

# THE STANDING RULES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

## INTRODUCTION

Peace River Presbytery is a member presbytery of the Synod of South Atlantic and the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is governed by the Constitution of that denomination and appropriate civil law.

Chapter III of the *Form of Government* of the *Constitution* describes the roles of councils of the church. It informs us that such bodies have only ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the purpose of serving Jesus Christ and declaring and obeying His will in relation to truth and service, order and discipline.

Composed of laypersons and both ruling elders and teaching elders, the councils have power to establish plans and rules for the worship, mission, government and discipline of the church and to do those things necessary for the peace, purity, unity and progress of the church under the will of Christ. They have responsibility for the leadership, guidance, and government of that portion of the church that is under their jurisdiction. The councils are separate and independent, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council.

## ARTICLE I. NAME, PURPOSE, AUTHORITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL JURISDICTION

- 1.1 The name of this council shall be Peace River Presbytery, which is a Presbytery of the Synod of South Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 1.2 The purpose of the Presbytery shall be the definition and duties set forth in the *Book of Order, Form of Government* of the *Constitution* and expressed in the Mission/Vision Statement of the Presbytery.
- 1.3 The Presbytery and its agencies shall be governed in their meetings by the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, the *Administrative Manual* which includes the *Standing Rules*, and where none of these apply, by *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.
- 1.4 The geographical jurisdiction of the Presbytery extends throughout the counties of Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry (except Clewiston Presbyterian Church), Lee, Manatee, and Sarasota in the State of Florida.

## ARTICLE II. STANDING RULES AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

- 2.1 The *Standing Rules* shall establish the basic structures of the Presbytery and provide for its functioning during and between meetings. They declare the mutual expectations of the churches and their Presbytery respecting the particular system of order by which they agree to govern and be governed.
- 2.2 The *Standing Rules* may be amended at any Stated Meeting of the Presbytery by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the Steering Committee and disseminated with the published agenda of that Stated Meeting.
- 2.3 The *Standing Rules* may be suspended for a particular Stated Meeting of Presbytery by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting at that meeting.
- 2.4 The *Administrative Manual* shall establish guidelines for the internal operation of the structures of Presbytery in carrying out the mission of Presbytery. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for seeing that the manual is produced and for bringing recommendations to Presbytery for its revision.
- 2.5 The policy content of the *Administrative Manual* may be amended at any Stated Meeting of the Presbytery by a majority vote of the members of Presbytery present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the Steering Committee and disseminated with the published agenda of that Stated Meeting.
- 2.6 Specific requirements of the *Administrative Manual*, with the exception of Chapter 1 and Appendix A, may be suspended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a Stated Meeting of Presbytery.
- 2.7 The Stated Clerk, General Presbyter, and Moderator of Presbytery shall function as a committee to appoint Investigating Committees as the need arises per the *Book of Order*.

- 2.8 Committees, Commissions, Teams, Task Forces or Work Groups of the Presbytery may conduct meetings by teleconference or video conference in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order* provided that all parties have an opportunity for simultaneous aural communications.

### **ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

- 3.1 The *Book of Order* reaffirms that the Presbytery is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within a certain district. The voting membership of Presbytery shall consist of enrolled teaching elders, ruling elders elected by the sessions of churches of the Presbytery in proportion to teaching elders as prescribed in the *Book of Order*, a representative, ordinarily the Moderator of the Steering Committee, Members at Large of the Steering Committee, a representative, ordinarily the Moderators of Steering Committee Teams and a representative, ordinarily the Moderators of Presbytery Committees who are ruling elders and not otherwise enrolled.
- 3.2 Each teaching elder, as a member of Presbytery, unless Honorably Retired, is expected to participate in the full life of the Presbytery, including but not limited to, attending each Stated Meeting of Presbytery or presenting to the Stated Clerk on or before the day of the Stated Meeting a request for an excused absence, late arrival, or departure before adjournment. If able, Honorably Retired teaching elder members of Presbytery are encouraged and expected to participate in meetings of the Presbytery.
- 3.3 Each ruling elder elected Moderator of Presbytery shall be enrolled as a member of Presbytery for the term of office, whether or not commissioned by a session.
- 3.4 The following, if not commissioners to or members of Presbytery, shall be seated as corresponding members with floor privileges of voice without vote: members of the Steering Committee; moderators of task forces and commissions (or their designees); the Presbytery Stated Clerk and Treasurer; executives or representatives of Synod and General Assembly and any visitors accorded that privilege by Presbytery.
- 3.5 Any member of the Steering Committee, moderator of a task force or commission, Moderator of the Coordinating Team of the Presbyterian Women, or president of a board of a covenant partner (or their designees) who is presenting a report to Presbytery and is not a commissioner or otherwise enrolled shall have the privilege of moving consideration of the report and its recommendations.
- 3.6 During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery, Certified Christian Educators shall be granted the privilege of the floor with voice only at all Presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

