

Revised October 9, 2021

THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS MINISTRY MANUAL

Part IV: Policies and Procedures

March 2018
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Nomination and Election of Officers and Committees

Regular Elections

Most presbytery positions are filled during the annual nomination and election process.

1. At least 4 months prior to the date of election (the last stated meeting of the year), the committee will solicit input from congregations, ministries, members of the presbytery, and committees for potential nominees.
2. At least fourteen days prior to the date of election (the last stated meeting of the year), the committee should submit a slate of candidates to the presbytery.
3. The committee shall secure the assent of each nominee.
4. The committee shall make every effort to ensure that the principles of parity and representation are maintained.
5. Nominations shall be allowed from the floor prior to election by the presbytery.

Special Elections

Special nominations are necessary when a position is declared vacant due to death, incapacity, or resignation of a committee member or other elected person, or by declaration of a vacancy by a presbytery committee due to chronic absenteeism by a committee member. Prior to a declaration by the committee, every effort should be taken to contact the individual and assess the circumstances of the absences.

When a vacancy is declared, the committee shall:

1. Forward a nomination to the presbytery at its next stated meeting.
2. If the needs of the presbytery demand, forward the nomination to the next stated meeting of the Coordinating team.

Qualifications for Election

All Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders in good standing in the presbytery are eligible for election. Other active members of congregations in the presbytery are eligible for those positions not requiring ordination to the Ordered Committee on the Church's Ministries.

Moderators

Unless otherwise provided by policy, the Nominating Committee will normally recommend to the presbytery moderators for standing ministries and committees.

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Terms

Terms of service are normally 3 years unless otherwise provided by rule or the Book of Order. Individuals who serve part of a term may be elected to serve a full term. With the exception of Investigative Committees, no person shall be elected to a third full term on the same committee or sub-committee until 12 months shall have elapsed.

Terms of service begin on January 1 of the year following election. For those elected to serve unexpired terms, service begins upon election.

~~With the exception of Synod and General Assembly commissioners and the members of the Permanent Judicial Commission, Investigative Committees, and the Committee on Representation, no person shall normally serve on two standing committees or sub-committees at a given time. (Repealed 3/6/2020)~~

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Presbytery Meetings

Stated Meetings

- ❖ Stated meetings are ordinarily held three times each calendar year in February, June, and October. Ordinarily there shall be two two-day meetings and one one-day meeting.
- ❖ The first meeting of the year shall normally be the second or third weekend (Friday and Saturday) in February. The second meeting shall normally be the first Saturday following Memorial Day. The third meeting shall normally be the second weekend in October.
- ❖ The first meeting shall normally alternate between Lyon College (even years) and the University of the Ozarks (odd years). The second meeting shall normally be held in central Arkansas (Conway, Faulkner, White, Lonoke, Saline, Pulaski, Jefferson, Garland, or Hot Spring counties). The third meeting shall normally alternate among the five regions of the presbytery.

Meeting Preparation for Stated Meetings

Planning Team assigned for that particular meeting plans the meeting. The Coordinating Team appoints the Planning Team at the conclusion of the preceding stated meeting (October team appointed at June meeting, etc.)

The Planning Team shall:

- ❖ Make all necessary arrangements for the logistics of the meeting (including meals, set-up, technical needs, etc.)
- ❖ Set the agenda for the meeting
- ❖ Plan worship
- ❖ Make any other necessary arrangements for the efficient running of the meeting

The members of the Planning Team are:

- ❖ The Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the presbytery
- ❖ The Moderator of the Coordinating Team
- ❖ The Stated Clerk
- ~~❖ A member of the presbytery (appointed for the calendar year) (Repealed 10/9/2021)~~
- ~~❖ One member of the Coordinating Committee (convener) (Repealed 10/9/2021)~~
- ~~❖ Two representatives of the hosting institution (Repealed 10/9/2021)~~
- ❖ The General Presbyter
- ❖ Other staff and representatives of the hosting institution as warranted

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Electronic Meeting Policy

Revised March 2018

Background

From “CM-18- Guidelines for Electronic Assemblies...” issued August 2009: “There is no substitute for the richness of conversation and debate that is possible when we gather in one place to listen and watch and open ourselves to the work of the Spirit. We best subject ourselves to each other and to God’s discerning power when we are together.

There are circumstances though, when being physically present with one another is impossible or impractical.” Also a principle of Presbyterian government is that decisions reached in church bodies shall be “by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern (G-4.0301).”

Practice

Ministry Areas, Committees, Sub-Committees, Task Forces, and Boards of the Presbytery of Arkansas may conduct occasional assembly by telephone, video conferencing or electronic mail when such Ministry Areas, Committees, Sub-Committees, Task Forces, and Boards decide in advance through policy to use these means of gathering and/or making decisions.

In deciding whether a specific meeting, or decisions to be made, will be through electronic means, the Moderator and Clerk shall determine that a particular meeting or actions within a meeting should be conducted by non-traditional methods such as telephone, video conferencing, or electronic mail.

To provide this opportunity, all members entitled to participate must ordinarily be able to take part through the chosen method of meeting. The means of meeting must not intentionally, or unintentionally, exclude those entitled to participate. Any non-traditional form of meeting must provide an opportunity for simultaneous communication and deliberation, and care must be taken that all qualified to participate in the meeting are included.

Matters addressed at a non-traditional meeting may be time-sensitive matters that must be acted on prior to the next stated meeting or may be “regular” pieces of business that have already been thoroughly discussed and debated.

The system for meeting must provide access by which each member participating in the meeting can communicate with each other.

Voting on a video or phone conferencing system will be done by roll call and the clerk will record the result of the vote. If voting is done by email, the clerk will post the item as a group email and all comments are to be addressed to all participants. Email voting must be done within 48 hours of the time the clerk sends out the item, and the clerk will tally and notify the group of the results.

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175 Minutes of the meeting must be recorded and added to the minutes record of the
176 committee, council or board. At the following meeting of the group, the tally of
177 conference or electronic votes is reported for verification.
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**Service of Installation of
the Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas**

General

The installation of the Moderator of the Presbytery of Arkansas shall normally occur during the opening worship service of the February presbytery meeting and will normally include the celebration of the Eucharist.

The outgoing Moderator will normally preach. If he/she is unable or does not desire to preach, the Moderator will name someone to preach in his/her place. The General Presbyter along with another Teaching Elder will normally preside at the table.

The installation is a function of the presbytery sitting in plenary and shall occur after the meeting has been gavelled to order.

Liturgy

The liturgy of the installation is a Pastoral Rite of the Church (BCW p. 39) and follows the proclamation of the Word and precedes the Eucharist.

The Order of Installation will normally follow the Installation of *Governing Body Officers and Staff* liturgy in the *Book of Occasional Services* of the PC(USA).

Following the blessing of the newly installed, the outgoing Moderator shall present the symbols of leadership with these or similar words:

I present to you this gavel as the symbol of the leadership we hereby grant to you. Use it with authority, yet with discernment and fairness.

I place around your neck this cross as the symbol of God's grace and love, which undergirds all that we do together in this presbytery. It bears the symbol of the Presbyterian Church (USA) with the map of our presbytery imposed upon it. Wear it with pride, humility, and hope.

Following the presentation of the symbols of leadership, it is appropriate for the newly installed moderator to make a short statement.

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Presbytery Records

General

Minutes of meetings of the presbytery and its committees shall be maintained in the presbytery office. The Stated Clerk shall act as custodian of the records of the presbytery.

