

**Bylaws of Providence Presbytery
of the Presbyterian Church in America**

This body shall be known as the Providence Presbytery (or such other name as its members may select, “the Presbytery”) and shall consist of those churches and teaching elders which are members of the Presbyterian Church in America (“PCA”) and are located in the Alabama counties of Winston, Cullman, Marshall, DeKalb, Marion, Franklin, Colbert, Lawrence, Morgan, Lauderdale, Limestone, Cherokee, Madison, and Jackson.

The purpose of the Presbytery shall be the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the gathering and perfecting of the saints and the glory of our eternal king.

In all respects the Presbytery shall be governed and bound first by Scripture law, then by the Book of Church Order of the PCA (“BCO”). These Bylaws are adopted for the use of the Presbytery, but in any instances of conflict either with the BCO or with Scripture law, these procedures shall be subordinate.

**Section 1
GOVERNMENT**

RULES OF ORDER. The rules of parliamentary order shall be the Bylaws herein and after provided. In matters not otherwise covered, the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall prevail.

AMENDMENTS.

BYLAWS - To change the By-Laws is to do so by amendment. To amend the By-Laws of Presbytery, the proposed amendment shall be read at one meeting of Presbytery, docketed for the next Stated Meeting. Then it shall be read again, debated, and voted upon. To amend the By-Laws, a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of Presbyters present and voting is required. To suspend any provision of the By-Laws, an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of Presbyters present and voting is required.

QUORUM. The quorum of Presbytery shall not be less than three (3) teaching and three (3) ruling elders representing a minimum of three (3) different churches. However, the quorum of Presbytery shall never be less than the minimum numbers required by the BCO.

Section 2 TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

STATED MEETINGS. Presbytery shall hold four Stated Meetings each year. These ordinarily shall convene on the second Tuesday of February, May, and November and the first Tuesday of August at 9:00 a.m. Presbytery shall set the place of its meetings. The Presbytery may, by a majority vote of those present and voting, change the time and/or the date of the next Stated Meeting. In an emergency, the moderator may change the time and place of the meeting, or if the moderator is unable to act, the Stated Clerk may perform this function.

CALLED MEETINGS. Called meetings of Presbytery shall be held as specified in the BCO. Persons desiring to call a meeting of Presbytery should consult with the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of Presbytery before requesting the called meeting. Ordinarily, a called meeting should not be considered within one (1) month preceding a Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

ATTENDANCE. Since each TE is a member of Presbytery, attendance by the TE(s) and their church commissioner(s) is expected at all meetings of Presbytery. Excused absences from any meeting of Presbytery must be approved by Presbytery and ordinarily include such reasons as:

1. Immediate need for pastoral care (illness, funerals, crisis counseling, etc.)
2. Personal or family illness or emergencies
3. Unexpected business demands upon those in business
4. Extraordinary distance to travel by those laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery, i.e. missionaries

Upon the fourth (4th) unexcused absence of any TE within a two (2) year period, his name will be sent to the Pastoral Care Committee for appropriate follow-up and inquiry. The Administrative Committee will be notified in regards to nominations to Presbytery committees, and information concerning the continued unexcused absences will be made available to any Presbyteries into which these TEs may transfer.

Section 3 OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY

THE MODERATOR

At the November Stated Meeting a Moderator shall be elected. After serving one (1) year, he may be reelected for only one (1) year. After at least one (1) year out of the office, he is eligible for additional terms. The Moderator shall take the chair at the first stated meeting of the year for which he is elected and preside at all sessions. He shall fulfill all the requirements of the BCO relative to the duties of the Moderator. He has the right to nominate members of Commissions that Presbytery approves for various purposes. Further, he shall appoint members of all standing and special committees unless, in specific cases, Presbytery reserves this matter to itself. The Moderator is an ex-officio member of all standing committees. Ordinarily, the office of Moderator will alternate between Ruling & Teaching Elders.

THE STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery and shall operate under the oversight of the Administrative Committee. He will hold office for three (3) years subject to re-election in accordance with the will of Presbytery but shall not serve more than two (2) terms in succession unless rules are suspended by Presbytery.

The Stated Clerk shall receive a salary fixed by Presbytery and shall be allowed a sum for the necessary expenses of his office, which sum shall be fixed by Presbytery.