### **ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY**

- 4.1 The Presbytery shall ordinarily have quarterly Stated Meetings. The schedule of meetings for the ensuing year will be set by the Steering Committee at a Stated Meeting no later than the third quarter of the preceding year. The Steering Committee may change the date of a particular Stated Meeting upon notifying the members and sessions thirty (30) days in advance.
- 4.2 The quorum for a Stated Meeting shall be forty (40) members, at least twenty (20) of whom shall be teaching elders and at least twenty (20) of whom shall be ruling elders.
- 4.3 The Moderator shall call a Special Meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches. Should the Moderator be unable to act, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both Moderator and Stated Clerk are unable to act, any three teaching elders and three ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting.
- 4.4 The quorum for a Special Meeting shall be twenty-four (24) members, at least twelve (12) of whom shall be teaching elders and at least twelve (12) of whom shall be ruling elders, representing at least ten (10) different churches of the Presbytery.
- 4.5 Orderly process requires that all business coming to the Presbytery meeting be in the commissioners' hands in sufficient time prior to the meeting to permit study and deliberation.

- 4.5.1 Therefore, ordinarily all committee, team, task force, commission, or other reports shall be in the hands of the Steering Committee at the Steering Committee meeting prior to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.
- 4.5.2 Ordinarily, overtures from sessions and other official communications shall be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days before the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.
- 4.5.3 Any new business to be introduced on the day of the Stated Meeting must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 30 minutes before the call to order.
- 4.6 In order to ensure an equitable balance of teaching elders and ruling elders, the following numbers of Ruling Elder Commissioners per congregation are authorized for each Presbytery Stated or Special Meeting:
  - Congregations of up to 750 members are entitled to two (2) Ruling Elder Commissioners;
  - Congregations of 751 to 1500 members are entitled to three (3) Ruling Elder Commissioners;
  - Congregations of 1501 or more members are entitled to four (4) Ruling Elder Commissioners.
- 4.6.1 The number of members referred to in Section 4.6 is the number of confirmed members reported by each congregation in its annual statistical report of the previous year.
- 4.7 Due to the large number of honorably retired teaching elders within Peace River Presbytery, the Stated Clerk shall use the average number of honorably retired members who have attended Presbytery meetings in the previous year when preparing a report to the Presbytery on the ruling elder/teaching elder balance and this average shall be used when ensuring that a balance is maintained.

#### **ARTICLE V. OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY**

- 5.1 The Presbytery shall elect the following officers: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Stated Clerk and Treasurer.
- 5.2 The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected at the last Stated Meeting of Presbytery of the year, and be installed on that day to begin service the first day of January to serve for one year. During the term of office the Moderator shall also serve as the Vice-Moderator of the Steering Committee. The Moderator shall serve according to the provisions of the *Book of Order*, and the *Administrative Manual* which includes the *Standing Rules* in Chapter 1. In the event of the absence of the Moderator the office shall be temporarily filled by the Vice-Moderator or the immediate past Moderator.
- 5.3 A Vice-Moderator shall be elected at the last Stated Meeting of Presbytery of the year, for a term of one year beginning January 1. The Vice-Moderator may succeed the Moderator should that position become vacant before the term is completed. The Vice-Moderator shall ordinarily be elected the next Moderator.
- 5.4 The office of Moderator shall ordinarily be filled alternately by ruling elders and teaching elders.
- 5.5 The Presbytery shall elect a Stated Clerk to serve for a term of three (3) years, who shall be eligible for re-election. Election of the Stated Clerk shall occur prior to expiration of term or upon vacating of the office. The Stated Clerk shall serve as secretary of the Steering Committee.
- 5.6 The Presbytery shall elect a Treasurer for a term of three (3) years, who shall be eligible for re-election. Election of the Treasurer shall occur prior to expiration of term or upon vacating of the office. The Treasurer of the Presbytery shall serve as Treasurer of the Presbytery Corporation.

