

# **John Calvin Presbytery Bylaws**

**Approved March 5, 2011**

Updated September 27, 2012

Amended November 3, 2012

Updated January 25, 2013

Amended August 3, 2020

Amended February 27, 2021

Updated September 27, 2021

Amended February 26, 2022

Over two thousand years ago, on Pentecost, God poured out the Holy Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the followers of Jesus began to spread the good news about Christ throughout the world. Where their message was heard and received, churches were planted. These churches lived the gospel and planted other churches as well. As the churches matured, they joined together into an organizational structure that helped them support each other, held them accountable, and provided direction for their ministry.

As part of the structure of John Calvin Presbytery, the following statements have served as part of our historical understanding of what it means to be a structure that supports one another, holds each other accountable, and provides direction for our ministry together. As part of the Reformed tradition of the church, we appreciate the honorable traditions of where we have been and look forward to the new thing God is doing among us.

### **THE FAITHFUL CONGREGATION**

*Our vision of a faithful congregation in John Calvin Presbytery is one that through Word and Sacrament, Christian nurture, fellowship, and care equips its people -  
to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world,  
to exercise compassion,  
to do justice,  
and to be stewards of God's creation in their daily life.*

*Adopted by the 94<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of John Calvin Presbytery, July 10, 1995*

### **A MISSION STATEMENT FOR JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERY**

We are most alive when we gather as a Presbytery in the name of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to do God's mission in southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri.

We are active members of all ages from congregations and ministers of Word and Sacrament, challenged by the culture in which we are set.

We are gathered as Presbytery to pray, to sing, to hear God's Word, to seek God's transformation of congregations, and to discern together how we can be open to the activity of the Holy Spirit among us.

We are then scattered – and as we are empowered by the Spirit, inspired by the Scriptures, informed by the Book of Confessions, and instructed by the Book of Order, we seek to challenge, support, strengthen and care for our congregations in their mission, who through Word and Sacrament, Christian nurture, fellowship, and care, equip their people to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world, to exercise compassion, to do justice, and to be stewards of God's creation in their daily life.

*Adopted by the 94<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of John Calvin Presbytery, July 10, 1995*

[Note: Useful commentaries on **The Faithful Congregation** and the **Mission Statement** may be found in the **Book of Order 1994-1995**, W-6.0000 through W-6.4000 and W-7.0000 through W-7.6002; and in Loren B. Mead, **Transforming Congregations for the Future** (Bethesda, MD: An Alban Institute Publication, 1994).]

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**Chapter One  
Definition**

**1.00** This Presbytery shall be known as John Calvin Presbytery of the Synod of Mid-America of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**1.10** The area of responsibility for mission and ministry of the John Calvin Presbytery shall include the counties of:

State of Kansas:	Allen Crawford	Neosho Cherokee	Labette	Bourbon
State of Missouri:	Vernon St. Clair Lawrence Greene Webster Douglas Howell	Barton Cedar Barry Christian Taney Ozark Maries	Jasper Dade Hickory Stone Laclede Pulaski	Newton Phelps Polk Dallas Wright Texas

**1.20** As a Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), John Calvin Presbytery shall be governed in its proceedings by the *Book of Order*, these *Bylaws*, and *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (most recent edition)*.

**Chapter Two  
Meetings**

**2.00** John Calvin Presbytery shall ordinarily hold stated meetings four (4) times each year according to the following schedule:

The last Saturday in February, the third Thursday in May, the first Thursday in August, and the first Saturday in November. These dates may be altered by the General Council when deemed necessary.

**2.10** Report of GA and Synod Commissioners

Commissioners to the General Assembly and Synod shall ordinarily present their report at the next meeting of Presbytery following the meeting of the General Assembly or Synod.

**2.20** Special meetings of John Calvin Presbytery shall be held when necessary as provided by the *Book of Order* G-3.0304.

