

Guidelines for an Administrative Commission Appointed to Close a Congregation

Approved, April 17, 1990
Minutes, pp. 11664-11667

GUIDELINES FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION APPOINTED TO CLOSE A CONGREGATION

Book of Order G-3.0109. A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a council. The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission's powers and any restrictions on those powers. ... The decisions of an administrative commission shall be reported to the clerk of the designating council, who shall report it to the council at its next stated meeting.

A. Appointment of the Commission

1. A request made by the Session of the congregation or by an appropriate body of the Presbytery shall be brought to the Presbytery Coordinating Commission (PCC) or the Commission on Ministry (COM) for consideration and recommendation to Presbytery. Upon authorization by Presbytery, the Moderator of Presbytery will appoint the moderator and members of an administrative commission and report the appointments to Presbytery.
2. The charge to the commission shall clearly state:
 - a. Whether the commission is granted power to act on behalf of Presbytery or whether it is to recommend actions to Presbytery;
 - b. Whether the commission is granted power to act in place of the Session or whether it is to act together with the Session.
3. The membership of the commission shall include persons, if possible, who are knowledgeable about the history and ministry of the congregation.
4. The Moderator of Presbytery will request the Executive Presbyter to assign staff to advise the commission. Staff will supply the commission with relevant policies and other information needed for its assignment.

B. Responsibilities of the Commission

1. If the Session still functions:
 - a. Meet with the members of the Session and, when possible, with other members of the congregation and with representatives of appropriate Presbytery entities to learn about the present situation of the congregation, including information about any relevant actions taken by the session and/or the congregation.
 - b. Advise the Session of its responsibility to urge members to seek new congregational homes and to transfer membership to those congregations.
 - c. Assure that the following records of the congregation are placed in the possession of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Chicago:

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- (1) Minutes of meetings of the Session, Trustees, Deacons and congregation;
 - (2) Financial records;
 - (3) Membership and baptismal rolls;
 - (4) Existing blueprints of the congregation's building and other real property;
 - (5) Such other records as may exist.
- d. Refer all fiscal, property and legal matters and decisions regarding them to the Business Affairs Work Group (BAWG) of PCC. BAWG shall, as needed, consult with COM and other Presbytery entities. It shall bring its recommendations to PCC, which shall make recommendations to Presbytery.
 - e. Supervise the preparation of an inventory which lists the contents of the congregation's building and any other real property. From that inventory, the BAWG shall determine the items which shall remain with the building and the items which may be sold or given away. In consultation with the Session, the commission shall direct the disposition of those assets.
 - f. Supervise the preparation of a final financial reconciliation and/or audit.
 - g. Plan for and take part in a closing service of worship.
 - h. Prepare a final report to Presbytery.
2. If the Session no longer functions:
- a. Meet, as far as is possible, with members of the congregation and with representatives of appropriate Presbytery committees to learn about the present situation of the congregation, including information about any relevant actions taken by the Session and/or the congregation.
 - b. Assume responsibility for urging members to seek new congregational homes and to transfer membership to those congregations.
 - c. Assure that the following records of the congregation are placed in the possession of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Chicago:
 - (1) Minutes of meetings of the Session, Trustees, Deacons and congregation;
 - (2) Financial records;
 - (3) Membership and baptismal rolls;
 - (4) Existing blueprints of the congregation's building and other real property;
 - (5) Such other records as may exist.
 - d. Supervise the preparation of an inventory which lists the contents of the congregation's building and any other real property. From that inventory, the BAWG shall determine the items which shall remain with the building and the items which may be sold or given away. In consultation with the Session, the commission shall direct the disposition of those assets.

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- e. Supervise the preparation of a final financial reconciliation and/or audit.
 - f. Plan for and take part in a closing service of worship.
 - g. Prepare a final report to Presbytery.
3. Final Report to Presbytery
- a. Review the charge to the commission.
 - b. Report briefly on the background and history of the congregation.
 - c. If the commission was given power to act, report all the actions taken by the commission, including the effective date of the dissolution of the congregation.

If the commission was given power to recommend, list the recommendations of the commission for presbytery action.
 - d. Request that Presbytery take several moments to remember and give thanks for the life and ministry of this particular congregation.
 - e. Request that the administrative commission be dissolved.