to three consecutive terms. A presbyter may be elected again to the same committee following this time after at least one year off the committee.

#### **Article VI – The Docket**

Normally the business of the stated meeting shall be according to the following docket.

- A. Devotional service
- B. Call to order
- C. Constituting prayer
- D. Roll call , introductions, and seating of corresponding members
- E. Appointment of parliamentarian
- F. Presentation and approval of minutes  
(corrections are to be submitted to the stated clerk in writing, if possible, before the meeting)
- G. Presentation and disposition of communications  
(each summarized by the stated clerk in writing, and read aloud in full by him or the committee to which it is referred, or may be distributed in writing)
- H. Adoption of docket
- I. Appointment of temporary and special committees
- J. Reception of ministers
- K. Report of the committee on arrangements
- L. Reports of and elections to the standing committees  
(items a through i will be scheduled on a rotating basis, with the committee which first reported at the prior meeting reporting last at the current meeting. Special requests can be docketed at the discretion of the moderator and the stated clerk)
  1. Auditing and Budget (with elections in spring)
  2. Candidates and Credentials (with elections in spring)

- 3. Christian Education (with elections in fall)
- 4. Church Extension (with elections in spring)
- 5. Church Visitation (with elections in spring)
- 6. Diaconal (with elections in spring)
- 7. Ecumenicity (with elections in spring)
- 8. Foreign Missions (with elections in spring)
- 9. Overtures and Papers (with elections in spring)
- 10. Youth (with elections in spring)
- 11. Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records (with elections in spring)
  
- M. Report of the stated clerk (with election in spring of even years)
- N. Report of the treasurer (with election in spring of odd years)
- O. Report of the archivist (with election in spring of even years)
- P. Report of ministerial advisors
- Q. Report of special committees
- R. Miscellaneous business
- S. Election of the moderator (fall meeting)
- T. Affirm the place of the next stated meeting, and set the place of following stated meeting
- U. Adjournment

### **Article VII – Exceptions and Amendments**

The provisions of any of these standing rules, with the exception of this article VII, may be set aside temporarily by a two-thirds vote of presbytery.

These standing rules may be amended at any stated meeting by a two-thirds vote of presbytery, provided a written notice of the proposed amendment has been given at the previous stated meeting and is incorporated in the record of the minutes sent to the ministers and sessions.

### **Article VIII – Trustees**

- A. The moderator, vice-moderator, stated clerk, assistant clerk and archivist shall constitute the trustees of the presbytery. Additional persons may be appointed trustees according to the procedures of the presbytery for electing officers.
  
- B. The term of office of trustees shall coincide with their term of office as officers of the presbytery, or in the case of non-officers, for a term designated by the presbytery, unless terminated earlier.
  
- C. The trustees shall have the care, custody and control of the real and personal property of the presbytery, subject to the direction of the presbytery, and the trustees may receive, sell or convey such property subject to the direction of the presbytery, and as provided by, and pursuant to, the laws of the state of Illinois.

- D. The trustees may designate persons who are not trustees to serve as custodians, caretakers, a treasurer, and an assistant treasurer for the care, custody and control of the property of the presbytery; and the trustees may conduct their business through rules and procedures that they may from time to time adopt.
- E. The trustees, however, are responsible to the presbytery, and shall report and account to the presbytery in the manner and at the time which the presbytery may direct. The presbytery shall have the right to audit and investigate the actions, records and books of the trustees through committees of the presbytery, or by specially-appointed outside auditors and accountants.
- F. The trustees shall maintain documents and records and keep suitable books of account for all property under their care, custody and control.