All records as required by the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) shall be maintained in the presbytery office.

Records of Judicial Proceedings and Investigations

(May 2002)

The written decision on any case brought before the Permanent Judicial Commission will be entered into the minutes of presbytery. All records, minutes, transcripts, or other documents of the PJC will be on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. After the final report on each case is made to the presbytery, these records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years. After five years the Stated Clerk will destroy the records.

All records, transcripts, or other documents of an Investigating Committee, whether or not the investigation resulted in charges filed, will be kept on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. These will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years after the final report of the Investigating Committee is made to presbytery. After five years, the Stated Clerk shall destroy all these records.

Records shall be stored in accordance with provisions of confidentiality of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Records of Non-Judicial Commissions

1. An Administrative Commission constituted to ordain or install Ministers of the Word, to organize churches, to merge churches, or to receive candidates under the care of presbytery, shall file a final report with the Stated Clerk. This report shall be entered into the minutes of presbytery. A copy of this report will be filed with the records in the office of the Stated Clerk under the name of the churches and ministers involved.
2. An Administrative Commission constituted to visit particular churches, governing bodies, or other organizations of the church with the purpose of inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, shall file a final report with the Stated Clerk, who shall then report to presbytery. This report shall be entered into the minutes of presbytery. All documents, files, transcripts or other records shall be kept on file in the office of the Stated Clerk. These records shall be kept for five years after the final report of the Administrative Commission to presbytery. After five years, the Stated Clerk will destroy these records.

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Statement of Purpose and Editorial Policy of *The Banner*

(May 2002)

The purpose of The Banner is:

1. To inform the leaders (clergy and lay) of the Presbytery of Arkansas by sharing news about the educators, clergy, church leaders, and churches,
2. To foster collegiality among the leaders of the Presbytery of Arkansas by sharing news about the educators, clergy, church leaders, and churches,
3. To increase awareness of the resources available through the Resource Center of Presbytery, and
4. To serve as a tool for the staff of Presbytery to communicate with the leaders of the Presbytery of Arkansas.

To that end:

1. The Banner will carry only information on programs of the Presbytery of Arkansas, its member churches, the Synod of the Sun, or the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is possible to carry information on a program outside of the Presbyterian Church (USA) only if approved by the General Committee of the Presbytery or its designated committee.
2. The Banner will carry no letters to the editor or unsolicited opinion pieces by authors in or outside of the Presbytery except for the editorials by the staff of Presbytery.
3. The editor of The Banner shall be the General Presbyter or his/her designee, and the editor shall make the final decisions related to these editorial policies and in cases that are not covered by these policies.

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Policy for Presbytery Inquiry into a Particular Church

(Revised May 1, 2019 to reflect changes in names of ministry areas and committees.)

General

The Presbytery is the corporate expression of the church in a particular geographic area. Gathering the Teaching Elders and congregations under its authority, the Presbytery acts to support the larger mission and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Among its duties, the Presbytery is responsible for “assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world...” (G-3.0301)

From time to time difficulties arising in a particular church may interfere with the congregation’s ministry and mission. In such times, the Presbytery has a responsibility to inquire into the life of that congregation, provide support to its members and leaders, and assist the church in finding a way through the difficulties and back to the work of witness in the world. In such times, the Presbytery acts as pastoral leadership for the congregation seeking not to punish or lay blame but to restore the peace, unity, and purity of the church through reconciliation and partnership.

Initiating the Inquiry Process

An inquiry into a particular congregation may be initiated by the congregation through a written request to the Committee on Ministry or the Presbytery’s Coordinating Team. An inquiry may also be initiated by the Committee on the Ministry, the Future of the Church Ministry Area, or Presbytery’s Coordinating Team. However initiated, the process of inquiry shall include both the Committee on Ministry and the Future of the Church Ministry Area as described below.

The Inquiry Process

Each congregation is different and every inquiry into congregational life presents unique challenges and opportunities. This policy seeks to give some vision for the overall structure of the process, however it will be up to the ministry teams involved to tailor the process and the membership of an inquiry team to meet the presenting needs in a particular case.

In all cases, the Inquiry Process shall:

1. Be coordinated between both the Committee on Ministry and the Future of the Church Ministry Area.
2. Include on any inquiry team or Administrative Commission designees each from the Committee on Ministry and the Future of the Church Ministry Area. (NB: These do not have to be currently seated members, however it is advisable that at least one from each team be in current service to ensure good communication and input from both ministry areas)

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3. Seek to further the peace, unity, and purity of the Church through reconciliation and restoration.
4. Advise the Stated Clerk immediately of any issues which may have an implication on future disciplinary or remedial action against an individual under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or against the session as a whole.

In all cases the Inquiry Process should:

1. Be mindful of the need for members to understand the particular needs of the community and context of ministry. Also, be mindful of the need to be able to respond to issues in a timely manner. An inquiry team made up of regional representation would be a way to achieve this objective.
2. Report regularly on their progress to both the Committee on Ministry and the Future of the Church Ministry Area.
3. Take care to ensure continuity of leadership through the Inquiry/Resolution process. In the event the resolution involves a change of leadership, the Committee on Ministry liaison may serve as a liaison for a pastoral search. This or some other mechanism to ensure continuity is essential.

Completing the Inquiry Process

When the difficulties in the congregation are resolved:

1. It is appropriate for the Inquiry Team to appoint a liaison to continue in contact with the congregation as they live into the season of resolution and restoration.
2. When appropriate, a thanksgiving to God during worship may be held involving the church and the Inquiry Team.
3. The Inquiry Team shall notify the Committee on Ministry, Future of the Church Ministry Area, and the session of the congregation of the resolution and any conditions or procedures for moving forward.

When the difficulties in the congregation are not resolved:

1. When the Inquiry Team completes their work and the difficulties in the congregation are not resolved, the congregation an Administrative Commission may be appointed.
 - a. In cases when the difficulties in the congregation are between the congregation and the PC(USA), the church may be determined to be in schism and the process of inquiry shifts to more formalized Policy for Schismatic Churches.
 - b. If the difficulties are confined to the particular church yet are deemed unresolved by the Inquiry Team, an Administrative Commission may be appointed.
2. When either of the above determinations are made, the Moderators of the Committee on Ministry and the Future of the Church Ministry Area shall notify the Stated Clerk that an Administrative Commission should be appointed in accordance with the *Book of Order*.

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Policy for Schismatic Churches:
Churches who express a desire to leave the PC(USA)

(Adopted May 2003; Revised February 2012)

Historic Principles

1. Particular churches exist by virtue of the powers delegated to presbyteries. Presbyteries have the responsibility and power to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members [G-3.0301c; G-3.0303b]
2. Membership in a particular church is voluntary. Members unite with those churches according to their preferences and may withdraw at their discretion. [G-1.0402]
3. All property held by or for a particular church is held in trust for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (USA) [G-4.0203]. While members of a particular church may leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) at any time, that church retains all assets.

