

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

I. The Vision and Mission of the Presbytery of Chicago

The vision of the Presbytery of Chicago is to nurture, guide, and govern those who witness as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in greater metropolitan Chicago, to the end that such witness strengthens the whole church and gives glory to God by:

Providing that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard,
responding to the promise of God's new creation in Christ, and inviting all people to participate in that new creation;

Providing that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received,
welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ, bearing witness to Christ's saving death and resurrection, anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the hungry; and

Nurturing a covenant community of disciples of Christ,
living in the strength of God's promise, and giving itself in service to God's mission. (See G-3.0101).

We do this through a commitment to a shared rhythm of welcoming, restoring, dwelling, and sending.

II. The Presbytery's Organization for Mission

- A. The Presbytery of Chicago is a mid Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with congregations in Cook County, Lake County, and DuPage County, Illinois.
- B. The mission, ministry and administration of the Presbytery of Chicago is carried out through two interrelated means. The vision, relationships, mission and structure of the Presbytery are supported by its primary commissions and committees. (Sections IV, V). The secular responsibilities of the Presbytery are conducted through the Corporations of the Presbytery (Section VII).
- C. The following terms define the organization of the Presbytery of Chicago and its entities.
 1. **Entity:** A particular unit of the Presbytery of Chicago's structure that is duly constituted in accordance with this Manual of Operations and the Book of Order.
 2. **Primary Commissions and Committees:** Standing entities of the Presbytery of Chicago which implement the duties required of presbyteries by the *Book of Order*. They are the following: Presbytery Coordinating Commission, Commission on Ministry, Commission on Preparation for Ministry, Nominating Committee, Transition Team, and the Permanent Judicial Commission.
 3. **Presbytery Assembly:** The teaching elder members of the Presbytery of Chicago, an approximately equal number of ruling elders who are commissioners representing member congregations, and other ruling elder members. The Presbytery Assembly

gathers in stated meetings at regular intervals, at least four times per year, and whenever called into special session.

4. **The Corporate Structure** of the Presbytery is defined in Section VII, below.

- D. As provided in F-1.0403, "The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person." Therefore, the Presbytery of Chicago "shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution."
- E. The Primary Committees and Commissions may report directly to the Presbytery Assembly. Subcommittees or task forces formed by the Primary Committees and Commissions shall ordinarily report to the Presbytery Assembly through the appropriate Committee or Commission.
- F. Whistleblower Protection: It is the responsibility of all officers, employees and elected leaders to report financial irregularities, misconduct, fraud, misrepresentation, or other serious financial concerns that may constitute unethical or illegal conduct. An officer, employee, or elected leader who raises a good-faith concern regarding financial misconduct or compliance with any law, is protected from any form of retaliation by the organization. "Good faith" means that the director, officer, or employee has a reasonably held belief that the concern reported is true and has not made the report either for personal gain or for any ulterior malicious motive. Malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

No officer, employee or elected leader, who in good faith reports an accounting, internal control, auditing, or financial concern shall be subjected to harassment, retaliation, or any adverse employment consequence. Any officer, employee or elected leader who retaliates against the reporting party will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment or of volunteer service.

- G. Presbytery business shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except as noted below:
 - 1. Remote Deliberation:
 - a. All deliberations of the Presbytery Assembly will be conducted only under conditions that allow for simultaneous aural communication among its members.
 - b. Other Presbytery entities may deliberate and/or make decisions by remote deliberation through means such as telephone conferences, e-mail and telephone polls, providing they comply with the following procedures:
 - 1) Telephone conferences will be conducted so that the person moderating can determine if a quorum is present.

- 2) Email votes, telephone conferences and other forms of remote deliberation shall be conducted as follows:
 - a) The moderator of the voting entity, in consultation with appropriate Presbytery staff, will determine whether the matter is suitable for remote deliberation, including by email vote or telephone poll;
 - b) If two members of the voting entity request a face to face discussion on the topic, then the matter will not be decided by remote deliberation;
 - c) All members of the voting entity will be provided twenty-four hours to make their responses.
 - d) In order for the motion to pass, it must be approved by a majority of the voting entity's full membership.
 - e) The decision reached by remote deliberation will be immediately reported to the members of the voting entity and will be entered into the minutes of the voting entity, in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
2. If a majority of members agree, the Presbytery Assembly and/or its entities, may, during the preliminary stages of discussion and debate, employ discernment processes in addition to those specified in Robert's Rules.
3. Proxy voting is not allowed in any entity of the Presbytery of Chicago.