### **Article IX – Situs of the Presbytery**

- 1. The bounds of the presbytery shall include those determined by the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. They include Illinois, Iowa (except Lyon, Sioux, Osceola, and O’Brien Counties), the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri (except Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties) and Wisconsin.
- 2. The presbytery shall be a legal resident of, and incorporated pursuant to, the laws of the state of Illinois. The address of the presbytery for receiving legal notices shall be

The Presbytery of the Midwest  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
1401 Naperville Road  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

### **Article X – Name of the Presbytery**

The name of the presbytery shall be The Presbytery of the Midwest, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### **Article XI – Articles of Incorporation**

The articles of incorporation for The Presbytery of the Midwest, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, shall be those adopted by the meeting of presbytery held October 3, 1981 at Tinley Park, Illinois.



## **Appendix A – Rules for Keeping Presbyterian Minutes**

1. The minutes of the presbytery shall be kept in lock-type record books with numbered pages.
2. The minutes shall be typewritten or printed, or reproductions from typewritten or printed masters, and shall be neat and legible.
3. The minutes shall state the date and place of each meeting, and the times of convening and adjourning.
4. If a meeting is held at a date, time or place other than that for which it is called, such facts shall be recorded in the minutes, together with a statement of the reason(s) therefor.
5. The name of the person serving the meeting as moderator shall be determinable from the minutes.
6. If the stated clerk is not present, a clerk pro tem shall be selected, and his selection shall be indicated in the minutes.
7. The minutes shall state the names of those present at each meeting, using the following categories.
  - a. Ministers.
  - b. Elder commissioners (with indication as to the churches they represent).
  - c. Alternate elder commissioners (with indication as to the churches they represent).
8. The names of absent ministerial members and of churches not represented by elder commissioners shall be indicated in the minutes of stated meetings.
9. The portion(s) of the call for a special meeting stating the purpose of the meeting shall be recorded verbatim in the minutes.
10. The minutes shall identify those who have offered opening and closing prayer at each meeting.
11. The minutes of each meeting shall be approved by the presbytery at the same or a subsequent meeting, such approval being recorded in the minutes. When minutes of a previous meeting (or meetings) are approved, the date(s) of said meeting(s) shall be given.
12. The minutes shall state that which is required to describe intelligibly the motions adopted and the business transacted; the terms of all ministerial calls as described in the Form of Government, chapter XXII:9, the entire call shall be recorded in the minutes; and such additional information as the presbytery deems desirable for historical purposes.
13. Each main motion shall normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motions to which

they pertain. Main motions may be recorded in the same paragraph if they are closely related and pertain to the same item of business.

14. The minutes of the meetings of the presbytery shall appear in the minute book in the order in which the meetings occur. When a previous action of the presbytery is referred to, the date of the meeting in which the action occurred shall be given.
15. Insofar as possible, erasures, interlineations and footnotes shall be avoided.
16. Documents and their specific location may be referred to in the minutes, and filed separately in a file maintained by the stated clerk; however, such documents shall be included in the minutes only by transcription.
17. The stated clerk shall be responsible for the custody of the minutes of the presbytery, and he shall be responsible for the presentation at each stated meeting of the minutes or such portion thereof as the presbytery may direct.
18. The minutes of each meeting of the presbytery shall be signed by the clerk of the meeting.
19. The stated clerk shall be responsible for the presentation to the general assembly for approval of all minutes of the presbytery which have been approved by the presbytery and not previously approved by the general assembly. All other minutes of presbytery to which specific reference is made in the minutes submitted to the general assembly for approval shall be submitted for the purpose of information. Presbytery minutes shall be placed in the hands of the stated clerk of the assembly no later than the start of the assembly's recess for advisory committee meetings.
20. A copy of the rules for keeping presbyterial minutes shall be kept with the minutes of the presbytery.
21. A copy of the standing rules of the presbytery, corrected as amended, shall be kept with the minutes.
22. The presbytery shall record in its minutes any exceptions taken to sessional minutes in its annual review of those minutes.

### **Appendix B – Procedure for Selecting Commissioners to General Assembly**

1. The choice of ministerial commissioners to general assembly shall be made at the stated fall meeting of presbytery and at that meeting the churches advised of their eligibility to select ruling elder commissioners. The selection of commissioners shall be concluded at the stated spring meeting of presbytery to replace any unable to attend.
2. Selection of ministerial commissioners to the general assembly.