Should a particular church seek to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Committee on Ministry should be notified immediately. The Committee on Ministry shall counsel with the Session of the church to seek reconciliation, and to dissuade it from the proposed withdrawal. The Committee on Ministry may, in consultation with the Stated Clerk and the General Presbyter, request Presbytery to form an Administrative Commission. The Administrative Commission shall consult with that congregation and its Session, advising it of the provisions of the Book of Order, presenting options for the resolution of the conflict. If an Administrative Commission is not formed, the responsibility devolves to the Committee on Ministry to provide opportunity for all members of the congregation to be heard. Should that church continue to pursue such a course, even after being advised of the constitutional and historic principles of the church, these procedures shall be followed:

A congregational meeting [G-1.0502] shall be called to present the issue for a vote by written ballot. Should the vote reveal the presence of the true church within the Presbyterian Church (USA) [G-4.0207], those wishing to leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) may be granted certificates of dismissal, and the true church shall remain responsible for the church government and all assets of the congregation.

If there is no true church the property shall ordinarily be sold and the assets retained by Presbytery.

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Sabbatical Leave Policy

(Approved as a recommendation for all calls May 22, 1999; Placed in the Manual of Operations as a recommendation November 9, 2004; The Minimum Terms of Call were updated to mandate a Sabbatical Leave in 2014; Revised February 10, 2018.)

Sabbatical leaves are frequently granted to people working in various settings, including academia, business, and church-related institutions. Basing leaves on the Biblically-based Sabbath concept, institutions recognize that people who have worked in their positions for a prolonged length of time frequently could benefit from an extended time away from their work, time usually devoted to study, personal growth, renewal, and reflection. Most Christian denominations, and, as is certainly the trend currently, many churches and presbyteries, are beginning to implement sabbatical leave policies for pastors, for educators, for denominational staff, and for other full-time church professionals. Accordingly, the Presbytery of Arkansas, has instituted a Sabbatical Leave Policy for the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas recognizes that pastors, other church professionals, and congregations could greatly benefit if full-time church professionals could have the opportunity to negotiate and be granted a sabbatical leave. Some of the reasons for wishing to grant such leaves include: the challenges of longer pastorates, the intensity of church work, and the opportunity to take advantage of new knowledge and approaches to ministry that may have developed since a pastorate began. These opportunities may well require a longer period of study than the normal two weeks study leave. Such opportunities will allow one to learn new ministry skills, to gain new information, to become familiar with new resources, and to have time for reflection and spiritual renewal.

General Considerations

1. Sabbatical leave shall be included in any new call to a full-time minister of the Word and Sacrament and should be considered in any new full-time position offered to a Certified Christian Educator or other full-time church professional.
2. Written notice and a written plan shall be given to the church's Personnel Committee (if there is one), to the church's Session, and to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry for approval. Ideally, this plan shall be submitted one year prior to the taking of the leave. This plan shall include the foreseen benefits to the pastor, educator, or other full-time church professional, the foreseen benefits to the church or agency, the goals and objectives of the study time, the location of the study, and the particulars about how the person's pastoral, educational, or other duties will be covered during the time of the leave.
3. Before the church professional goes on leave, provision shall be made to cover the duties of the person on that leave.

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- 461 4. Upon returning from sabbatical leave, the pastor, educator, or other full-time
462 church professional shall present to the personnel committee and to the Session,
463 a written summary statement of the Sabbatical Leave experience, including what
464 was learned and how what was learned will be applied.

465 **Time Considerations**

- 466 5. Sabbatical leaves shall be granted no sooner than after six years of service has
467 been completed, or no sooner than six years after a previous sabbatical leave.
- 468 6. Sabbatical leaves shall normally be no longer than six months.
- 469 7. Ordinarily, the normal study leave time that is due in the sabbatical year shall be
470 a part of the sabbatical leave time, not in addition to it, although an exception may
471 be negotiated.
- 472 8. The pastor, educator, or other full-time church professional shall normally pledge
473 to stay in his/her parish/position for no less than one calendar year after a
474 sabbatical leave. If the person chooses to leave the congregation/position within
475 one year after the completion of a sabbatical leave, the pastor, educator, or other
476 full-time professional shall refund to the church the salary paid to her or him
477 during the sabbatical leave.
- 478 9. It is also recommended that any church or agency that has made a provision for a
479 sabbatical leave fully inform and educate their congregation or constituents about
480 the leave, its rationale, and the foreseen benefits, beginning at least six months
481 prior to the start of the leave time.

482 **Financial Considerations**

- 483 10. During a sabbatical leave, all salary and benefits shall continue to be paid by the
484 employing church or agency, except for the travel allowance.
- 485 11. While the church professional is on sabbatical leave the employing church or
486 agency shall provide for payment of the expenses of whomever covers the
487 ministerial duties of the person on leave.
- 488 12. All costs of the sabbatical shall ordinarily be borne by that person, but s/he may
489 apply her or his study allowances to these costs, and the Session may cover any
490 costs it considers appropriate. These costs shall not include the church or
491 agency's costs to cover the duties of the person on leave.
- 492 13. The Presbytery encourages churches or agencies to begin a savings account that
493 would accumulate over the six years' requirement to help defray the additional
494 costs that having a church professional on sabbatical leave would incur.

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Parental Leave Policy

(Adopted November 9, 2004; Revised February 10, 2018.)

Many churches would like to “do the Christian thing” when it comes to taking care of their pastors, but others are not sure what that is. Furthermore, if the decision is postponed until the time of pregnancy or when plans for adoption are being made, with the emotionally charged atmosphere that surrounds such a time, it is difficult to know what is best for the pastor, his or her family, and the church.

Therefore, the Presbytery of Arkansas requires churches of this Presbytery to adopt the following policy as a **minimum** for those persons that they may call to a full-time position:

That there be a six-week leave of absence with full pay for pastors who give birth, or whose wife gives birth, or who adopt an infant child. Following that, if it be needed for the health of the mother or the child, or to care for the mother or child whose health requires extra care, additional time may be granted as paid vacation time, or as leave without pay. Full medical and pension payments by the church should be made during the first six weeks of the life of the child, or the first six weeks after the adoption of a child.

A written request for such a maternity or paternity leave should be made in writing to the session at least 30 days before the expected birth or adoption date.

In addition, the Committee on Ministry recommends to the Presbytery that this be the policy for those who are called or employed by the Presbytery of Arkansas.

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Active Honorably Retired Minister of the Word and Sacrament Policy

(Approved February 2003; Revised February 10, 2018.)

An “active” honorably retired minister of the Word and Sacrament has been retired by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and certified as retired by the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Classification as an Active Honorably Retired Minister of the Presbytery of Arkansas may be met in one or more of the following ways:

1. Serving as a Transitional, Stated Supply, Pulpit Supply, Validated Ministry, Moderator of a Session, Parish Associate, serving as a mentor for a new minister in our Presbytery at the request of the Committee on Ministry, or any activity presented to the Committee on Ministry which the Committee deems in accord with the spirit of “active honorably retired;
2. Serving on a Presbytery ministry area, committee, sub-committee, task force, or commission; or
3. Attending stated meetings of Presbytery unless excused by the Presbytery.

All Active Honorably Retired Ministers will have voting privilege in the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Annually the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Arkansas will send a communication to all honorably retired ministers of the Word and Sacrament of the Presbytery asking them to indicate whether or not they wish to be moved to the status of no longer active. The results of this communication will be shared by the Stated Clerk at a stated meeting, and recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery of Arkansas.

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Background Check Policy

(Revised June 3, 2017.)

Who is included?

- All active members of the Presbytery of Arkansas (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators who are Ruling Elders), Certified Christian Educators who are not Ruling Elders, and other ministers who are serving within the bounds of the Presbytery of Arkansas with the exception of non-active honorably retired clergy.
- All persons seeking membership into the Presbytery of Arkansas. (Completion necessary before face-to-face with the Committee on Ministry's Examinations Subcommittee.)
- All paid staff members of the Presbytery of Arkansas.
- It is incumbent on all member churches to follow prudent procedures with their own staff and for persons who work with youth and other vulnerable populations.