H. Conflicts of Interest

1. Any staff member or volunteer who is employed by or engaged in any activity or function carried on by the Presbytery of Chicago, and who has a personal interest in a matter before the Presbytery Assembly or any of its entities, shall be deemed to have a conflict of interest if:
 - a. he or she has an existing or potential financial or other interest which might reasonably appear to impair his or her independent, unbiased judgment in the matter; or
 - b. a member of the person's family (e.g., a spouse, parent, sibling, or child), or an organization with which the person is affiliated has an existing or potential financial or other interest which might reasonably appear to impair the person's independent, unbiased judgment in the matter.
2. Any person with an existing or potential conflict of interest in a pending matter must;
 - a. fully disclose all material facts to the Presbytery entity considering that matter;
 - b. refrain from participating in a discussion about or voting on the pending matter.
 - c. If the person is uncertain whether a conflict of interest exists, he or she shall presume the existence of a conflict of interest and act in accordance with subsections a and b above.
3. In the event an actual or potential conflict of interest arises, the entity in question
 - a. shall disclose in its minutes that a conflict arose and that the person with the conflict abstained from discussion and voting; and

- b. in the event the entity proceeds with an action despite a potential or actual conflict of interest, the entity shall report its action to the entity to which it is accountable.
- 4. Nothing in this section shall preclude Presbytery of Chicago entities from establishing more stringent rules regarding conflicts of interest.
- I. This manual shall be interpreted in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and all applicable state and federal laws.

III. The Presbytery Assembly

- A. The Presbytery Assembly is the name given to the assembled teaching elder members and ruling elder commissioners representing member congregations and other ruling elder members elected or appointed to participate in the stated and special meetings of the Presbytery of Chicago.
- B. The purpose of the Presbytery Assembly is to serve as “a community of spiritual, intellectual, and vocational discipline that ensures open space for Word and Sacrament, and sharpens clear vision of the presence of Christ” (from *Proclaiming the Great Ends of the Church*, 2010).
- C. The actions reserved to the Presbytery Assembly are:
 - 1. Relating to Congregations
 - a. organize new congregations;
 - b. divide, dismiss or dissolve congregations in consultation with their members;
 - c. approve location of new churches or churches desiring to move; and
 - d. assume original jurisdiction when it has been determined that a session cannot exercise its authority.
 - 2. Relating to Higher Councils
 - a. maintain regular and continuing relations to the higher Councils of the church;
 - b. elect commissioners to the Synod of Lincoln Trails and the General Assembly;
 - c. act on overtures to the General Assembly; and
 - d. vote on proposed amendments from the General Assembly.
 - 3. Relating to Elections
 - a. elect Presbytery officers: Moderator-elect, Moderator, and Immediate Past Moderator;
 - b. elect the Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk; and
 - c. elect members of the primary committees and commissions. (*Authoritative Interpretation on Delegation*, GA Minutes, 1995, p. 281).
- D. The dates, times, and locations of stated meetings of the Presbytery Assembly shall be determined by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission and confirmed, if possible, in the preceding year. The quorum for Presbytery Assembly meetings shall be the minimum allowed by G-3.0304.

- E. Special meetings of the Presbytery Assembly may be called by the Synod of Lincoln Trails, by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission, or upon the request of at least ten sessions of Presbytery congregations.
- F. The date and locations of any special meetings shall be determined by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission and confirmed no less than ten days prior to any special meeting.
- G. All teaching elders who are either active members or members-at-large of the Presbytery of Chicago, as defined in G-2.0503 a and b, or who are honorably retired, as defined in G-2.0503c, are members of the Presbytery Assembly.
 - 1. When the number of resident teaching elders entitled to vote is greater than the number of ruling elders so entitled, the Presbytery Assembly shall redress the imbalance annually by providing for the election, appointment or selection of additional ruling elders; and
 - 2. When the Presbytery Assembly faces an imbalance between the number of teaching elder members and the number of ruling elder members due to a large number of resident honorably retired teaching elder members, the Stated Clerk is authorized to use active participation of honorably retired teaching elder members as a criterion in determining balance.
- H. A ruling elder commissioner to the Presbytery Assembly should be elected as a commissioner by the session of his or her congregation.
- I. Upon notice to the Stated Clerk, the following ruling elders are also members of the Presbytery Assembly with full voice and vote and without election by a session:
 - 1. ruling elders who are Certified Christian Educators during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery;
 - 2. ruling elders who are commissioned by the Presbytery Assembly to a congregation or a validated ministry in Chicago Presbytery, in accordance with applicable Presbytery policies, during the term of the commissioning;
 - 3. ruling elders in active service as the Presbytery Assembly moderator, moderator-elect, or immediate past moderator;
 - 4. ruling elders who are elected to serve on the Presbytery Coordinating Commission, the Commission on Ministry, and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry while in active service on those Commissions; and
 - 5. ruling elders who are moderators of the Nominating Committee, the Transition Team, and the Permanent Judicial Commission, while serving as moderator.
- J. Upon notice to the Stated Clerk, a recognized worshipping community may appoint a member to the Presbytery Assembly as a liaison, with voice, but without vote.