**2.30** Member Responsibilities

It is the duty and responsibility of all ministers of the Presbytery who are not honorably retired to attend all stated meetings. Excuses will be granted for good and justifiable reasons. All written or verbal requests for excused absences received by the Presbytery office prior to, or within one week following, a stated meeting of Presbytery shall be granted.

## **2.40 Representation at Presbytery meetings**

(a) When the Presbytery meets, each church shall be represented by an elder commissioned by the session with the following guidelines:

Churches with membership over 200 shall be represented as follows:

201- 500 – 2 elders

501-1000 – 3 elders

1001-2000 – 4 elders

2001-3000 – 5 elders

It is the duty and responsibility of each session to be represented at all stated meetings of Presbytery by a duly elected elder. All written and verbal requests for excused absences received by the Presbytery office prior to, or within one week following, a stated meeting of Presbytery shall be granted.

(b) Each elder elected an officer, a moderator of a standing committee, or a member of the General Council shall be enrolled as a member of Presbytery for the term of office, whether or not commissioned by his or her session.

(c) All lay members of standing committees who may not be commissioners to Presbytery shall be granted speaking privileges on the floor but may not vote.

(d) Commissioned Ruling Elders who are currently serving a congregation have voice and vote on the floor of Presbytery. CRE votes count as elder commissioner votes for parity purposes.

(e) Certified Christian Educators and commissioned church workers working within its bounds who are employed on at least a half-time basis by a church or agency of the Presbytery and are present at a meeting of Presbytery, shall be granted voice privileges on the floor but may not vote.

## **2.50 Roll**

The roll of Presbytery shall be taken at the beginning of each stated meeting, and the names of members present, of those excused, and of those absent without leave shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## **2.60 Quorum**

A quorum necessary to transact business at each stated or called meeting of Presbytery shall consist of not less than six (6) ministers and as many elders as may be present providing that at least four (4) churches are represented by ruling elders.

## **2.70 Worship**

Each stated meeting of Presbytery shall include a service of worship to ordinarily include a sermon and the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Under unusual circumstances the General Council may make an exception to this requirement. Leadership of the worship service at each meeting of Presbytery should be representative of the makeup of the membership of Presbytery so that more than one of the following constituencies are represented in leadership roles: lay, clergy, male, female, racial ethnic.

## **Chapter Three Officers**

**3.00** The officers of John Calvin Presbytery shall be a Moderator and a Stated Clerk.

**3.10** Moderator

The Moderator shall ordinarily be elected for a term of one (1) year and installed during the last stated Presbytery meeting of the year. Terms of service will be from January 1 through December 31. As long as he or she is a member of Presbytery, the Moderator will serve until a successor is installed. If the Moderator is unable to moderate, the Moderator-elect will do so. Ordinarily, the Moderator will alternate between clergy and elder and between male and female so that all are equally represented.

The duties of the moderator shall be those provided for in the *Book of Order* G-3.0104.

**3.20** *Section rescinded here and moved to Section 4.15 (November 3, 2012).*

**3.30** Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery for a term of three (3) years. The nominee, chosen from among those eligible members of Presbytery, shall be presented to Presbytery by the General Council upon recommendation of the Administrative Ministries Committee. The Stated Clerk shall be elected at the fourth stated meeting of Presbytery of each third year, assume office at the first of the calendar year, and may be re-elected to succeeding terms. In the Stated Clerk's absence, death, or inability to serve, the General Council shall appoint an interim Stated Clerk who shall serve until further action by Presbytery. The salary of the Stated Clerk shall be determined annually by the General Council upon recommendation from the Administrative Ministries Committee.

The Stated Clerk shall perform those duties provided by the *Book of Order* G-3.0104 and the *Manual of Operations*.

The Stated Clerk may request volunteer help to record minutes during presbytery meetings.

## **Chapter Four General Council**

**4.00** The Presbytery shall elect a General Council as provided in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0106 and G-3.0109 and these *Bylaws*, which shall meet at least three (3) weeks before each stated meeting of Presbytery or when necessary at the call of the Moderator or at the direction of Presbytery.