What is included?

1. National and state criminal records including the sex offender registry.

What is the procedure?

- ~~Those who are included in the background check policy~~ are asked to complete a self-reporting form indicating any prior felony convictions and to give written permission to the presbytery to initiate the criminal background check process.
- All results of background checks will be sent to the General Presbyter or designated presbytery staff. If any irregularities appear, the GP will contact the Consultation Committee to determine if any further action is necessary. This Consultation Committee will ordinarily consist of the GP, the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry. Care will be taken to assure fair representation. The GP and the Consultation Committee will make determination about the most appropriate pastoral response.
- Criminal background check records will be kept in a separate personnel file accessible only by the GP, the GP's designee and the Consultation Committee. Each individual upon whom a background check has been done will have access to his or her own background check results. Under normal circumstances, the presbytery office will only indicate that a background check has been done and a clearance has been given.
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- Background checks are to be conducted regularly every five years, ordinarily at the beginning of the year (January 2017, 2022, etc.). Those who have entered their ministry in the Presbytery of Arkansas within the last 18 months will not be required to repeat the background check until the following regular check.

What is the cost?

- 2.—Costs associated with the background check for current members of the presbytery will ordinarily be borne by congregations and costs for presbytery staff will be borne by the Presbytery of Arkansas.

- —Costs associated with the background checks for incoming presbyters will be borne by the calling congregation.

- 2.—Costs associated with the background checks for incoming presbyters will be borne by the calling congregation.

- —For initial and ongoing checks of presbytery members-at-large or those in validated ministry, costs will be borne by the individual or the employing agency.

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Refusal to give consent to run a background check will disqualify a person for consideration for membership in the Presbytery of Arkansas, or employment by the Presbytery of Arkansas.

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Disclosure Authorization and Release Form
For Pre-Employment, Continued Employment, or Presbytery Membership

(Revised June 3, 2017; Revised February 10, 2018)

I understand that in connection with my application for employment, volunteer services, continued employment, and/or membership, the Presbytery of Arkansas, its consultant IntelliCorp, their agents or employees, shall be performing, requesting, obtaining, or conducting a background check on me. This background check will include only national and state criminal records, including the sex offender registry. If my position involves handling money and/or having access to monies and/or other transferrable money instruments, my credit history may also be checked.

I understand that the Presbytery of Arkansas may rely on any part of this information in determining whether to extend an offer of employment, volunteer duties, or membership to me. I further understand that if any adverse action is taken by the Presbytery of Arkansas, or if the Presbytery of Arkansas chooses not to extend an offer of employment/volunteer duties, or membership to me based upon the information, that I will be provided a copy of such information.

I have read this Disclosure Authorization and Release Form and by signing below hereby authorize investigators to conduct a background check as described herein. I hereby release any and all investigators, including the Presbytery of Arkansas, from any and all liability related to the procurement or disclosure of any information provided by me or obtained about me in connection with the Presbytery. I further direct and authorize Investigators to conduct the background check and further authorize any third parties who may be the custodians of or in possession of the requested information to disclose such information to investigators in connection with this background check.

Although furnishing the Social Security number is not optional, it shall be used for NO other purpose than to make the process for conducting a background check more accurate. It shall not be sold, or in any way transferred to a third party except for the express purpose of conducting the background check. If applicable, list on the reverse any prior felony convictions with date and state.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name (First, Middle, Last) _____ Social Security Number _____

Date of Birth _____ Former Last Name(s) *if applicable* _____

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655 Current Address:

656

657 Street

City

State Zip

658

659 Former Address:

660

661 Street

City

State Zip

662

663

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Sexual Misconduct Policy

(Revised June 3, 2017.)

"... tend the flock of God, that is your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it, not for sordid gain, but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock."

1 Peter 5:2, 3 (NRSV)

I Introduction:

The Presbytery of Arkansas ("Presbytery") believes and proclaims that all people are created by God, who intends that everyone – children, women, and men – have worth and dignity in all relationships. Our sexuality is a gift from God, and when rightly expressed leads to the wholeness of life which God intends for all people. In addition, the Presbytery desires to maintain the integrity of the Church at all times. The Presbytery also recognizes that sexual misconduct can have devastating effects on the victim, his or her family, the Church community at large, and all individuals involved. Therefore, the Presbytery adopts this Sexual Misconduct Policy ("Policy"), in accordance with G-3.0106 to present guidelines for responding to allegations of Sexual Misconduct.

II. Reporting of Sexual Misconduct:

- A) When an Ecclesiastical Mandated Reporter has Reasonable Suspicion of Sexual Misconduct, a written report should be submitted to the Stated Clerk. If the Accused is the Stated Clerk, the written report should be submitted to the General Presbyter.
- B) The Stated Clerk (or General Presbyter) must then file a written report in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *Book of Order* D3.000 – D10.000 (ff), as amended from time to time, and notify the moderator of the Committee on Ministry ("COM").
- C) Persons having ecclesiastical reporting responsibilities under this Policy may also have reporting requirements to secular authorities and must comply with all such requirements. Nothing in this document shall be construed to abrogate or modify the duty of any person under any law of the United States or the State of Arkansas.

III. Response Coordination Team:

Whenever notification is made in accordance with II.B, the moderator of COM shall name a Response Coordination Team ("RCT") to ensure a caring response is made to all impacted by the allegations of Sexual Misconduct. The RCT shall strive to extend to all such persons the love and care of Jesus Christ. Its responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, a needs assessment and identification and coordination of resources.

- A) Each RCT shall be composed of three to five persons making all efforts to be diverse with respect to gender and ethnicity. The membership shall be

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comprised, to the extent possible, to reflect expertise and professional experience in the following areas:

- 1) Psychological counseling
- 2) Child advocacy
- 3) Conflict management and resolution

B) The COM shall maintain a list of all those who meet the qualifications listed above and who are willing to serve as needed. Individuals shall be on the list no less than three (3) years in staggered terms. The moderator of the COM shall appoint a RCT from the list of qualified individuals within 10 days receipt of notification pursuant to ILB. The RCT shall elect its own moderator, and the administrative costs shall be borne by the Presbytery.

C) The task of each RCT shall be to ensure, as much as possible, the competent pastoral care of all persons impacted by an allegation of Sexual Misconduct as described in Section IV: Meeting the Needs of All Involved.

D) Each RCT, on its own initiative and in its own judgment, will decide when the need for care is ended. The RCT will inform the COM if the need for care extends beyond twelve (12) months. The RCT shall prepare a summary report of its actions and submit it to the Stated Clerk.

IV. Meeting the Needs of All Involved:

When there are allegations of Sexual Misconduct there are needs that have to be met for the good of all persons, groups, and entities. The RCT will not investigate the allegation or in any way function as an investigating committee for disciplining an Accused, but should confine itself to coordinating a process that will meet the specific needs of Victims and their families (if any), the Accused and family (if any), employing entities, congregations, and councils:

A. The Needs of the Victim

The RCT should assure that adequate treatment and care are available for the Victim and the Victim's family. Sometimes the Victim or family is so angry and alienated from the church that offers of help may be perceived as insincere or as attempts of a cover-up. If the Victim or family at first refuses the RCT should continue to offer help.