It shall be the duty of the Stated Clerk:

- A. To fulfill the requirements as set forth in the BCO.
- B. To keep a complete record of all meetings of Presbytery and be responsible for the custody of the files and equipment of Presbytery.
- C. To publish a full and properly attested accurate record of Minutes of the Meeting of Presbytery in a timely fashion. He shall make available to all members of Presbytery a copy of the Minutes of each meeting of Presbytery.
- D. To keep an accurate roll of the churches, ministers, clerks of Session, licentiates, and candidates under the care of Presbytery. This record shall be published in the minutes of Presbytery annually. He shall preserve all historical papers of the actions of Presbytery which do not appear in the Minutes of Presbytery.
- E. To make available to each church Session, if requested, blank forms needed for the annual statistical report prior to the beginning of the each church year.
- F. To attend the quarterly meetings of the Administrative Committee, with whom he shall plan the stated meetings of Presbytery.
- G. To submit, in conjunction with the Administrative Committee, a tentative docket for the meeting of Presbytery and make available or send a copy of the proposed

- docket to each minister, clerk of Session and other members of Presbytery's Committees at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- H. To receive requests for memorials for ministers and ruling elders who have died during the previous twelve (12) months and to present such memorials prior to the observance of the Lord's Supper at the First Annual (February) Stated Meeting.
 - I. To advise the Moderator in every possible way by keeping him informed of matters requiring his attention, giving notice for him of Called Meetings of Presbytery or changes in time and place of meetings, and rendering any service requested by the Moderator in connection with the operation of Presbytery.
 - J. To keep an historical record of Presbytery from year to year and to preserve all historical papers.
 - K. To prepare, publish and make available a Presbytery Directory.
 - L. To notify in writing within fifteen (15) days after the meeting of Presbytery each member who has been elected or appointed to a Committee of Presbytery. It shall be the responsibility of the Administrative Committee to provide the Stated Clerk with accurate names and addresses of the persons elected by the Presbytery to membership on any committee of Presbytery.
 - M. To make available to each minister a copy of the Bylaws when he is received as a member of Presbytery and to provide a copy to each elected member of a Presbytery Committee when he is appointed to a committee.
 - N. To present the Moderator with a list of the ministers and ruling elders present at the meetings of Presbytery.
 - O. To cause to be bonded all persons assigned responsibility for Presbytery funds, the expenses of same to be borne by Presbytery.
 - P. To recommend an operating budget for his office , which is to be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its meeting prior to the November Meeting of Presbytery and included in its Presbytery budget request.
 - Q. To notify all TEs and clerks of Sessions of any meeting of Presbytery. Such notification shall include: the proposed docket, directions to the meeting location, Minutes from the previous Presbytery meeting, committee reports, and any other pertinent documents.
 - R. The Stated Clerk shall refer communications to the proper committees when practicable prior to the meetings of Presbytery and shall report all such referrals to the court.
 - S. He shall properly sign and issue all official papers authorized by Presbytery and shall also cause to be signed all papers requiring the signature of the Moderator or the trustees of Presbytery.

THE ASSISTANT STATED CLERK

The Presbytery shall elect an Assistant Stated Clerk for a period of three (3) years except that the initial term shall be for a period of two (2) years, so that the terms of the Assistant Stated Clerk and Stated Clerk shall not be concurrent. He is subject to reelection in accordance with the will

of Presbytery but he shall not serve more than two (2) terms in succession. He shall operate under the oversight of the Administrative Committee.

The duties of the Assistant Stated Clerk shall be to record under the direction of the Stated Clerk the Minutes of the meetings of Presbytery and turn the Minutes over to the Stated Clerk within fourteen (14) days after the meeting of Presbytery in a form ready to be disseminated to the Presbytery for consideration.

The Assistant Stated Clerk shall receive a salary fixed by Presbytery.

The Assistant Stated Clerk shall act as an assistant parliamentarian and shall fill the role of the Stated Clerk in the case of his absence from Presbytery.

THE TREASURER

The Treasurer of Presbytery shall receive and disburse the funds of Presbytery under its direction. He shall keep a detailed account of all receipts and disbursements and report the same each January to the Administrative Committee. He shall dispense the funds of the Presbytery as directed by the Chairman of the Presbytery's Committees or the Presbytery as a whole. The Treasurer shall operate under the oversight of the Administrative Committee.