- a. One-half of the commissioners shall be selected by turn from the top of the current selection list of ministerial members of presbytery. Newly enrolled ministers shall be placed at the bottom of the current selection list.
  - b. The remaining commissioners shall be elected by presbytery.
  - c. A foreign missionary ministerial member of presbytery shall automatically be elected to attend general assembly once during his furlough.
  - d. Alternates of those chosen by turn shall be those next in order from the current selection list. Alternates for those elected by presbytery shall be elected up to 50% of the total commissioners. The alternate receiving the highest number of votes shall be first alternate, the one receiving the next highest, second alternate, etc.
  - e. Upon the adjournment of the general assembly a new selection list for the next general assembly shall go into effect. The new selection list shall be drawn up from the current selection list in this manner: commissioners selected by turn or elected who are unable to attend general assembly shall be placed at the bottom of the current selection list in the order their names appeared on the list but before those who do attend. Commissioners who do attend shall be placed in the order their names appeared on the list below those who were unable to attend. This then becomes the current selection list for the next general assembly.
3. Selection of ruling elder commissioners to the general assembly.
- a. This selection shall be made by the sessions from churches entitled to send commissioners. The selection of eligible churches shall be made from the top of the current selection list of churches and shall be announced at the fall stated meeting of Presbytery.
  - b. Alternate eligible churches shall be selected from the remaining churches in the order in which they appear on the list.
  - c. Newly enrolled churches shall be placed at the bottom of the current selection list.
  - d. The sessions of eligible churches shall notify the stated clerk in writing within 30 days following the fall stated meeting of their choices of commissioners or of their inability to send any. The stated clerk shall then notify the alternate churches which thus become eligible to select commissioners. These churches will then have 30 days to notify the stated clerk in writing of their choices of commissioners or of their inability to send any. After that time, the stated clerk shall fill any remaining vacancies with any available ruling elders on a first come, first appointed basis. The presbytery shall finalize the list of ruling elder commissioners and alternate ruling elder commissioners at the stated spring meeting of presbytery and shall certify them to the general assembly by the stated clerk of presbytery. Should any vacancies arise subsequent to the stated spring meeting, the stated clerk shall be authorized to fill them.

- e. Upon the adjournment of general assembly a new selection list shall be drawn up from the current selection list of churches in this manner: eligible churches unable to send a ruling elder commissioner shall be placed at the bottom of the current selection list in the order the churches appeared on the list but before those who do send commissioners. Churches which do send commissioners shall be placed in the order their churches appeared on the list below those churches which were unable to send commissioners. This then becomes the current selection list for the next general assembly.

### **Appendix C – Rules for Keeping and Submitting Sessional Records**

1. The records shall be:

- a. Legibly written or typed
- b. In chronological order
- c. On numbered pages

Erasures, interlineations and footnotes shall be avoided. A format where each item or paragraph is numbered is encouraged.

2. The record for each meeting shall state:

- a. Time and place of the meeting
- b. Names of all members, indicating whether present and absent, and all guests
- c. That the meeting was opened and closed with prayer
- d. The name of the moderator of the meeting
- e. That records from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

The record referred to should be listed by date. If any corrections are made, these may be shown in the record of the current meeting when they were made, or the original record may be corrected.

- f. All votes and proceedings which are necessary to give a complete history of the church, including
  - (1) Election of elders and deacons
  - (2) Changes in actively serving ruling elders and deacons
  - (3) Reception and dismissal of members
  - (4) Dates of celebration of the Lord's Supper
  - (5) Baptism of infants and adults
  - (6) Marriages and deaths
  - (7) Actions of church discipline, including restorations
  - (8) The appointment of the elder commissioner to presbytery.