The extent of the damage to a Victim will vary from person to person and is influenced by such factors as the degree or severity of abuse, the age and emotional condition of the Victim, human dynamics, and the importance of the Victim's religious faith. The RCT is to assume in all cases that the Victim has been wounded by the experience. Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are frequent injuries suffered by a Victim. It is important for the RCT to be sensitive to the Victim's pain and need for healing and to act by making appropriate pastoral care available. The following may be needs of the Victim:

1. To be heard and taken seriously.

From the time that Reasonable Suspicion exists, the Victim should receive immediate attention and serious consideration from all church representatives.

2. To receive pastoral and therapeutic support.

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The Victim may require spiritual and professional assistance as a result of Sexual Misconduct. The RCT should offer to help arrange for such support from a minister of the Word and Sacrament and/or therapist, if the Victim desires. Discussions with such people would be confidential, privileged conversations.

3. To be informed about church process and progress with regard to the accusation. One member of the RCT should be the church contact person for the Victim. Frequently this contact person will give the victim information as to what is happening in the church as a result of the allegation of Sexual Misconduct, and disclose the progress of the discipline process to the extent possible.

B. The Needs of the Accuser

Attention should also be paid to the needs of the Accuser by applying the steps listed above as needed.

C. The Needs of the Accused

The RCT shall offer treatment and care for the Accused and the Accused's family as well as the Victim and the Victim's family. Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, mistrust, lowered self-esteem, depression, unworthiness, and feelings of alienation from God, self, the religious community, and family are often experienced by the Accused. In addition, there may be the fear of job loss, incarceration, and indignation if an allegation is false.

When a person is found not guilty of charges of Sexual Misconduct it is important for the RCT to see, as widely as possible within their power, that the decision is disseminated, unless doing so would further injure the Accused.

1. Personal Care

Whether the allegations about the Accused are eventually found to be true or not, the Accused deserves to be treated with Christian kindness and respect. The RCT may suggest that the Accused seek spiritual support or professional counseling. People in staff positions should not engage in personal counseling of the Accused because of their potential involvement in the disciplinary process.

2. Economic Security and Care for the Family of the Accused

When an allegation of Sexual Misconduct has been made the economic security of the Accused is directly threatened, along with reputation, career, and family relationships. The Committee on Ministry can be of assistance. The RCT may alert the COM to the possible spiritual, emotional, and financial needs of the family of the Accused and recommend expert resources.

D. The Needs of a Congregation or Employing Entity in a Context of Sexual Misconduct

The RCT should be aware of the problems a congregation or employing entity may experience following allegations of Sexual Misconduct. The allegations may polarize the congregation or employing entity, damage morale, create serious internal problems, and even limit the trust a congregation may place in succeeding ministers

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of the Word and Sacrament. Efforts should be taken to recognize and identify the problems and heal any damage that may be done to the congregation or employing entity.

1. Pastoral Care

Members and staff of the congregation will need pastoral care. The minister of the Word and Sacrament of the congregation, if not previously trained in this specialty area, should consult with denominational specialists who will advise how to proceed, and any anticipated problems. The RCT should provide information regarding appropriate denominational specialists to all teaching elder(s) of the congregation, except any minister of the Word and Sacrament who is an Accused.

2. Information About the Case

Members of the congregation may need opportunities both to receive and give information, and the RCT should facilitate such opportunities. Such opportunities may include appropriate meetings with individuals, small groups, or the whole congregation. Such meetings should provide information about Sexual Misconduct in general, Presbyterian polity and judicial processes, and how others who may have been victimized may be heard and ministered to. A minister of the Word and Sacrament may perform these functions as long as that minister of the Word and Sacrament is not the Accused. At such meetings one may expect members to vent their feelings. An opportunity for this to happen should be provided. If this venting does not take place then it may create serious problems for the future of the congregation, for future ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and for the council.

3. Resource Persons

In light of the above needs, the RCT may recommend persons whose services would be valuable to a congregation in the context of Sexual Misconduct: a trained transitional pastor, a Committee on Ministry representative knowledgeable in polity and the effects of Sexual Misconduct in the church, and/or a consultant or therapist with knowledge and experience in dealing with Sexual Misconduct.

V. Risk Management

A. *Insurance*

The Presbytery shall regularly consult with its liability insurance carriers about coverage for the activities and programs it operates or sponsors, and the duties and responsibilities of officers, employees, and volunteers.

B. *Employment Practices*

1. Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping is an essential part of the hiring and supervision practices of churches, councils, and related entities. The Presbytery should maintain a personnel file on all Covered Persons. The file should contain employment questionnaires and criminal background checks.

2. Prescreening Applicants

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The Presbytery shall establish thorough and consistent hiring practices. If an applicant is unknown to the Presbytery the Presbytery should confirm the applicant's identity by requiring photographic identification, such as a driver's license. The Council should perform a background check on all Covered Persons, including a national criminal background check. Part of pre-employment screening should include specific questions related to discovering previous allegations of Sexual Misconduct.

3. References

The employing council, or entity, is responsible for contacting references for prospective ministers of the Word and Sacrament, employees, or volunteers. A written record of conversations or correspondence with references should be kept in the minister of the Word and Sacraments' or employee's personnel file.

If false or misleading information is given by the applicant, or relevant information is withheld, the applicant should be eliminated from consideration.

Applicants should be informed of negative comments regarding Sexual Misconduct and shall be given an opportunity to submit additional references or to give other evidence to correct or respond to harmful information obtained from a reference.

The person within any council, or entity authorized to give a reference for any person, shall, if asked to give such a reference, give truthful and complete information regarding allegations, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to Sexual Misconduct of the applicant.

VI. Educating and Training – Awareness

The Presbytery shall appoint appropriate committees to regularly train and educate Covered Persons using educational materials or courses on preventing, identifying, and responding to Sexual Misconduct

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Definitions

- 870
871
872 Accused – Covered Person against whom an allegation of Sexual Misconduct is made.
873 Accuser – Person claiming knowledge of Sexual Misconduct by a Covered Person.
874 Child Sexual Abuse – Any contact or interaction between a child (a person under the
875 age of 18) and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the
876 adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching.
877 Such contact or interaction between a child and an adult is always considered to be
878 Child Sexual Abuse regardless of whether consented to by the child or not.
879 Commissioned Ruling Elder – Ruling elder commissioned to limited pastoral service.
880 (G-2.1001)
881 Council – In this Policy, Presbytery serving as a corporate expression of the church
882 within a certain district and composed of all the congregations, ministers of the Word
883 and Sacrament, Commissioned ruling elders, and certified Christian educators who
884 are ruling elders within that district. (G-3.0301)
885 Covered Person – any minister of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned ruling
886 elder, certified Christian educator, or Employee.
887 Ecclesiastical Mandated Reporter – All Covered Persons are designated by the
888 Presbytery as Ecclesiastical Mandated Reporters.
889 Employee – Persons who are hired or called to work for salary or wages by the
890 Presbytery.
891 Minister of the Word and Sacrament – Ordained pastors, ministers in validated
892 ministries, honorably retired pastors, and at-large presbyters. (G-2.0501)
893 Reasonable Suspicion – A subjective criterion that refers to a belief or opinion based
894 on facts or circumstances that are sufficient to cause a prudent person to believe that
895 an act of Sexual Misconduct may have been committed.
896 Response Coordination Team – A body constituted by the Presbytery to respond to
897 the needs of persons impacted by allegations of Sexual Misconduct.
898 Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and
899 other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment
900 when:
901 1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a
902 condition of an individual's employment or their continued status in an
903 institution;
904 2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis
905 for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
906 3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an
907 individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or
908 offensive working environment

909 Sexual Misconduct – A comprehensive term used in this Policy with respect to the
910 following actions by a Covered Person with respect to an individual with which such
911 Covered Person has a professional, ministerial, or employment relationship:
912 1. Child Sexual Abuse, as defined above.
913 2. Sexual Harassment, as defined above.