The term of office for the Treasurer of Presbytery shall be for three (3) years except that the initial term shall be for a period of two (2) years, so that the terms of the Treasurer and Stated Clerk shall not be concurrent. The Treasurer shall be elected by Presbytery and may be reelected in accordance with the will of Presbytery but shall not normally serve more than two (2) terms in succession.

MISSION TO THE WORLD LIASON

The Presbytery shall elect a member to serve for a three (3) year term as its Liaison to Mission to the World.

The duty of the Liaison to MTW shall be to keep before the Presbytery the work and needs of our Presbytery missionaries. Other MTW missionaries will be welcomed as guests at meetings of Presbytery, but ordinarily shall not have the privilege of the floor.

TRUSTEES

The Presbytery shall elect three (3) Trustees who shall have the authority to receive, hold, sell or otherwise protect and convey assets as necessary and as authorized on behalf of the Presbytery.

Section 4 COMMITTEES OF PRESBYTERY

GENERAL GUIDELINES

All permanent committees shall seek to have an equal number of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders. The committee members shall be divided into three classes as equal as possible numerically, and shall serve for three years. A member may serve for two (2) terms and, after the lapse of one (1) year, may be re-elected. Filling an unexpired term is not to be counted as a term.

The quorum for each committee shall be one more than half of its membership. Election of permanent committee members shall be held at the fourth (November) Stated Meeting and those elected shall begin their term of office at the first Stated Meeting of the next calendar year. To enhance their effectiveness elected members to a new committee are encouraged to attend all committee meetings after their election and prior to beginning their terms.

Each permanent committee shall elect on or before the first (February) Stated Presbytery Meeting of any calendar year at least a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary to serve for the upcoming year. Results of these elections shall be reported to the Stated Clerk in a timely manner.

All committees will provide to the Administrative Committee a proposed budget for their own needs for the upcoming year by the third (August) Stated Presbytery Meeting.

Special business of permanent committees may be conducted by e-mail or conference call upon consent of 3/4 of the members of the committee as long as proper records are kept. Wisdom should be used in the frequency of utilizing these methods, for face-to-face meetings are always preferable, but not always possible.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committees shall submit their written reports to the Stated Clerk in a standard format as required by the Stated Clerk at least two weeks before the meeting of Presbytery at which the report is to be made, in order that the report may be made available to Presbyters with the docket before the Stated Presbytery Meeting.

Ordinarily only committee recommendations from the report and questions from the floor will be considered at the scheduled time for each committee during the business sessions of the Presbytery. Committee recommendations shall be followed by the recorded vote of the Committee and the rationale of the Committee to expedite the meeting of Presbytery. Presbytery will not ordinarily hear reports which have not been submitted in the timely manner listed above and provided with the docket unless Presbytery approves by a 2/3rds vote of Presbyters present and voting.

Presbytery shall admonish any Committees which are negligent in fulfilling their charter.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Committees are encouraged to keep good and accurate minutes of their proceedings.

Minutes of Committees are not to be considered a Committee Report to Presbytery.

COMMITTEE & COMMISSION EXPENSES

The necessary expenses of the committees and commissions of Presbytery shall be paid by the treasurer when approved in writing by the chairman of the committee or commission.

No member of a committee of the Presbytery shall sign a contract or otherwise obligate the Presbytery for any expenditure in excess of the amount in the approved budget for that committee, without the review and approval of the Administrative Committee of Presbytery.

PERMANENT COMMITTEES

The Permanent Committees of the Presbytery are:

1. Administrative Committee (AC)
2. Candidates and Credentials Committee (CCrC)
3. Mission to North America Committee (MNA)
4. Pastoral Care Committee (PCC)
5. Reformed University Ministries Committee (RUM)

1) Administrative Committee (AC)

Membership.

The Administrative Committee (AC) shall consist of four (4) members. The Stated Clerk and Treasurer shall attend meetings of the AC as observers, subject to excuse at the discretion of the AC.

Duties.

- A. To prepare, with cooperation of the Stated Clerk, a proposed docket for each stated meeting of Presbytery.
- B. To submit at the 4th (November) Stated Presbytery Meeting, after all nominees have been contacted before their nomination for their consent and willingness to actively serve if elected, the following:

1. A full slate of Permanent Committee nominees.
2. A nominee for Presbytery Moderator for the following year.
3. A slate of nominees for consideration to serve on the Permanent Committees of the General Assembly.