- K. Attendance at all meetings is strongly encouraged for all elected ruling elder commissioners, other ruling elder commissioners and all teaching elder commissioners. Excused absences, however, are not required. Teaching elder members who are honorably retired or in service outside the geographical bounds of the Presbytery are automatically excused from attendance at Presbytery meetings.

IV. The Primary Committees and Commissions

- A. The following entities of the Presbytery are the primary committees and commissions of the Presbytery and may report directly to the Presbytery Assembly.
1. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission, which is the primary generative, strategic and fiduciary unit of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery Coordinating Commission is a commission and thus has full authority to act on behalf of the Presbytery Assembly:

- a. To approve matters involving the real property of member congregations providing:
 - 1) The session and the congregation have approved the matter; or, if the congregation has closed, an administrative commission with appropriate jurisdiction has approved the matter;
 - 2) The purchase and sale of congregational property, not including the congregation's main building and sanctuary; and
 - 3) The matter consists of a Presbytery guarantee of a mortgage or other encumbrance of congregational property; or a lease of worship space or other space for more than five years.
- b. To establish committees for the purpose of implementing the responsibilities of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission and to provide the means for staffing such committees.
- c. To authorize the administration of the sacraments at Presbytery-sponsored activities;
- d. To assume original jurisdiction of a session for a limited matter upon the request of that session;
- e. To exercise supervisory authority over all Presbytery staff, as provided in Section VI;
- f. In the event of the resignation, removal, disability or death of a Presbytery officer or elected staff member, to appoint an interim officer or staff member to serve until the Presbytery Assembly can fill the vacant position.

All actions taken under the foregoing authority shall be reported to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

2. The Commission on Ministry, which shall:
 - a. Serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators of the Presbytery;

- b. Facilitate the relations between the Presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and certified Christian educators; and
- c. Settle difficulties on behalf of the Presbytery where possible and expedient (G-3.0307).

The Commission on Ministry has full authority to act on behalf of the Presbytery Assembly:

- a. To find in order calls issued by congregations;
- b. To approve and validate calls for services of teaching elders and commissioned pastors;
- c. To approve changes in the terms of call for teaching elders and commissioned pastors;
- d. To approve the examination of teaching elders transferring from other presbyteries;
- e. To appoint administrative commissions to ordain and/or install teaching elders or commission pastors;
- f. To authorize the administration of the sacraments at Presbytery services of ordination and/or installation or commissioning;
- g. To set compensation guidelines for teaching elders and commissioned pastors;
- h. To dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor or commissioned pastor concur;
- i. To assume original jurisdiction of a session for a limited matter upon the request of that session;
- j. Upon the request of a session, to extend the term of a session member (G-2.0404);
- k. To appoint a moderator when a congregation is without a pastor;
- l. To dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries; and
- m. To establish committees for the purpose of implementing the responsibilities of the Commission on Ministry and to provide the means for staffing such committees.

All actions taken under the foregoing authority shall be reported to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

- 3. The Commission on Preparation for Ministry, which shall develop and maintain the processes of prayerful discernment to guide, nurture and oversee the preparation of persons to become a teaching elders (G-3.0307) or commissioned pastors.