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- 914 3. Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
915 4. Sexual conduct (such as offensive, obscene, or suggestive language or
916 behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) that
917 is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.
918 5. Sexual Malfeasance, which is defined as sexual conduct within a ministerial,
919 employment, or professional relationship. Sexual Malfeasance includes
920 unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical
921 conduct of a sexual nature. This definition is not meant to cover relationships
922 between spouses, nor is it meant to restrict church professionals from having
923 normal, social, intimate, or marital relationships.
924 6. Sexual Abuse as defined in the *Book of Order*, D-10.0401c, as amended from
925 time to time.
- 926 Victim – A person who is alleged to have been the object of Sexual Misconduct.
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Presbytery of Arkansas Child and Youth Protection Policy

A Vision for Children and the Church

Our Presbytery affirms...

...That all children are a gift of God,
created by God and created good.

...That all children depend upon adults for safety and security
in a world that does not always value children.

...That we hope for a world where
all children can find a safe place.

...That Jesus welcomed children
and encourages us to welcome them in his name.

...That we take seriously our baptismal vow
to nurture all children committed to our care.

*Excerpts from "A Vision for Children and the Church"
Adopted by the 205th General Assembly of the PC(USA) in June 1993*

Purpose

Our Presbytery believes that children and youth are a gift of God to the whole of the human community. They are an integral part of the community contributing to its worship and ministry. It is in the church that children and youth receive nurture and hear the good news of God's love and protection. Therefore, the church must strive to provide safety and security for children and youth as well as for the adults to whom they are entrusted.

Prohibited Acts.

The following acts are prohibited during any Presbytery activity for children and youth. Additional information about identifying child abuse and neglect is attached as Attachment A.

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a child or youth.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child or youth.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth.
- Physical neglect of a child or youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to Presbytery activities. Adequate supervision means the type of supervision a reasonable person would provide in the same or similar situation.
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a child or youth.
- Possessing or accessing obscene or pornographic materials at any Presbytery activity.
- Possessing illegal drugs or being under the influence of any illegal drugs.
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while participating in any Presbytery activity designed for children and youth.
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a child or youth.
- Carrying any type of weapon.

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Screening

Application. All volunteer YOUTH leaders, all volunteers who drive children and youth, and all employees must complete an authorization and release form (attached) and be screened and approved by the Presbytery.

Criminal History Checks. Criminal history checks must be conducted by the Presbytery for volunteer YOUTH leaders. The General Presbyter will review the criminal history report. If the report shows a "Not Clear" status, the General Presbyter will discuss the report with the individual. If the individual desires to continue pursuing his or her application to work with children and youth, the General Presbyter may discuss the report with Presbytery Counselor at law and the Minister of the Word of the local church. Criminal history checks should be updated periodically.

Disqualifying Offenses. Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a criminal history check or motor vehicle report, the following will disqualify a person from participating in the leadership of any activity involving children and youth: any indictment alleging the offense of, or any conviction for: murder; aggravated assault; sexual abuse; sexual assault (rape); aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child; incest; indecency with a child; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance with a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to children; or a conviction for domestic abuse. If an individual disputes information that appears in his or her criminal history check or motor vehicle report, he or she may appeal through the appropriate governmental agency.

Confidentiality. While this screening process understandably intrudes into the privacy of our own lives, our Presbytery believes that the safety of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent in this process. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all criminal history checks and motor vehicle reports, and the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of making such disclosures will be considered confidential. This information will be handled only by the General Presbyter and staff person(s) responsible for administering this process. A neutral third party outside the church may be retained to conduct criminal history checks or motor vehicle reports, the results of which will be presented to the Executive. The General Presbyter will maintain a secured storage facility in the Presbytery's business office for all confidential information.

Violations

Reporting Prohibited Acts. Anyone witnessing the occurrence of a prohibited act is asked follow the steps outlined below. If a child or youth reports that a prohibited act occurred while participating in a church activity or involved church volunteers or employees at any time or place, the person initially contacted by the child or youth is asked to follow these same steps. A prohibited act must be reported immediately, and any failure to do so will be considered a procedural violation of these guidelines. The Presbytery may treat such violation as grounds for termination of an employee or as grounds for the suspension or prohibition of any person participating in church activities involving children and youth. All questions or concerns regarding any suspected violation should be directed to the General Presbyter.

1. Personally secure the safety of the child or youth.
2. Do not leave the child or youth alone to report the incident.
3. Report the incident immediately to the General Presbyter or the Stated Clerk.
4. Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of the policy.
5. Complete a Confidential Incident Report and deliver it to the General Presbyter or the Stated Clerk.
6. Report abuse and neglect to local authorities as required by law.
7. The Response Team (see next paragraph) is solely responsible for all communications on behalf of the church.

Response to Reported Prohibited Acts. When the General Presbyter or the Stated Clerk receives a report involving a prohibited act, they may consult with others as needed and take such immediate steps as are deemed appropriate. The report will be referred as soon as possible to a Response Team comprised of the General Presbyter, and up to three additional persons appointed by him/her who understand the issue of confidentiality. The Response Team shall take such actions as it deems appropriate in the investigation and handling of the report. The Response Team will be responsible for timely contacting law enforcement authorities as required by law. Designated members of the Response Team will be responsible for all communications on behalf of the church, including those with parents, civil authorities, presbytery, the church's insurance company, and the media. If necessary, the Response Team shall have access to an attorney and counselors for both the alleged victim and the alleged abuser. The Response Team will ensure that pastoral care needs are addressed and

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will notify the accused and the accuser that they have the right to retain their own counsel. The church's counsel will represent the church but not individual interests.

Consequences of Committing a Prohibited Act. Any person who is accused of committing a prohibited act, whether a volunteer or employee, will be suspended automatically from any further participation in any church activity for children and youth. The suspension will continue until a disposition of the report has been made by the Response Team. The disposition shall be based upon such evidence as the Response Team deems appropriate. The evidence may include the results of any investigation by the church or law enforcement or child protection proceeding, or the filing, prosecution or outcome of any criminal charges or other legal proceedings. The Response Team may, at its discretion, delay disposition pending the outcome of any investigation or proceeding involving the alleged violation. Upon disposition, if a majority of the Response Team believes from the evidence that any person has committed a prohibited act, such person shall be prohibited from future participation in all church activities for children and youth, either permanently or for such length of time and in such manner as the Response Team shall determine in its discretion. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment. If the Response Team determines that the allegations are false, the General Presbyter will determine any appropriate pastoral response.

Oversight

On behalf of the Presbytery, the General Council oversees the implementation of these guidelines.

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Attachment A
To “A Vision for Children and the Church”

Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect
Adapted from information provided by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The Role of Adults Who Work with Children and Youth

Observer. Adults should be aware of the physical signs of child abuse and neglect, as well as changes in behaviors and relationships with peers. Sometimes it is hard to determine what is different, but remember if it doesn't seem right, it usually isn't.