#### **ARTICLE VI. PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF PRESBYTERY**

- 6.1 The professional staff of Presbytery shall consist of:
  - 6.1.1 the called General Presbyter who is called, elected and installed by the Presbytery,
  - 6.1.2 the Stated Clerk who is elected to a three-year term by the Presbytery and eligible for successive terms,
  - 6.2.3 the Treasurer who is elected to a three-year term by the Presbytery and eligible for successive terms,
  - 6.2.4 and such additional installed associates as shall become necessary to implement the mission of Presbytery. Authorization and election of such associates shall not be given until adoption by the Presbytery of position description(s) provided by the team and committee charged with human resources and administrative matters for inclusion in the *Administrative Manual*.

- 6.2 The general requirements of Presbytery's professional staff shall be:
  - 6.2.1 To be visible and accessible to the constituency.
  - 6.2.2 To work in accordance with the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities approved by Presbytery.
  - 6.2.3 To have pastoral concern for the churches and church professionals.
  - 6.2.4 To combine church related experience and administrative ability to enable the leadership within the structures of Presbytery to carry out the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of Presbytery.
  - 6.2.5 To comply with all rules of the Presbytery's *Administrative Manual* and the *Book of Order*.

## **ARTICLE VII. STEERING COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 Function
  - 7.1.1 The primary function of the Steering Committee is to help convene, coordinate, generate, discern and strategically think about the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of the Presbytery.
- 7.2 Composition
  - 7.2.1 The Steering Committee shall be composed of the following: a representative, ordinarily the moderator, of each Steering Committee Team; one (1) representative of the Committee on Ministry; and three (3) members-at-large, nominated by the Nominations and Representation Committee for election by the Presbytery for three (3) year terms beginning January 1, with the privilege of re-election to one (1) additional term, the Moderator of Presbytery, the Vice-Moderator of Presbytery, the Stated Clerk, the Treasurer, the General Presbyter, and any Associate Presbyters.
  - 7.2.2 One of the three (3) at-large members shall be nominated annually as Moderator by the Human Resources Team for election by the Presbytery and may not serve more than three (3) consecutive years in that capacity; co-moderators may be elected from the at-large members with the same three (3) consecutive years limitation.
- 7.3 The Steering Committee shall have the following responsibilities for the coordination of the mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of the Presbytery:
  - 7.3.1 To be informed of recommendations of committees, teams, and task forces and to refer recommendations to the committees, teams and task forces when necessary. Presbytery Committees report directly to the Presbytery and the role of the Steering Committee in those instances is limited to assisting in organizing the reports and motions in a way that will ensure meetings are conducted in a decent and orderly manner.
  - 7.3.2 To institute a process by which Presbytery may establish its goals, determine its priorities and evaluate its mission and vision, values and strategic directions including action steps for implementing the recommendations of such a process.
  - 7.3.3 To originate programs and issues for presentation to Presbytery.
  - 7.3.4 To consider communications to Presbytery, including those of higher governing bodies and to make all necessary recommendations to Presbytery.
  - 7.3.5 To preview and coordinate all business coming before Presbytery.
  - 7.3.6 To recommend to Presbytery the date, time and place for meetings of Presbytery.
  - 7.3.7 To recommend changes in the policies in the *Administrative Manual*.
  - 7.3.8 To nominate the members of the Human Resources Team.
  - 7.3.9 To act on an issue in the case of an emergency or urgency requiring a decision between Stated Meetings of Presbytery before a Special Meeting of Presbytery can be called and to report all such actions at the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery to be ratified.
  - 7.3.10 To set up processes to evaluate our organizational design and committee functioning that nurtures the Presbytery's ability to build on its strengths, maintain its wholeness, fulfill its mission/vision statement and address challenges it is facing.

- 7.4 No action of the Steering Committee shall be counter to the *Book of Order*. Committees, teams, and task forces of Presbytery shall have the right to appeal decisions or recommendations of the Steering Committee at the meeting of Presbytery to which they are reported.
- 7.5 The quorum of the Steering Committee shall be a majority of its membership.
- 7.6 The Steering Committee shall have authority to create task forces within its purview and name their membership. The creation of a task force, its responsibilities and the names of its members shall be reported at the next meeting of Presbytery. A task force shall function no longer than twelve months without being reconstituted.
- 7.7 The Steering Committee shall ordinarily meet at its discretion between Stated meetings. One such meeting shall ordinarily be at least four weeks prior to the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery to set the docket, among other Steering Committee business.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. STEERING COMMITTEE TEAMS**