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry has full authority to act on behalf of the Presbytery Assembly:

- a. To enroll persons discerning their call as inquirers;
- b. To enroll inquirers as candidates;
- c. To remove persons from the rolls of inquirers or candidates;
- d. To certify candidates as ready to receive a call; and
- e. To establish committees for the purpose of implementing the responsibilities of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry and to provide the means for staffing such committees.

All actions taken under the foregoing authority shall be reported to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

4. The Nominating Committee, which shall oversee the process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the Presbytery Assembly (G-3.0111);
 5. The Transition Team, which shall advise the Presbytery Assembly regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403; and
 6. The Permanent Judicial Commission, which shall function in accordance with D-5.0000.
- B. Members of the primary committees and commissions shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Presbytery Assembly, with the exception of the members of the Nominating Committee, whose members shall be nominated by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission. Ordinarily, terms shall begin with the installation of the Presbytery Assembly moderator.
- C. A person elected to serve on any Presbytery entity may resign from his or her position for good cause, upon notice to the Stated Clerk, with a copy to the moderator of the entity served. Upon ceasing to be an active member of a particular congregation in the Presbytery of Chicago, or upon ceasing to be an active member or member-at-large of the Presbytery of Chicago, an elected person ceases to be a member of the entity to which he or she was elected. When an elected person, because of good cause, is unable to perform the duties of the elected position, the elected relationship may be dissolved by the entity and the vacancy reported to the Stated Clerk and the appropriate nominating entity.
- D. Those persons elected by the Presbytery Assembly to serve on any Primary Commission or Committee, except for members of the Permanent Judicial Commission, shall serve for a three year term. Persons elected to the Permanent Judicial Commission shall serve for a six year term (D-5.0102). No person shall be elected to a term that would cause his or her continuous service on a particular entity to exceed six years. When a position becomes vacant the unexpired term may be filled as long as the person filling the vacant position does not serve a term that exceeds six continuous years.
- E. The moderators of the primary Committees and Commissions shall be elected by the appropriate commission or committee, and shall serve as moderator for a one year term. They shall be eligible for reelection as moderator annually as long as they are members of the particular commission or committee.

V. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission

- A. The role of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission is to ensure the generative, strategic, and fiduciary leadership of the Presbytery.

1. Generative leadership frames problems rather than solving them, producing a sense of what knowledge, information, and data mean;
 2. Strategic leadership thinks about the strategic priorities of the season and about aligning the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization with any external opportunities or threats; and
 3. Fiduciary leadership attends to the duties of loyalty and care, through financial discipline, informed oversight, mission fidelity, and the primacy of organizational interests.
- B. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission shall be composed of 15 voting members.
- C. The voting membership of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission shall be as follows:
1. the moderator of the Presbytery Assembly,
 2. the moderator-elect of the Presbytery Assembly,
 3. the most recent past moderator of the Presbytery Assembly,
 4. the moderators of the Commission on Ministry and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, or their designees, and
 5. ten individuals nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Presbytery Assembly in three as equal as possible three-year classes.
- D. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission may invite particular members of the Presbytery staff to serve as corresponding members of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission with voice but without vote.
- E. Other Presbytery staff and representatives of other Presbytery entities may participate without vote in Presbytery Coordinating Commission meetings as invited or upon request with the approval of the Moderator of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission.
- F. In the event the moderator of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission is unable to attend a Presbytery Coordinating Commission meeting, he or she shall designate another member of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission to moderate in his or her absence.
- G. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission shall:
1. oversee the mission priorities of the Presbytery;
 2. receive, consider, and report to the Presbytery Assembly, matters coming to it from Presbytery Coordinating Commission committees and other entities;
 3. review and refer to the Presbytery Assembly for its action a comprehensive, unified budget assembled in consultation with the other entities of the Presbytery of Chicago;
 4. plan the meetings of the Presbytery Assembly, determining the calendar and location, and prepare the agenda, with the assistance of the moderator of the Presbytery Assembly, the Stated Clerk, and the Executive Presbyter;

5. review, whenever possible in advance of their presentation to the Presbytery Assembly, reports, recommendations, and requests from sessions, administrative commissions, and other bodies established by the Presbytery Assembly, adding recommendations of its own as may be appropriate and desirable;
 6. Review this *Manual of Operations* at least once every five years, or more frequently, as needed, and recommend any appropriate revisions.
- H. The quorum of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission shall be a majority of its voting members.