Listener. Adults should listen to what children say. They may speak directly to you or a friend, but they may also speak through play, school work, or their reaction to books they read.

Role Model. Children need adult role models who provide them with positive, nurturing reinforcement of their own worth. Church volunteers and employees are in a unique position to be such models. Their behaviors and actions are regularly seen by children and may provide a basis for learning.

Possible Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Physical Abuse

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns, especially when the child cannot adequately explain the cause
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern that may indicate a human bite, cigarette burns, or the use of an instrument on the face, arms, or palms
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Fear of going home or seeing a parent
- Injuries that appear after the child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothes that may hide injuries to the arms or legs
- Reluctant about sitting down; unable to hold a pencil
- Evidence of poor self-concept
- Complaints of beatings or other harsh treatment
- Chronic runaway

Sexual Abuse

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with members of the opposite sex
- Exhibits sexually suggestive or promiscuous behavior
- Knowledgeable about sexual relations

Sexual Abuse (continued)

- Reports sexual assault
- Complaints of pain or itching in genital area
- Unusual odors from genital area
- Drawings or writings with strong, often bizarre sexual theme
- Suicide attempts
- Regressed, clingy behavior
- Poor peer relationships
- Declining grades
- Abrupt change in behavior

Emotional Abuse

- Speech disorders
- Habit disorders
- Conduct disorders
- Developmental lags
- Delinquent behavior
- Overly adaptive behavior
- Substance abuse

Neglect

- Obvious malnutrition
- Dirty hair and body/offensive body odor
- Habitually dressed in torn and dirty clothes
- Obvious fatigue and listlessness
- Unattended for long periods of time
- In need of glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Begs for or steals food
- Abnormally short or underweight for age

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Attachment B
To "A Vision for Children and the Church"

Confidential Information Form

*Must be completed by all volunteer youth leaders,
all volunteers who drive children and youth, and all employees.*

As covenant members of _____ Presbyterian Church, we are each called to teach, nurture, and protect our children through the myriad of opportunities we are given. As a volunteer "shepherd" please know that information gathered below is only asked in the spirit of utmost interest of our littlest and most vulnerable members, our lambs.

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Other Names You Have Used: _____

Name as It Appears on Driver's License: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Application to Serve as a Youth Leader:

Yes ____ No ____ I wish to serve as a youth leader at _____ Presbyterian Church.

If you checked "yes," please answer the following:

Yes ____ No ____ Have you been active in the life of _____ for more than six months?

Yes ____ No ____ Have you been convicted of or pled guilty to or contest to a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except minor traffic violations)? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ____ No ____ Have you ever been charged with a sexual offense, offense relating to children, or crime of violence? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ____ No ____ Have you ever been reported to a social service agency, law enforcement agency, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding child abuse or neglect? If "yes," please describe:

Application to Drive Children and Youth:

Yes ____ No ____ I wish to drive children or youth on behalf of _____ Presbyterian Church.

If you checked "yes," please answer the following:

Yes ____ No ____ Do you have a valid Arkansas driver's license?

Yes ____ No ____ Are you twenty-one years old or older?

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Attachment B (continued)

Yes ____ No ____ Have you been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any moving violations within the past five years? If "yes," please describe:

Yes ____ No ____ Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked?

Yes ____ No ____ Do you carry at least the minimum required level of personal automobile insurance?

Insurance Company: _____ Policy No.: _____

Yes ____ No ____ Do you agree to require seat belt usage at all times and child safety seat usage when appropriate?

Yes ____ No ____ Do you agree to transport persons only in vehicles that are in safe operating condition?

Authorization and Release:

I confirm that the above information is accurate and complete. The church is required by law to obtain the following authorization before requesting criminal background and driving record information: By my signature below, I authorize _____ Presbyterian Church or its agent to obtain information – written, oral, or other – from a consumer reporting agency bearing on my creditworthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics, mode of living, criminal background, and driving background. I understand that this investigation may include interviews with friends, acquaintances, or others who have relevant information and that this report will be used in evaluating me for employment or volunteer positions within the church. I understand that I have a right to request disclosure of the nature and scope of the report if it involves personal interviews with sources such as my friends, acquaintances, or others who have relevant information. For myself, my estate, my representatives, and my assigns, I release and agree to indemnify _____ Presbyterian Church and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim resulting from the investigation of my background.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

~~ All information requested or obtained is confidential ~~

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Attachment C
To "A Vision for Children and the Church"

Confidential Incident Report
Deliver to the General Presbyter or the Safeguards Committee

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____ Place: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____ Age(s): _____

Child's parent or other person responsible for the child's care: _____

Name(s) of those suspected of violating the church's guidelines: _____

Relationship of the accused to the child: _____

Briefly describe what happened: _____

What was the child's demeanor and appearance? What, if anything, did the child say about the incident? _____

What immediate action was taken? _____

Were there any witnesses? Does anyone else have relevant information? (names and phone numbers) _____

Printed Name of Person Reporting: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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Investigating Committee Procedures for a Disciplinary Case

(Adopted February 10, 2018)

“...building up the body of Christ, not destroying it...”

The purpose of discipline is to:

- **Honor God** by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ;
- **Preserve the purity of the church** by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community;
- **Achieve justice and compassion** for all participants involved;
- **Correct or restrain wrongdoing** in order to bring members to repentance and restoration;
- **Uphold the dignity** of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses;
- **Restore the unity of the church** by removing the causes of discord and division;
- Secure the **just, speedy, and economical determination** of proceedings.
 - Preamble, Principles of Church Discipline, Book of Order D-1.0101

“...for redeeming, not for punishing.”

An offense is

- Any **act or omission**
- By a member or a **person in an ordered ministry** of the church
- **That is contrary to the Scriptures** or the **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**
 - D-2.0203

“...dispensation of mercy and not of wrath...”

The Investigating Committee (IC), having been formed upon the receipt by the Stated Clerk of a written statement of an alleged offense occurring within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Arkansas, shall abide by the following procedures in determining whether charges should be filed:

1. Select a moderator and a clerk. ☐
2. Review the statement of alleged offense to determine whether it alleges any facts, that *if true*, constitute an offense. ☐
 - a. NO OFFENSE ALLEGED: end inquiry and report to Stated Clerk. ☐
 - b. OFFENSE ALLEGED: proceed to step 3. ☐
3. Provide the accused with a copy of the statement of alleged offense. ☐
 - a. ADVISE ACCUSED OF RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, TO BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL and, if charges are later filed, TO HAVE

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COUNSEL APPOINTED IF UNABLE TO SECURE COUNSEL. **REMINDE
THROUGHOUT INVESTIGATION.**