In this regard the committee ought to endeavor to involve every local church in the work of Presbytery by seeking to place at least one Ruling Elder from each church on some Presbytery committee in order to facilitate Presbytery-wide parity.

- C. To fill, with the approval of the Moderator and at the request of the committee, vacancies on any permanent committees of the Presbytery.
- D. To submit at the first (February) Stated Presbytery Meeting of each year, after all nominees have been contacted for their consent and willingness to actively serve if elected, a slate of Commissioners to the various Committees of Commissioners for service at the upcoming General Assembly.
- E. To supervise and review the work of the Stated Clerk, Assistant Stated Clerk and Treasurer. It shall nominate persons to fill these office terms at the appropriate times.
- F. To prepare and recommend to Presbytery at its 4th (November) Stated Presbytery Meeting a Presbytery budget for the following year.
- G. To receive and submit to Presbytery bills, overtures, resolutions, protests, complaints and any other communications requiring response addressed to the Presbytery. In each instance, if such communication is found in order and without intemperate language, the committee shall report to Presbytery with a recommendation concerning its resolution.
- H. To keep the Presbytery informed concerning all legal matters within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery and arrange to furnish counsel to the Presbytery, its committees, and consider the legal needs of any congregation when asked to do so.
- I. To administer any Presbytery's Disaster Relief Fund the Presbytery deems appropriate to create.
- J. At such time as trustees of the Presbytery are needed, the Administrative Committee shall provide nominees for Presbytery consideration.
- K. To encourage, oversee, and report on the Presbytery WIC organization.

2) Candidates and Credentials Committee

Membership.

The Candidates and Credentials Committee (CCrC) shall consist of eight (8) members.

Duties.

- A. To examine men recommended as candidates by Sessions in accordance with the BCO, and to present approved candidates to Presbytery for examination.
- B. To counsel and oversee candidates in regard to their preparation for the ministry and to arrange for further specific study as may be needed.
- C. To recommend candidates to a seminary when scholarship funds administered by the seminary require such recommendation and approval by the Presbytery.
- D. To supervise the internship program.
- E. To examine candidates for licensure and ordination.
- F. To examine ordained men who are transferring into the bounds of this Presbytery.
- G. To approve the terms of the call of men coming into Presbytery.
- H. The committee shall examine men in all areas required by the Book of Church Order. Written exams must be completed and returned to the chairman at least four weeks prior to the Presbytery meeting at which the candidate will appear for licensure or ordination in order that the exam may be graded before he appears for oral exam by the committee. The committee will require candidates for licensure to submit sufficient accepted media copies of a sermon they have preached, which the committee shall evaluate.
- I. In addition to the requirements of the BCO, the Committee shall examine all men coming into Providence Presbytery in the areas including but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Physical, emotional and moral health
 - 2. Financial needs and problems
 - 3. Spiritual gifts
 - 4. History of Ministry
 - 5. Spiritual maturity
 - 6. General Ability to Edify the Church

Although these areas are subjective in nature, the Committee shall draw conclusions about the general acceptability of the man for the church and report

its findings or concerns to the Presbytery candidates and pulpit supply. Churches desiring to call a particular minister shall notify the committee of its selection and of the terms of the call, providing the committee with a sufficiently future date for extending the call in order to allow the committee to act properly in processing the call through Presbytery.

- J. To lead examinations on the floor of Presbytery by having the chairman or his designee ask representative questions from each area on which the man is to be examined. After the representative exam questions are asked the Presbytery may ask questions of the examinee from the floor.
- K. When a church is without a minister or is seeking to add an additional minister to its staff, it should notify the committee of its needs, and it should seek the counsel of the committee both for locating and selecting candidates and pulpit supply. Churches desiring to call a particular minister shall notify the committee of its selection and of the terms of the call, providing the committee with a sufficiently future date for extending the call in order to allow the committee to act properly in processing the call through Presbytery.

3) Mission to North America Committee

Membership.

The Mission to North America Committee (MNA) shall consist of six (6) members. Reasonable effort shall be made to have members spread across the geographical bounds of Presbytery. Three members of MNA shall be elected by the committee to the Leadership Team of the Alabama Church Planting Network (ACPN).

Duties.