VI. The Presbytery Officers and Staff

- A. The officers of the Presbytery of Chicago shall be the Moderator of the Presbytery Assembly, the Moderator-Elect of the Presbytery Assembly, the Immediate Past Moderator of the Presbytery Assembly and the Stated Clerk. The Presbytery Assembly may provide for additional officers as required (G-3.0104).
- B. The staff of the Presbytery of Chicago shall consist of the Executive Presbyter who shall be elected by the Presbytery Assembly to a term, which may be renewed, and any additional staff hired by the Presbytery Coordinating Commission. For the purpose of this Section VI, the Stated Clerk, and any corporate officer hired by the corporate board of trustees, shall also be deemed to be staff.
- C. The Presbytery Coordinating Commission has the authority to establish the administrative structure of the Presbytery staff, for the description of the responsibilities of all staff positions, the method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment.

VII. The Corporate Structure of the Presbytery of Chicago

- A. The Presbytery of Chicago shall conduct its secular business through one or more not-for-profit corporations. In accordance with the Book of Order, these corporations hold title to the Presbytery's working capital, unrestricted and restricted funds, unrestricted and restricted endowment assets and property.
- B. The following material describes the general operation of these corporations. However, each of them is governed by their respective Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and resolutions and other actions of their Trustees, as well as the law of the state of incorporation. In the event of a conflict between any of those governing documents or laws and the description set forth below, the provisions of such governing documents or laws shall control. Also, reference is made to those governing documents and laws for information and direction as to the procedures and rules to be followed in such matters as the election of trustees and officers, the holding of meetings of the members and Boards of Trustees, and all other matters affecting the operations of these corporations.
- C. The members of the Presbytery Assembly, as defined in Section III, above, are the voting members of the corporations of the Presbytery of Chicago. In the case of a stock corporation, the Presbytery Assembly is the sole shareholder of the corporation.

- D. The Presbytery Assembly shall elect the members of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission to serve as the Boards of Trustees of each of the Presbytery's corporations. No action of the Presbytery Coordinating Commission shall be presumed to be an action of a Board of Trustees, unless that action is specifically identified as an action by the Trustees in the corporate minutes. Each Board of Trustees is subject to the authority and direction of the Presbytery Assembly, meeting as the members or sole shareholder of the corporation and as provided in the corporation.
- E. The Trustees of each corporation elect officers of their respective corporations as follows:
 - 1. a President, who is ordinarily the Moderator of the Presbytery Assembly, a Vice-President, who is ordinarily the Moderator-Elect of the Presbytery Assembly; a Secretary, who is one of the other Trustees of the corporation, and a Treasurer; and
 - 2. any other additional corporate officers as the Trustees determine are needed. These additional corporate officers need not be members of the Presbytery Assembly or the Presbytery Coordinating Commission.
- F. At the request of a Board of Trustees, Presbytery staff members may ordinarily attend meetings of the Board of Trustees of each corporation and may participate in discussion of Board matters without vote. At the request of a Board of Trustees, particular Presbytery staff members can serve as signatories on corporate accounts or fulfill other official corporate duties, as designated by the respective Board of Trustees.

VIII. Amendments

- A. All sections of this *Manual of Operations* except Section VII shall be amended as follows:
 - 1. Anyone wishing to propose an amendment shall present the proposed amendment in writing to the Presbytery Coordinating Commission for its consideration prior to presenting the proposed amendment in writing to the Presbytery Assembly.
 - 2. Proposed amendments shall be presented to the Presbytery Assembly in writing for review and comment (i.e. "first reading") prior to being voted on.
 - 3. Once proposed amendments have been presented to the Presbytery Coordinating Commission and to the Presbytery Assembly for review and comment, they may be modified and voted on at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly (i.e. "second reading"), without requiring an additional review and comment period. Amendments must be passed by a two-thirds vote.
- B. Section VII shall be amended as above except that any amendment to Section VII shall be voted on by the Presbytery Assembly meeting as a corporation.

IX. Closing Words

By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, may this *Manual of Operations* empower the Presbytery of Chicago to covenant together to serve our triune God and the great ends of the church.

The great ends of the church are: the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. (F-1.0304.)

Adopted, June 12, 2007
Revised, June 10, 2008
Revised, February 20, 2010
Revised, April 12, 2011
Revised, April 24, 2012
Revised, February 21, 2015
Revised, December 2, 2017