**4.10** The General Council shall have the number of voting members as prescribed by the *Manual of Operations*. The membership shall include:

The Moderator of Presbytery, the Moderator-elect of Presbytery who will serve as the Vice-Moderator of General Council, the Moderator of General Council, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Women and the Moderators of all standing committees or their designated representatives.

#### **4.15** Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Presbytery for a term of three (3) years and shall be eligible for re-election. The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt and disbursement of the funds of the Presbytery; receive a detailed account of all receipts and disbursements from the financial service; report them to the General Council and to the Administrative Ministries Committee regularly and to the Presbytery quarterly; be bonded, along with others who handle Presbytery finances, and see that the books are properly reviewed as prescribed by the *Book of Order*, G-3.0113.

#### **4.20** Ex-Officio Members

- (a) The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery shall serve as secretary of the General Council and shall be an ex-officio member with voice but without vote.
- (b) The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the General Council with voice but without vote.
- (c) The Pastoral Presbyter shall be an ex-officio member of the General Council with voice but without vote.

#### **4.30** Quorum

A quorum necessary to transact the business of the General Council shall be two (2) ministers and two (2) elders.

#### **4.40** General Council Officers

- (a) The Moderator of the General Council shall be the immediate past Moderator of Presbytery and shall assume this office upon installation of the next Moderator of Presbytery.
- (b) The Moderator-elect of Presbytery shall serve as the Vice-Moderator of the General Council, and shall be Acting-Moderator in the event of the absence, the death, or the inability to serve of the Moderator of the General Council.

The Moderator-elect of Presbytery shall ordinarily be elected and installed for a term of one (1) year during the last stated Presbytery meeting of the year. As long as he or she is a member of the Presbytery, the Moderator-elect will serve until a successor is installed. The Moderator-elect shall ordinarily succeed to the office of Moderator.

- (c) The General Council may elect such other officers as it deems necessary.

#### **4.50** General Council Responsibilities

The General Council shall have those responsibilities assigned to it by the *Book of Order* and the *Manual of Operations*.

#### **4.60** Accountability

The General Council is responsible to Presbytery and shall report every item of business transacted by it at each stated meeting of Presbytery.

### **Chapter Five Incorporation**

#### **5.00** Incorporation

John Calvin Presbytery shall be incorporated by the State of Missouri under the general Not for Profit Corporation Act.

#### **5.10** Membership of the Corporation

The members of the Presbytery corporation shall be the duly constituted members of John Calvin Presbytery as constituted under the *Book of Order*. Each member of the Presbytery corporation shall have equal voting powers.

#### **5.20** Board of Directors of Corporation

(a) The voting members of the General Council of John Calvin Presbytery shall be the Board of Directors of the Presbytery corporation and their election to the General Council shall constitute their election to the Board of Directors.

(b) The Moderator of the General Council shall be the chair of the Board of Directors of the Presbytery corporation. The Moderator of the Administrative Ministries Committee, as elected by the Presbytery, shall be the vice-chair of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall be the treasurer of the Board of Directors, and the stated clerk shall be the secretary of the Board of Directors.

#### **5.30** Meetings of the Corporation

Every duly called and constituted meeting of John Calvin Presbytery shall constitute a duly and properly called meeting of the members of the Presbytery corporation. All actions authorized to be taken by the corporation may be taken at any stated meeting of Presbytery without special notice to the members, or at a meeting called for the purpose of taking such action.

#### **5.40** Administrative Ministries Committee

The Presbytery shall elect an Administrative Ministries Committee (AMC) composed of nine (9) members who shall serve in three (3) classes with a three (3) year term. The Treasurer and the Pastoral Presbyter serve as ex-officio members with voice and no vote.

(a) The Administrative Ministries Committee is responsible for conducting, managing, and directing the business affairs of the Presbytery and of the Presbytery corporation. This includes reviewing, supervising, and approving bookkeeping, auditing, and financial procedures. The Administrative Ministries Committee also manages personnel matters

including hiring, annual reviews and dismissal. The AMC reviews management affairs of civil entities related to presbytery.