3. The full name of applicants for church membership shall be recorded, including:

- a. Baptismal status  
[NOTE: When a covenant child becomes a communicant member, “X, covenant child, (son of) (daughter of) Y” is appropriate. “Covenant child” indicates baptismal status.]
  - b. For married females, the maiden name and indication of husband’s name or an indication of “widow of”  
[NOTE: When a wife is received with the husband, “X and Y (last name), both baptized” is sufficient indication of the marital relationship.]
  - c. For minors, an indication of whether male or female (if not apparent from the given name) and the parents’ name  
[NOTE: When children are received with parent(s), “X and Y, A (son), B (daughter) (last name), all baptized” is sufficient indication of the family relationship.]
4. All records of members joining by letter of transfer shall state from what church the members came.
  5. All records of dismissal shall state to what congregation the member is recommended.
  6. The record of each meeting shall be signed by the clerk of that meeting.
  7. When previous actions of the session are referred to, the page on which it is recorded and/or the date (and paragraph number if available) shall be cited.
  8. Once each year, at the end of that year’s records, a facsimile of the statistical report to the denomination shall be inserted. This statistical report shall be on numbered pages.
  9. The record book of the session shall include formal records and proceedings of all congregation meetings. Any other records (e.g., corporation meeting records) necessary to record any changes in the congregation’s support of its pastor(s), and any changes in the terms of the call shall also be included. All such records shall be on numbered pages.
  10. The session shall take note in its records of exceptions taken by presbytery to its records as presented. A letter from the clerk of session to the stated clerk of presbytery shall normally be sent within two months of the presbytery meeting where such exceptions were taken, and shall include:
    - a. The exception taken, date of presbytery meeting and item number in presbytery minutes.
    - b. The correction or explanation adopted by the session to rectify the exception.
  11. Approximately half of the sessions of the presbytery shall submit their sessional records to the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee prior to the spring stated meeting. The remaining sessions shall do the same prior to the fall stated meeting. The Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee shall maintain the submission schedule.

12. Copies of sessional records (electronic or photocopied) shall be provided to the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee no later than three months prior to the stated meeting at which they are scheduled to be signed. The sessional record book itself shall be provided to the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee at the stated meeting. The sessional record book shall be identical in content to the copy submitted except by prior agreement of the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee.
13. If any session fails to produce its minutes in both copy and book form at the required times, it shall do so according to the submission schedule for the next stated meeting.

#### **Appendix D – Rules for Review of Sessional Records**

1. At the meeting where the sessional records are reviewed, a member of the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee shall sign and date the last reviewed page of the records book to indicate presbytery review.
2. The Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee shall use the Sessional Records Exceptions and Notations Form to make its written report to the presbytery. The information from these forms will be included in the minutes of presbytery. These forms are available from the stated clerk. The following definitions will be used:
  - a. Notations: typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation, non-prejudicial misstatements of fact, and failure to provide sufficient information or identification.
  - b. Exceptions: violations of presbytery's Rules for Keeping Sessional Records, and actions which appear not to conform to the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
3. After the report of the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee, the presbytery will vote on the recommendation of the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee. The following indications will be used to indicate scope of approval:
  - a. Approved: Records are approved; no action by the session is required.
  - b. Approved with exceptions and/or notations: Records are approved, but the session must respond as required in Appendix C:10.
  - c. Not approved: The records are not approved. In such cases, detailed and specific requirements, as explained on the Sessional Records Exceptions and Notations Form, must be reviewed, and the records resubmitted at the next presbytery meeting.
4. Should the presbytery desire to see the records book of any particular session, it shall be presented at the next stated meeting.

5. Should any session desire to challenge any exceptions or notations made by the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee, it should formally communicate this to the stated clerk. The session should then bring its records book to the next stated meeting. A temporary committee shall be erected during the stated meeting to review the challenge. Should the challenge be upheld, the report of the Leaves of Absence and Sessional Records Committee will be amended.