- 8.1 The term of service for Steering Committee Teams shall be three (3) years beginning January 1, with the privilege of re-election to one (1) additional term. One-half or more of a term shall be counted as a full term. Ordinarily members shall be placed in three (3) classes of equal number.
  - 8.1.1 When an elected member of a team shall fail to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without an excused absence, that body shall declare the position to be vacant and so inform the Human Resources Team. Where a member of a team finds it necessary to resign, this person shall immediately notify the moderator of the team on which the person serves.
- 8.2 The membership on teams shall consist of laypersons or ruling elders and teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. Finance Team lay persons shall be ruling elders. The Stated Clerk and General Presbyter shall be ex officio members.
- 8.3 Teams shall have a moderator and vice-moderator, or co-moderators, nominated by the Nominations and Representation Committee unless otherwise specified by the Standing Rules. Moderators and vice-moderators are elected annually and may not serve more than three (3) consecutive years in that capacity.
- 8.4 Organization, number and dates of meetings of teams
  - 8.4.1 Teams shall organize themselves internally except where specified otherwise. They shall have authority to create task forces within their purview and name the membership upon approval by the Steering Committee and by the Finance Team if there are any budgetary considerations.
    - 8.4.1.1 The creation of a task force, its responsibilities and the names of its members shall be reported at the next meeting of Presbytery. A task force shall function no longer than twelve (12) months without being reconstituted.
  - 8.4.2 Meeting dates for the ensuing year shall be set at each team's annual orientation and planning meeting. Meetings shall normally be held at least quarterly, sufficiently ahead of the meetings of the Steering Committee to provide time for review by the Steering Committee of their written reports to Presbytery.
  - 8.4.3 The quorum for meetings shall be one-third (1/3) of the voting members except for the Finance Team which shall be two thirds (2/3) of its nine (9) voting members.
  - 8.4.4 Specific services growing out of each team's functions, guidelines for its work, and procedures for implementation shall become a part of the *Administrative Manual*, Chapter 2, upon approval by Presbytery. Each Team shall review and revise, if needed, its chapter of the *Administrative Manual* and *Standing Rules* at the beginning of each year.
  - 8.4.5 Steering Committee Teams report to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee.

## 8.5 Steering Committee Teams

- 8.5.1 **Finance Team.** The responsibilities of this team shall be:
- 8.5.1.1 Providing oversight, planning and management of the funds and properties owned by Peace River Presbytery, always subject to the direction of the Presbytery.
  - 8.5.1.2 Preparing and recommending to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee the annual operating budget for the Presbytery and communicating to the congregations the annual operating budget for the Presbytery.
  - 8.5.1.3 Facilitating training for congregational treasurers and stewardship education opportunities for congregations.
  - 8.5.1.4 Providing financial administrative resources to all the ministry areas of the Presbytery.
  - 8.5.1.5 Serving as the Trustees of Peace River Presbytery, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation, under the provisions of the *Book of Order*.
    - 8.5.1.5.1 Under the provisions of the corporation *By-laws*, there shall be nine (9) voting members serving as the Trustees, at least four (4) of which are ruling elders.
    - 8.5.1.5.2 The Moderator of the Finance Team shall be elected as President of the corporation.
  - 8.5.1.6 Serving as a commission of the Presbytery to consider and decide requests for approval and/or guarantee of loans to congregations as required by the *Book of Order*; additionally, to consider and decide requests to sell or lease real property not used for worship held in trust by congregations of the Presbytery under the provisions of the *Book of Order*, subject to any exceptions enacted by the Presbytery. All such actions shall be reported to the Presbytery at the next Stated Meeting. They may, at their discretion, forward to the Presbytery a loan guarantee that might benefit from the consideration and vote of the whole Presbytery.
- 8.5.2 **Outreach and Nurture Team.** This team (9 members) shall be responsible for:
- 8.5.2.1 Helping the Presbytery live into a missional understanding of being the church.
  - 8.5.2.2 Creating, maintaining, supporting and sustaining partnerships of congregations around areas of congregational vitality, church growth, mission, and evangelism.
  - 8.5.2.3 Assessing geographical areas of Presbytery where new worshipping communities or new churches may be initiated and provide oversight.
  - 8.5.2.4 Reviewing all Blessing Grant applications, evaluate requests in the context of the Blessing Grant Program and make recommendation for awards to be granted to the Steering Committee.
  - 8.5.2.5 Being a catalyst and convener in the creation of mission partnerships between and among congregations in response to global mission needs; building awareness and support.
  - 8.5.2.6 Overseeing the Peace River – Matanzas, Cuba partnership. (delayed until 2021 after other structural options can be considered.)
  - 8.5.2.7 Coordinating the relationship with the covenant partnerships of the Presbytery (e.g. The Presbyterian Homes and Housing Foundation of Florida, Inc., The Presbyterian Camp and Conference Ministries of Southwest Florida, Inc., The Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, Inc. and The Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network).

- 8.5.3 **Human Resources Team.** Ordinarily the moderator of the Human Resources Team shall be a lay person. In the event that the Team uses a co-moderator model, it would ordinarily be desirable for both a teaching elder and lay person be represented. This team (9 members) shall be responsible for:
- 8.5.3.1 Assisting the General Presbyter in his or her role regarding human resource matters, including professional and leadership development of staff and volunteers and in making any recommendations to the Steering Committee.
  - 8.5.3.2 Nurturing a culture that values relationship building and mutual respect. Ensuring that new committee or team members are properly onboarded and members completing terms of service are appropriately recognized with appreciation.
  - 8.5.3.3 Conducting annual performance reviews of the General Presbyter, and Presbytery's elected staff in consultation with the General Presbyter.
  - 8.5.3.4 Preparing and recommending the annual compensation of the Presbytery staff to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee.
  - 8.5.3.5 Preparing and recommending, upon discussion with the General Presbyter, human resource policies for the Presbytery staff to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee.
  - 8.5.3.6 Serving as a resource to the churches of Presbytery in human resource matters.
  - 8.5.3.7 Administering the Presbytery's policies as defined in the *Administrative Manual* on the process for nominating and electing commissioners to the General Assembly and to the Synod.
  - 8.5.3.8 Nominating members of committees, teams, commissions and boards as required including the moderators and vice-moderators, or co-moderators, at the last Stated Meeting of Presbytery of the year.
  - 8.5.3.9 No person shall ordinarily serve in more than two (2) elective positions in Presbytery at the same time.
  - 8.5.3.10 With the exception of the Steering Committee, no members of the professional or office staff shall serve on any of Presbytery's committees or teams except in an advisory capacity.
  - 8.5.3.11 Vacancies are to be filled by the Human Resources Team as they occur by submitting nominees for replacement at any properly called meeting of Presbytery.
- 8.5.4 **Communication, Connection and Community Team.**  
The responsibilities of this team (9 members) shall be:
- 8.5.4.1 Nurturing the Presbytery's understanding and functioning as a learning community.
  - 8.5.4.2 Encouraging, maintaining and supporting the development of meaningful and value-added relational connections, conversations and gatherings among congregations, sessions and both teaching and ruling elders.
  - 8.5.4.3 In consultation with staff, the Steering Committee and Presbytery Committees, developing and planning the themes, locations and speakers for our Stated Presbytery meetings.
  - 8.5.4.4 To develop a communication strategy for the Presbytery; its philosophy and methodology for building community.
  - 8.5.4.5 To provide communication linkage between Presbyterian Women and the Presbytery.

- 8.5.6 **Mision Peniel Team.** The responsibilities of this team (9 members) shall be to:
- 8.5.6.1 Maintain Mision Peniel’s Vision of being “A Christ-Centered and Compassionate Bridge Connecting Migrant Farmworkers in Immokalee, Florida to Faith Communities and the World,” and empowered to make future revisions to this vision upon prior approval of the Presbytery.
  - 8.5.6.2 Develop Mision Peniel’s core mission that addresses the isolation and injustice among the migrant farmworkers in Immokalee, and provide support to them through spiritual and material care;
  - 8.5.6.3 Develop structures to provide operational and management oversight of this ministry, including strategic planning and funds development;
  - 8.5.6.4 Prepare in consultation with the Trustees and recommend to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee the operating budget for Mision Peniel;
  - 8.5.6.5 Work with the congregations, sessions, and pastors of the Presbytery and others to cultivate the necessary support for this ministry;
  - 8.5.6.6 Support the work of the Presbytery Evangelist to Immokalee;
  - 8.5.6.7 Participate in the annual Presbytery personnel review of the Presbytery Evangelist and Mission Coordinator;
  - 8.5.6.8 Be an advocate for the farm work community in Immokalee, working with other organizations that address the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, and economic challenges and needs of the farm work community;
  - 8.5.6.9 Provide a report to Presbytery (in writing or verbally) at every Stated meeting of the Presbytery, and more often as requested.

#### **ARTICLE IX. PRESBYTERY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSION**

- 9.1 The term of service for Presbytery Committees shall be three (3) years beginning January 1, with the privilege of re-election to one (1) additional term, One half (1/2) or more of a term shall be counted as a full term. Ordinarily members shall be placed in three (3) classes of equal number. The term of service for the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be six (6) years and no person shall be eligible for re-election until four (4) years have elapsed after the expired six (6) year term per the *Book of Order*.
- 9.1.1 When an elected member of a committee or the Permanent Judicial Commission shall fail to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without an excused absence, that body shall declare the position to be vacant and so inform the Nominations and Representation Committee. Where a member of a committee or the Permanent Judicial Commission finds it necessary to resign, this person shall immediately notify the moderator of the committee or commission on which the person serves.
- 9.2 The membership on committees consist of laypersons or ruling elders and teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible with the exception of the Committee on Ministry and the Permanent Judicial Commission, where laypersons must be ruling elders per the *Book of Order*. The Stated Clerk and General Presbyter shall be ex officio members.
- 9.3 Committees shall have a moderator and vice-moderator, or co-moderators, nominated by the Human Resources Team unless otherwise specified by the Standing Rules, elected annually and may not serve more than three (3) consecutive years in that capacity.
- 9.4 Organization, number and dates of meetings of Committees:
- 9.4.1 Committees shall organize themselves internally except where specified otherwise. They shall have authority to create task forces within their purview and name the membership. The creation of a task force, its responsibilities and the names of its members shall be reported at the next meeting of Presbytery. A task force shall function no longer than twelve (12) months without being reconstituted.
  - 9.4.2 Meeting dates for the ensuing year shall be set at each committee’s annual orientation and planning meeting. Meetings shall normally be held at least quarterly, sufficiently ahead of the meetings of the Steering Committee to provide time for review by the Steering Committee of their written reports to Presbytery.
  - 9.4.3 The quorum for meetings shall be one-third (1/3) of the voting members except for the Steering Committee and Committee on Ministry which shall be a majority of voting members.



9.4.4 Specific services growing out of each committee's functions, guidelines for its work, and procedures for implementation shall become a part of the *Administrative Manual* upon approval by Presbytery, after review by the Steering Committee. Each Committee shall review and revise, if needed, its chapter of the *Administrative Manual* and *Standing Rules* at the beginning of each year.

9.4.5 Presbytery Committees and the Permanent Judicial Commission report directly to the Presbytery.

## 9.5 Presbytery Committees

### 9.5.1 Committee on Ministry. (COM) – 21 members

9.5.1.1 As prescribed in the *Book of Order*, the general function of the Committee on Ministry will be to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service and certified Christian educators; to facilitate relations between the Presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the Presbytery wherever possible. The Committee on Ministry shall oversee and administer the following, coordinating with the appropriate individuals, sessions, congregations, and the full Presbytery, when appropriate:

1. Ruling Elders Commissioned to Pastoral Service
2. Certified Christian Educators
3. Ethical Standards for Teaching Elders
4. Equal Employment Opportunity
5. Guidelines for Collegial Relationships
6. Minimum Terms of Call
7. Transitional Policy Between Installed Pastors
8. Deploy resources of the Pastoral Care Network when appropriate.
9. Relationships with the Pastoral Counseling Center
10. Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy and Procedures
11. Validating the Ministry of Continuing Members
12. Annual Review of Church Records, Training and Support of Clerks of Sessions
13. Share responsibility with the congregation to ensure that the Book of Order requirements regarding oversight/accountability are fulfilled and that ordination vows are honored.
14. Brokering Resources for Creating Healthy Congregations and for Leader Development
15. Any Other Duties of a Ministerial Nature Specifically Assigned by the *Book of Order* or Presbytery
16. Maintain COM Policy Manual for the Presbytery Related to Pastors and Congregations

9.5.1.2 To expedite the calling and receiving into membership of teaching elders and to allow them to move onto the field in a timely manner, the Committee on Ministry shall function as a Commission to examine and admit into membership all teaching elders seeking membership in Peace River Presbytery and to approve terms of call and commissions of installation of those it examines. COM shall function as a commission when the following contingencies have been met: the Teaching Elder in good standing of the PC(USA); unanimous approval of those present and voting by the Committee on Ministry of the examination; promise of match and terms of call; and the call and election of the nominee by the congregation or other calling agencies (i.e., non-parish calls). If the vote is not unanimous, the approval must go to the full Presbytery for approval.

9.5.1.3 The number of members on the Committee on Ministry shall be approximately equally divided between teaching elders and ruling elders, and arranged in three (3) classes.

9.5.2 **Committee on Preparation for Ministry. (CPM) – 6 members**

9.5.2.1 This committee shall provide care and supervision of all Inquirers and Candidates, carrying out all responsibilities detailed in the *Book of Order* plus supervision of education for Ruling Elders preparing for limited Commissioned Pastoral Service.

9.5.2.2 The committee shall administer scholarships for Inquirers and Candidates from available designated funds.

9.5.2.3 The committee shall encourage congregations to nurture those who may believe themselves called to ordered ministry.

9.5.2.4 The members on the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall be approximately equally divided between teaching elders and ruling elders, and arranged in three (3) classes.

9.5.3 **Representation Committee**

9.5.3.1 The committee is specifically charged with the requirements of G-3.0111 and G-3.0103 of the *Book of Order*.

9.5.3.2 The committee shall be in regular consultation with the Human Resources Team throughout the year to provide guidance in identifying representation gaps and provide a report to the Presbytery annually.

9.5.3.3 The committee shall be comprised of the Peace River Presbytery moderator or vice-moderator, the Human Resources Team moderator or vice moderator and the Stated Clerk.

9.5.4 **Overtures Committee. – 4 members**

9.5.4.1 The committee shall study and review all overtures with Sessions prior to forwarding to the Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly (as appropriate).

9.5.4.2 The committee shall present recommendations for Presbytery action on proposed constitutional amendments.

9.5.4.3 The members on the Overtures committee shall be the current General Assembly Commissioners.

9.5.5 **Permanent Judicial Commission. (PJC)**

9.5.5.1 The Permanent Judicial Commission shall hear and decide cases of process on behalf of the Presbytery according to the *Rules of Discipline*.

9.5.5.2 The Permanent Judicial Commission shall conduct hearings and trials in accordance with the *Rules of Discipline*.

9.5.5.3 The function, membership, terms of service and manner of election of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be in every way consonant with the provisions of the *Book of Order* and *Rules of Discipline* as a whole.

9.5.5.4 The number of members on the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be seven (7) and arranged in three (3) classes, equally divided, as nearly as possible between teaching and ruling elders. The additional member may be either a teaching elder or a ruling elder. No more than one member may be elected from a particular church. The term of office shall be six (6) years, divided into three (3) classes with no more than three (3) members in one class. No member who has served a full term of six (6) years shall be eligible for re-election until four (4) years have elapsed.

## ARTICLE X. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND BOARDS

- 10.1 The Presbyterian Women of Peace River Presbytery is structured according to its own constitution and by-laws and carries out its mission in partnership with the Presbytery. The Moderator of the Coordinating Team of the Presbyterian Women or her designee reports annually and as needed to the Presbytery concerning its work.
- 10.2 The Presbyterian Homes and Housing Foundation of Florida, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation of Peace River Presbytery and Presbytery of Tampa Bay of the PC(USA) formed to benefit and support their ministry of housing. The corporation is structured as defined in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida, the By-laws and the current Covenant of Agreement with the two presbyteries.
- 10.2.1 The corporation reports annually and as needed to the Presbytery through its President or designee and/or Executive Director.
- 10.2.2 Members of the Board (9 members) are nominated by the Human Resources Team for election by the Presbytery according to its by-laws.
- 10.3 The Presbyterian Camp and Conference Ministries of Southwest Florida, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation of Peace River Presbytery and Presbytery of Tampa Bay of the PC (USA) formed to benefit and support their programs of camps and conferences. The corporation is structured as defined in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida, the By-laws and the current Covenant of Agreement with the two presbyteries.
- 10.3.1 The corporation reports annually and as needed to the Presbytery through its President or designee and/or Executive Director.
- 10.3.2 Members of the Board (6 members) are nominated by the Human Resources Team for election by the Presbytery according to its by-laws.
- 10.4 The Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation of Peace River Presbytery and Presbytery of Tampa Bay of the PC (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Inc. formed to benefit and support their ministry to and with farmworkers. The corporation is structured as defined in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida, the By-laws and the current Covenant of Agreement with the two presbyteries.
- 10.4.1 The corporation reports annually and as needed the Presbytery through its President or designee and/or Executive Director.
- 10.4.2 Members of the Board (4 members) are nominated by the Human Resources Team for election by the Presbytery according to its by-laws.
- 10.5 The Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN) is a mutually agreed upon partnership among the six PC (USA) presbyteries in Florida, the Synod of South Atlantic, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. The purpose of FLAPDAN is to address the needs of the Body of Christ during times of disaster by providing communication links, addressing common issues of preparation and response, identifying resources and supporting training for presbyteries and their congregations.
- 10.5.1 The membership consists of eighteen (18) voting members, three (3) elected from each of the six (6) presbyteries, and a body of at-large members who participate in study groups and training events but do not have vote on motions before the elected body. FLAPDAN is required to maintain relationships with other disaster preparedness groups in the region.
- 10.5.2 The partnership reports annually and as needed to the Presbytery through its President or designee and/or Executive Director.
- 10.5.3 Members, who may be laypersons, ruling elders or teaching elders, are nominated by the Human Resources Team for election by the Presbytery for three (3) year terms beginning January 1, with the privilege of re-election.
- 10.5.4 The Partnership shall be asked to inform the Human Resources Team when a Peace River Presbytery member shall fail to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without an excused absence or submits a resignation.

## ARTICLE XI. COVENANT COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

- 11.1 Covenant Communities of Faith and Practice are small gatherings of those who have a common interest and freely choose to come together for study, fellowship and mission. Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders or congregations may participate, as Covenant Communities are voluntary, not compulsory. These guidelines encourage us all to seek out purposeful relationships within Peace River Presbytery that will enrich and challenge us. Covenant Communities will be recognized by and shall be invited to contribute their special interests to the good of the whole Presbytery.
- 11.2 Types of Covenant Communities:
1. CONGREGATIONS. A Covenant Community shall ordinarily consist of up to four (4) congregations (including their teaching elders, staffs, and sessions).
  2. ELDERS. A Covenant Community shall ordinarily consist of four (4) to seven (7) teaching elders or four (4) to seven (7) ruling elders.
- 11.3 Standards for membership are determined by each community; however, they shall be consistent with the Holy Scriptures, the Presbyterian Church (USA) *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*. Each community shall outline Standards for Membership in the community as follows:
1. At least three (3) principles from Scripture which shall guide their life together.
  2. At least three (3) citations from the *Book of Confessions* which they believe are especially necessary for their life together.
  3. A brief statement explaining the goal of their joining together and how it helps live out the Vision/Value Statement of Peace River Presbytery. They should also present a vision statement for their community.
- 11.4 Members of a Covenant Community shall meet at a frequency and for the purposes determined by the Covenant Community. Their meetings should be often enough to effect real change in the lives of the participants but not so often that it becomes a burden. It is recommended that Congregational Communities meet on at least a quarterly basis while Elder Communities meet on a bi-monthly basis, at the discretion of the community.
- 11.5 A covenant community requesting to be recognized by Peace River Presbytery shall submit a petition to the Presbytery seeking its formal recognition, blessing and celebration. The Stated Clerk shall receive the request, docket the request at the next available stated meeting of the Presbytery and after due discussion, it shall be offered up for a vote of approval by the body of the Presbytery. The petition shall include a signed commitment to full Presbytery membership by all individuals and congregations. The Stated Clerk shall verify, prior to the Presbytery meeting where the petition shall be received, and that the Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders and Congregations are all in good standing. Members are expected to remain in good standing of Presbytery through participation, financial support and prayer.
- 11.6 Each Covenant Community shall be convened for a period of not more than two (2) years; however the community may be renewed every two (2) years as needed and at the discretion of the Presbytery.
- 11.7 Covenant Communities report annually and as needed to the Steering Committee and the Presbytery.

Original DRAFT presented at the  
August 25, 2012 Stated Meeting

Revised version for consideration by the Presbytery on November 15, 2012

APPROVED by PRP 11/15/2012

AMENDED by PRP 2/26/2015

AMENDED by PRP 4/28/2016

AMENDED by PRP 2/23/2017

AMENDED by PRP 5/17/2018

AMENDED by PRP 11/15/2018

APPROVED by PRP 11/14/2019