- A. To assist churches of Presbytery in evangelism and revitalization.
- B. To provide oversight and financial resources to the ACPN which will:
 - 1. Develop and coordinate a strategic plan for church planting within the Presbytery.
 - 2. Provide financial aid to churches and guide them toward a self-supporting status, when possible.
 - 3. Provide oversight to mission churches in the Presbytery receiving aid or loans from the Presbytery.
- C. To recommend to the Presbytery for final approval all candidates, locations, funding allocations and strategies for each church plant.

- D. To pray with and for the new church plants and planters.
- E. To, act and buy, sell, convey, lease, mortgage, and otherwise encumber real property either owned or acquired by the Presbytery for church extension purposes with the approval of Presbytery.
- F. To counsel with congregations desiring to unite with this Presbytery, taking care to follow current BCO requirements for doing so.

4) Pastoral Care Committee

Membership.

The Church & Pastor Care Committee (PCC) shall consist of four (4) members. Reasonable efforts should be made to have representatives spread evenly across the geographical bounds of Presbytery.

Duties.

- A. To inquire into matters and offer counsel at the invitation or request of a minister, Session of a Church, the Congregation of a Church by a majority vote at a duly called meeting of the Congregation or at the instruction of Presbytery when said ministers, sessions, or congregations encounter problems in fulfilling their calling. If the committee deems wise, the committee shall report on the matter to the Presbytery with recommendations for further action.
- B. To act as a commission of the Presbytery in dissolving pastoral relationships in cases where the minister and congregation formally concur in such dissolution and when judicial complaints are not involved. In situations in which no congregation is involved, the committee has the authority to act as a commission of the Presbytery in dismissing ministers at the request of the minister. In such cases where the commission would propose dismissal against the will of the minister, the matter will be brought before the entire Presbytery. The committee shall inform the Stated Clerk of Presbytery of any action taken in exercising this authority, and the Clerk will subsequently remove the minister from the Presbytery rolls after the next stated meeting.
- C. To oversee the annual examination of the minutes and records of the Sessions of the local churches and report their findings to the affected churches and to the Presbytery.
- D. In conjunction with the stated clerk, to review the reasons for absences from meetings of the Presbytery and provide pastoral care and encouragement where needed. In addition, the committee will pastorally inquire as to the welfare of

sessions and members of Presbytery who are referred to it because of four unexcused absences in a two year period.

- E. To receive requests and make recommendations concerning ministers who desire to labor in works beyond the Presbytery's jurisdiction. The Presbytery will not ordain or approve a minister to work outside the bounds of the Presbytery (1) without the full concurrence of or (2) under circumstances not completely agreeable to Presbytery. The committee shall implement the Presbytery's oversight of ministers (including missionaries and chaplains who remain members of the Presbytery) laboring outside the bounds of the Presbytery. Whenever possible, unless mitigating circumstances dictate otherwise, ministers should be asked to hold membership in the Presbytery in which they labor.
- F. To review, at least semiannually, the status and welfare of ministers without a call and encourage and help where possible as needed.
- G. If the Presbytery is so inclined, the committee shall administer a mercy fund for ministers experiencing financial emergencies. The committee may make known such needs to the Presbytery between Stated Presbytery Meetings and solicit assistance from the local churches as it deems necessary and appropriate.
- H. To oversee the TEs that serve as stated supply according to BCO 22-5.

5) Reformed University Ministries Committee

General

Northern Alabama Presbytery will accomplish campus work through the Alabama Joint Committee on Campus Ministries. The Alabama Joint Committee on Campus Ministries is an arm of the presbyteries of Evangel Presbytery, Providence Presbytery, Southeast Alabama Presbytery and Warrior Presbytery. In each presbytery the Joint Committee on Campus Ministries will work to carry out the common campus ministries within the boundaries in an effective and efficient manner.

Membership.

Providence Presbytery will designate four members of this presbytery to serve on its RUM subcommittee. None of the designated members shall be ministers serving RUM. Members of the subcommittees from each of the Alabama presbyteries will comprise the Joint Committee on Campus Ministries.

Duties.

The Joint Committee on Campus Ministries and the minister(s) operating under their supervision will function in accordance with the "Manual for Campus Ministries: Presbyterian Church in America" as approved by the Seventh General Assembly of the PCA. (1979 minutes, p. 205 ff).

To report directly to the presbytery concerning the work of the Joint Committee and to present any appropriate matters to the presbyteries.