(b) The Administrative Ministries Committee receives requests for all of the following:

Loan requests, permission to borrow or sell from congregations, land purchases for a new church development site, loan applications and mortgages from the General Assembly and Synod for new church development sites and building loans, loan guarantees from lending institutions, authorization of requests to encumber church property, authorization of leases of real property for a duration in excess of five (5) years, withdrawals from restricted accounts, and all contractual agreements required by the Presbytery. All such actions shall come to Presbytery with committee recommendation at its next stated meeting.

(c) The AMC shall be responsible for the administration of the Trustees' fund of Presbytery and may grant loans to congregations from the fund in accordance with the policies approved by the Presbytery.

## **Chapter Six Standing Committees**

- 6.00** The Presbytery shall have such standing committees as may be required by the *Book of Order* and as necessary and appropriate to carry out its work of mission and ministry. Such committees are enumerated and described in the *Manual of Operations*.
- 6.10** The membership, responsibilities and organization, and reporting relationships shall be those required by the *Book of Order* and the *Manual of Operations*.

## **Chapter Seven Creative Ministry Grants**

- 7.00** Presbytery shall establish and maintain a Creative Ministries Grant Fund under the oversight of the General Council. The purpose of this fund is to support creative and emerging ministries from within the Presbytery. Ideas may be brought from committees, affinity groups, or from congregations.
- 7.10** The General Council shall establish and maintain guidelines for grants from the fund and the criteria by which grants shall be made as funds are available.

## **Chapter Eight Technology**

- 8.00** General Council and committees of Presbytery are encouraged to use web-based and phone technologies in the accomplishment of their work. All members shall have the opportunity to participate in open discussion using such technology. In all such instances where the structure does its work as a group, minutes shall be regularly kept and distributed. Any votes

taken by email or through other technology will always be recorded in the minutes of the corresponding body.

## **Chapter Nine Discipline**

### **9.00** Permanent Judicial Commission

The Presbytery shall have a Permanent Judicial Commission composed of ministers and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. *Book of Order* D-5.0100 defines the parameters of membership for the PJC.

The powers, duties, and procedures of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be those stated in Chapter V of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Rules of Discipline* (*Book of Order*, D-5.0000 *et seq.*)

### **9.10** Investigating Committee

When needed, the Moderator and Stated Clerk of Presbytery and the Moderator of General Council shall together name an Investigating Committee. If any one or more of the above shall have a conflict in the matter requiring such a committee, then the full General Council shall name the Investigating Committee. *Book of Order* D-10.0201 a. defines the membership of an Investigating Committee. *Book of Order* D-10.0103 defines the need for naming such.

The powers, duties, and procedure of an investigating committee shall be those stated in Chapter X of the *Rules of Discipline* (*Book of Order* D-10.0000 *et seq.*).

## **Chapter Ten Amendment of Bylaws**

### **10.00** These *Bylaws* may be amended at any stated meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present providing one of the following has been done:

- such proposed amendment was read and filed with the Stated Clerk at the preceding stated meeting of Presbytery, or
- such proposed amendment was sent to each pastor and clerk of session in the Presbytery at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of Presbytery at which the proposed amendment is to be considered and voted upon.

Every proposed amendment shall be reviewed by the General Council and its recommendation heard before the Presbytery votes on the amendment.

### **10.10** The Stated Clerk is authorized to revise references to the *Book of Order* in these *Bylaws* in order to reflect subsequent amendments made by the General Assembly.

### **10.20** It shall be the responsibility of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, in consultation with the Pastoral Presbyter and with access to full services of the Presbytery office and office staff, to edit, publish, and update these *Bylaws*. The Stated Clerk shall be granted editorial privilege in reorganizing and rewording for clarity, and those changes shall stand unless Presbytery acts to change the wording of a particular section. There shall be no routine review and approval of the Stated Clerk's *Bylaws* wording and organization. Changes of policy or procedure shall be made using appropriate parliamentary process with the *Bylaws* reflecting changes made.