4. Provide the accuser with a copy of these procedures. ☐
5. Determine if the accusation repeats previously-made allegations against the accused. ☐
6. Make a thorough inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the alleged offense.
 - a. Examine all relevant papers, documents, and records available. ☐
 - b. Ascertain all available witnesses and inquire of them. ☐
7. Determine whether there is probable cause to believe that an offense was committed by the accused. ☐
8. Decide whether the charge(s) filed—on the basis of the papers, documents, records, testimony, or other evidence—can *reasonably* be proved, having due regard for the character, availability and credibility of the witnesses and evidence available. ☐
9. Initiate, if appropriate, alternative forms of resolution (after the investigation has been completed and probable cause determined, but before charges have been filed). ☐
 - a. Any mediation shall be completed within 120 days unless a continuance is allowed by the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC). ☐
 - b. The IC shall report any settlement agreement to the PJC for its approval. ☐
 - c. Two-thirds (2/3) of PJC must approve the settlement and a record must be made including the name of the accused, the substance of the charges and censure. ☐
 - d. The report must be submitted to the Stated Clerk. ☐
 - e. The IC shall provide an advocate for the accused during the settlement negotiations. ☐
 - f. If a settlement is not reached, the IC shall designate a prosecuting committee and the case shall proceed on the charges filed. ☐
 - g. "All ICs should be aware that an alternative form of resolution agreement must be filed concurrently with charges and may not be used to offer secret agreements. The alternative form of resolution agreement may be used to avoid trial and censure hearing and to craft censures agreeable to all parties, but *may not be used to avoid public accountability.*" -- Advisory Opinions: Note 15 ☐
10. Report to the Presbytery whether charges will be filed. ☐
11. Prepare and file charges and designate a prosecuting committee. ☐
 - a. Inform the accuser of the right to be accompanied by an advocate, to provide support and consultations, at each conference. ☐

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- 1022 12. Promptly inform the accused in writing of the charges to be made, including a
1023 summary of the facts that are expected to be proven at trial to support those
1024 charges. ☐
- 1025 a. Statement shall advise the accused of her or his option to plead guilty
1026 to the charges to avoid a full trial. ☐
- 1027 b. Statement shall indicate the censure it will recommend to the PJC. ☐
- 1028 13. Promptly file a written report that charges will NOT be filed with the Stated
1029 Clerk and notify the accuser. ☐
- 1030 a. Accuser has thirty (30) days to petition the PJC to review the decision
1031 not to file charges. ☐
- 1032 b. IC shall submit a written response to petition. ☐
- 1033 c. PJC designated members have ninety (90) days to respond to petition.
1034 i. If petition is sustained, a new IC shall be appointed. ☐
- 1035 ii. If once again no charges are filed, the matter is concluded. ☐
- 1036 iii. If charges are filed, consideration shall be given to the
1037 possibility of a reference (PJC requests a trial and decision or
1038 hearing in a case not yet decided). ☐
- 1039 14. If no charges are filed, the disposition of the IC's records shall be in
1040 accordance with Presbytery policy. ☐
- 1041 15. Charges
- 1042 a. Must be filed within five (5) years of the time of the commission of an
1043 alleged offense but no later than one (1) year from the date the IC was
1044 formed, whichever occurs first. ☐
- 1045 b. Each charge shall allege only one (1) offense. ☐
- 1046 c. Several charges against the same person may be filed at the same
1047 time. ☐
- 1048 d. Each charge shall be numbered and set forth the conduct that
1049 constituted the offense, including: ☐
- 1050 i. Time, place and circumstances of the commission of the alleged
1051 conduct. ☐
- 1052 ii. List of the names and addresses of the witnesses for the
1053 prosecution. ☐
- 1054 iii. Description of the records and documents to be cited for
1055 support. ☐

1056 *"For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed*
1057 *that will not be known or brought out into the open. "*

1058 *Luke 8:17*

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Policy on Temporary Membership

(Adopted February 10, 2018)

A minister in good standing in their denomination may apply, through the Presbytery of Arkansas' Committee on Ministry, for Temporary Membership in the Presbytery of Arkansas. The Committee on Ministry first will determine whether such Temporary Membership is needed, desirable, and appropriate for temporary service within the Presbytery. The purpose of such membership would be to serve "temporarily in a validated ministry of this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B; G-5.0202)." (*Book of Order*, G-2.0506)

A minister wishing to be enrolled as a Temporary Member in the Presbytery of Arkansas must present a written letter of good standing from their denomination, together with a resume resembling a Personal Information Form used in the PC(USA), and a written request for their temporary service from the Session of a congregation, or the appropriate designee of another validated ministry that meets the criteria of the Presbytery's Validated Ministry Policy (*Book of Order*, G-2.05031).

If the Committee on Ministry determines that Temporary Membership should be considered, an Examinations Sub-Committee of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry shall examine a minister being considered for Temporary Membership "on his or her Christian faith and views in theology, the Sacraments, and the government of this church," as the Sub-Committee would any PC(USA) pastor seeking membership in the Presbytery of Arkansas (*Book of Order*, G-3.0306). Based on the results of this examination, and the consideration of whether this person meets the Examinations Sub-Committee's understanding of the needs of the particular congregation or other validated ministry, the Examinations Sub-Committee shall recommend its findings to the Committee on Ministry as a whole.

At the sole discretion of the Committee on Ministry, the COM will decide whether to recommend the minister to the Presbytery for Temporary Membership. The Committee on Ministry may also recommend to the Presbytery whether a Temporary Member will be given all of the rights and responsibilities of membership in the Presbytery, including, but not limited to, voting, moderating the Session or congregation, and celebrating the sacraments.

Note: The Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B; G-5.0202) allows for members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ to serve in both temporary and called pastoral relationships in the PC(USA). These ministers are still held to the standards of this policy concerning application and examination, although they would ordinarily be given all of the responsibilities and privileges of PC(USA) ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

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**Policy for Ministers from other Denominations Seeking to Serve
in an Installed or Temporary Pastoral Relationship Role**

(Adopted by the Presbytery February 11, 2017; Revised February 10, 2018)

1. When a congregation requires pastoral or temporary pastoral leadership and would like to consider a candidate whose ordination in good standing, prior service, and/or training are not in a denomination in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the session of that congregation shall consult formally with the Committee on Ministry before any formal or informal conversations are conducted with any such candidate.
2. Through its assigned liaisons and its appropriate Examinations Subcommittee, the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry shall determine whether, when, and to what extent the person's ability to lead, teach, preach, and provide pastoral care may or may not serve the present and future mission and vision of the congregation in a manner consistent with Presbyterian theology and polity, and the ethos of The Presbytery of Arkansas and the Presbyterian Church (USA). This determination shall be made in a formal examination by the appropriate Examinations Subcommittee and approved by the Committee on Ministry.
3. In addition, in order to preside at the Lord's Supper or to celebrate a baptism or be the officiant for a session-authorized wedding of the PCUSA congregation, a potential pastor, temporary pastor, minister, or leader whose credentials in good standing are in a denomination not in full communion with the PCUSA, shall normally be required to pursue pre-approved coursework in the following areas:
 - a. Reformed Theology (*Book of Confessions*)
 - b. Reformed Understanding of the Sacraments (*Book of Confessions* and "Directory for Worship")
 - c. Presbyterian Polity (*Book of Order*)
4. Following the completion of the above coursework or its equivalent, the appropriate Examinations Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry shall examine the candidate again and may—at the Committee on Ministry's sole discretion—specifically authorize the individual to exercise one or more of the following pastoral functions if it judges the exercise of that function by that individual to be desirable for the church's ongoing ministry:
 - a. Presiding at the Lord's Supper
 - b. Celebrating a baptism
 - c. Serving as the officiant for a session-authorized wedding of the congregation

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- 1147 Such authorization shall apply only to the congregation, context, and time-frame
1148 specified by the Committee on Ministry.
1149
- 1150 5. In no event shall a pastor, temporary pastor, minister, or other leader whose
1151 ordination, prior service, and training are not in a denomination in full
1152 communion with the Presbyterian Church (USA) moderate the Session of a
1153 congregation of the Presbytery of Arkansas unless and until such leader is
1154 enrolled as a Temporary Member of the Presbytery of Arkansas, or ordained as a
1155 minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA).