

**GRAND CANYON PRESBYTERY
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS**

Adopted June 9, 2012 and amended November 10, 2012, January 26, 2013, April 27, November 2, 2013, January 24, 2014, March 7, 2015, November 7, 2015, and November 4, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Gatherings and attendance	2
2. Officers and staff	5
3. Leadership Team	8
4. Operations Committee	10
5. Resources Committee	12
6. Omitted	14
7. Congregational Resourcing Team	15
8. Presbytery Visitation and Connections	17
9. Networks	18
10. Teams, Commission and Committee general provisions	19
11. Commission on Ministry	20
12. Continuing membership and validation of ministry	21
13. Sabbatical leave for parish ministers and educators	23
14. Examination for membership	26
15. Minimum salary	29
16. Commission on Preparation for Ministry	30
17. Policy for congregations desiring departure	31
18. Reimbursement for committee members attending meetings	39
19. Credit card policy	40
20. Personnel	41
21. Sexual misconduct	47

Certified Approved

Stated Clerk

Presbytery Meeting 11/04/2017

Part 1. PRESBYTERY GATHERINGS AND ATTENDANCE

Purpose Statement

The basic responsibilities of the Presbytery are stated in the Book of Order, G – 3.0301:

- to provide governance of the church throughout its district, and to assist and support the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness;
- to provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard;
- to provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received; and
- to nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ.

At every gathering, we will strive to nurture our teaching and ruling elders in spiritual vitality; lifelong learning; creativity, and collegial support.

The purpose of our gatherings is to further these responsibilities, values and commitments in both our formal meetings and informal fellowship time together as we discuss and make decisions; worship and learn; serve, celebrate and challenge and as we socialize, nurture and affirm each other's ministries.

At Every Presbytery Meeting, we will

- Attend to values of Lifelong learning, Collegial Support, Creativity, Spiritual vitality
- Worship with communion
- Celebrate the work of congregations, networks, and teams
- Spend time in intentional prayer
- Listen and learn from keynote speakers
- Provide experiential/participatory opportunities
- Offer intentional social time
- Work from a Consent Agenda as much as possible, especially in the areas of Operations, Resources, and COM

On an Occasional Basis (at least once a year) we will:

- Approve budget
- Address CPM/COM concerns
- Hear Reports
- Learn about General Assembly actions and vote on overtures (biennially)
- Intentionally meet in Racial/Ethnic communities

Planning Process and Team

- Four Annual Meetings, one of which may be regional, with Themes chosen by designated Ministry Team or other Team of Presbytery as designated by Leadership Team of Presbytery
- Planning Team: Presbytery Pastor, Stated Clerk, Moderator Team (Moderator/Moderator-elect of Presbytery and Moderator/Moderator-elect of Leadership Team), and Member from Ministry Team
- Host congregation plans meals and logistics in coordination with Office Staff
- Host congregation advises and makes recommendations regarding worship and music
- Congregation hosting the subsequent meeting sends one representative to the planning team for training

Meeting notices

Notice of meetings or gatherings shall be given by sending the Call and associated documents to Presbyters, churches, and clerks of session by posting on the Presbytery website at least two (2) weeks before the next stated meeting or by other appropriate means upon special written request and arrangement.

Special meetings may be called in accordance with the Book of Order, G-3.0304, by the call of the Leadership Team or by the following process. The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches. Should the moderator be unable to act, the stated clerk shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both moderator and stated clerk are unable to act, any three teaching elders and three ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting. The synod may direct the presbytery to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. Notice of a special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each teaching elder and to the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.

Eligibility for representation

For Presbytery stated meetings, each church shall be represented by ruling elders as follows:

Below 100	---	membership	---	1 ruling elder
100 - 199	---	membership	---	2 ruling elders
200 - 499	---	membership	---	3 ruling elders
500 - 999	---	membership	---	4 ruling elders
1000 and greater	---	membership	---	5 ruling elders

On an annual basis, Presbytery Leadership Team shall recommend to Presbytery the redress of any imbalance between teaching and ruling elders pursuant to the Book of Order, G-3.0301. The following formula shall be used to calculate the redress of imbalance:

1. Correct for imbalance on the basis of the count of resident members on the roll in all active capacities within the following membership categories: Validated within a Congregation, Validated outside a Congregation, Validated beyond the Jurisdiction, Member at Large and Honorably Retired;
2. Include resident Honorably Retired who have attended at least one presbytery meeting in the prior year and/or are on a Presbytery commission, committee, a Parish Associate, Moderator of a Session or a Mentor/Supervisor of a CRE; and
3. Determine the number of Ruling Elder Commissioners eligible to vote before determining whether an imbalance exists by including Ruling Elders constitutionally representing churches, Ruling Elders who are voting members of the Leadership Team, Ruling Elders who are chairpersons of standing commissions and committees, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators with voice and vote; and
4. That whenever the number of Teaching Elders calculated in 1 and 2 above and the number of Ruling Elder Commissioners calculated in 3 above have a difference less than 10% of the larger number, a balance is declared. If the difference is greater than 10% of the larger number, an imbalance is declared and is corrected as follows:
 - a. RE is greater than TE – no adjustment needed since Resident TE members are substantially greater than RE commissioners generally.
 - b. TE is greater than RE – Add one more RE beginning with the highest membership classification then to the next lowest membership classification until the difference is within the 10% limit.

Special rules of order

Consent Agenda. Presbytery Leadership Team may designate items of business for the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda shall be considered at Presbytery stated meetings and any member of Presbytery may request that any item be removed, in which case that item shall be removed from the Consent Agenda to be considered

by Presbytery. Any items not so removed at the time set forth for consideration of the Consent Agenda shall be deemed adopted by the Presbytery as the action of Presbytery. Overtures to amend the Book of Confessions, the Book of Order, and amendments to the Bylaws and Manual of Administrative Operations shall not be set on the Consent Agenda.

New Business. New business may be brought to the Presbytery in the following ways:

1. Presbytery Leadership Team or the moderator (or acting moderator) may submit a motion to the stated clerk 14 days prior to the Presbytery meeting during which it shall be heard. The motion, and any accompanying background and rationale, shall be distributed with the call to the meeting. The stated clerk, in consultation with the Presbytery Gathering Planning Team, shall place the item of new business on the proposed agenda for the meeting.
2. Presbytery Leadership Team or the moderator (or acting moderator) may bring a motion concerning an item of an emergency or urgent nature to a meeting of Presbytery, with the motion and accompanying background and rationale distributed to presbyters early in the meeting. The item of business shall be added to the agenda, upon the stated clerk's recommendation as to the time of day and the amount of time to be allotted.
3. A presbyter may submit a motion in writing to the stated clerk thirty (30) days prior to the Presbytery meeting during which it shall be heard. The motion, and any accompanying background and rationale, shall be distributed with the call to the meeting. The stated clerk, in consultation with the Planning Team, shall place the item of new business in the proposed agenda for the meeting.
4. A presbyter may submit a motion in writing to the stated clerk at the beginning of a Presbytery meeting, when the proposed agenda is being considered. If found by the moderator to be in order* the motion shall be read to the Presbytery and the item of new business shall be added to the agenda, upon the stated clerk's recommendation as to the time of day and the amount of time to be allotted. Copies of the motion shall be available in writing for presbyters at least one hour before it is to be considered.

* Timely, in respectful language, properly presented, and not an "improper motion" as defined by Robert's Rules of Order (Chapter X, Section 39).

Procedures for recording attendance, authorizing reports, and modifying the agenda.

1. The roll for gatherings or meetings is established by signing of the registration sheets at the registration desk.
2. The Moderator has authority to grant privilege of the floor to persons for the purpose of reporting to gatherings or meetings.
3. The Moderator and the Stated Clerk are empowered to make adjustments in the agenda during the meeting or gathering, as may be necessary, to provide for efficiency in reporting.
4. Written requests for absences received by the Stated Clerk prior to the gathering or meeting will be approved.

Part 2. OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE PRESBYTERY

OFFICERS

Moderator. There shall be a moderator of Presbytery.

a. The moderator-elect shall assume office as the moderator upon the election of the new moderator-elect at the Annual Meeting. The moderator shall serve a one-year term.

b. The duties of the moderator shall be those specified in Form of Government, G-3.0104, and this Manual of Operations. The moderator shall preside at all meetings of Presbytery. The moderator shall designate the immediate-past moderator or, in his or her absence, the moderator-elect or some other member to preside at Presbytery in the moderator's absence. The moderator shall be an ex-officio member of Presbytery Leadership Team.

Moderator-elect. There shall be a moderator-elect of Presbytery.

a. The moderator-elect shall be elected after roll call at the opening session of the Annual Meeting. The moderator-elect shall serve a one-year term. If the moderator for the moderator-elect's term is a teaching elder, the moderator-elect shall be a ruling elder; if the moderator for the moderator-elect's term is a ruling elder, the moderator-elect shall be a teaching elder.

b. The moderator-elect shall act as moderator at the request of or in the absence of the moderator and the immediate-past moderator. The moderator-elect shall be an ex-officio member of the Presbytery Leadership Team.

Stated clerk. There shall be a stated clerk of Presbytery.

a. The Stated Clerk/Associate shall be nominated by a special committee elected by the Presbytery after adequate publicity has been given to the position opening throughout the denomination and after intensive efforts have been made to secure candidates from among minorities and women. The Presbytery shall elect a Stated Clerk/Associate for a four-year term. The work of the Stated Clerk/Associate, along with the terms of the call, shall be reviewed annually. Notification of the Stated Clerk/Associate's intention to retire or resign shall be made to the Presbytery Leadership Team at least three months in advance. Either of the contracting parties may at any time request the joint consideration of the termination of the call.

b. The duties of the stated clerk shall be those specified in Form of Government, G-3.0104, and this Manual. The stated clerk shall serve as an ex-officio member on Presbytery Leadership Team and a member with voice, but without vote, on the Commission on Ministry.

c. The stated clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that notices of Presbytery gatherings are timely and correctly posted and sent.

d. The stated clerk shall transmit to the Synod and the General Assembly the required reports and duly certified copies of the records of Presbytery, and shall cause duly certified copies of the minutes of Presbytery to be contained in volumes at suitable intervals.

e. The stated clerk shall distribute annually a compilation of churches, officers, staff, and presbyters. Other pertinent facts, records and information may be included in the distribution of this directory.

f. An index of all current policies shall be maintained as Appendix 1 to the Bylaws and shall be made available, upon request, to any member of Presbytery or session within the jurisdiction of Presbytery.

e. The stated clerk shall work under the direction of the Presbytery Leadership Team.

f. The stated clerk shall be an exempt salaried employee.

Treasurer. There shall be a treasurer of Presbytery.

a. The treasurer shall be elected at every third annual meeting of the Presbytery. The treasurer shall serve a three-year term and shall not normally serve more than six consecutive years. The treasurer will assume the duties of the office at the close of the annual stated meeting.

b. The treasurer shall disburse funds according to the adopted budget of Presbytery, keep records of the several Presbytery accounts in a generally accepted bookkeeping method, and present the records annually for audit/review. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Presbytery Leadership Team.

c. The Presbytery Leadership Team shall appoint a member or employee of the Presbytery staff to be receiving agent, to receive and deposit all funds.

d. The treasurer and the receiving agent, as well as any person(s) designated to be cosigners of checks on Presbytery accounts, shall, at the expense of Presbytery, be bonded in an amount set by the Presbytery Leadership Team.

e. The treasurer shall make monthly reports to the Presbytery Leadership Team, indicating the expenditure of budgeted funds with respect to the approved budget.

f. The work of the treasurer shall be under the direction of the Presbytery Leadership Team.

Presbytery Pastor

Election. The Presbytery Pastor shall be nominated by a special committee elected by the Presbytery after adequate publicity has been given to the position opening throughout the denomination and after intensive efforts have been made to secure candidates from among minorities and women. The Presbytery shall elect a Presbytery Pastor for a four-year term. The work of the Presbytery Pastor, along with the terms of the call, shall be reviewed annually. Notification of the Presbytery Pastor's intention to retire or resign shall be made to the Presbytery Leadership Team at least three months in advance. Either of the contracting parties may at any time request the joint consideration of the termination of the call.

Duties and Charge. The Presbytery Pastor shall:

a. supervise and coordinate the work of Presbytery Staff and any Synod or General Assembly agency staff persons assigned to work within Presbytery;

b. report at each meeting of Presbytery, and shall present an annual report at the January meeting of Presbytery;

c. serve as interpreter to the general public of the actions and policies of the churches, Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly;

d. be a corresponding member without vote of all program committees, permanent committees and commissions, standing committees, teams and task forces of Presbytery, except the Permanent Judicial Commission;

e. be the agent of Presbytery to carry out its actions when no other specific individual or body is named; and

f. fulfill such other responsibilities as are assigned by this Manual or the Leadership Team.

STAFF

Professional, Administrative AND Volunteer Staff

The Presbytery shall establish, on recommendation of the Leadership Team, a staffing plan for professional and administrative positions.

Employment of Executive Staff. Presbytery, upon recommendation of Leadership Team, or special search team, as appropriate, may approve hiring of such professional staff as Presbytery deems appropriate. Presbytery staff may receive a salary and shall be employed for an indefinite term with annual reviews of performance.

Employment of Professional/Administrative Staff. Presbytery Leadership Team, on recommendation of the Operations Committee, may approve hiring such administrative staff as Presbytery deems appropriate. Administrative staff may receive a salary and shall be employed for an indefinite term with annual reviews of performance.

Volunteer Staff. Presbytery Leadership Team, upon recommendation of the Operations Committee, may contract for volunteer staff. Volunteer staff shall not receive a salary, but may be reimbursed for certain expenses after prior approval by Presbytery Leadership Team in accordance with the Presbytery budget. Volunteer staff shall be employed for a term set by Presbytery Leadership Team, subject to periodic performance review.

PROVISIONS FOR EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

Ex officio members of the Presbytery shall have voice and vote, except that they are not permitted to vote on proposed amendments to the *Book of Order*, or other Assembly or Synod matters in which the Presbytery's vote is necessary to a decision of the Synod or General Assembly. For disciplinary jurisdictional purposes, primary jurisdiction for *ex officio* members of the Presbytery shall rest with the presbytery within which the alleged violation occurred.

PART 3. PRESBYTERY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mission Statement

Ensures that the vision and values of the whole presbytery are sustained by engaging in ongoing reflection, encouraging exploration, and prayer.

Team Expectations

- Team Members: 14 people represent the fullness of the diversity of our presbytery; twelve are elected in three classes of four persons, and two serve as part of their Presbytery office
- Each year, the Moderator and Moderator-elect of Leadership Team will be elected from among the team members. The Moderator-elect will be elected from members who have at least two years remaining in their term. In subsequent years, the Moderator-elect will become Moderator and a new Moderator-elect will be elected from among the current members who have 2 or more years remaining in their term of service
- Additional ex-officio participants, with voice and vote: Moderator and Moderator-elect of Presbytery
- Additional ex-officio participants, with voice but without vote: PWP Moderator, Stated Clerk of Presbytery, Treasurer of Presbytery, Presbytery Pastor, Presbytery Staff and Network Leadership if requested by Leadership Team Liaison
- Continue current annual nomination/election cycle
- Those nominated will provide a 250 word Leadership Statement outlining sense of call to this work to be included in the Presbytery papers for the meeting at which they are to be elected
- For the first 18 months, the Leadership Team will meet no fewer than 10 times per year. After the first 12 months of living into the new structure, the Leadership Team will evaluate and establish the number of meetings needed to go forward
- Members will serve as resources to and in ex-officio capacity on the following teams/committees
 - Operations
 - Resources
 - Commission on Ministry
 - Commission on Preparation for Ministry
 - Congregational Resourcing Team
- Members will be assigned on a rotating basis to serve as Network Liaisons, assisting the Network in bringing communication, proposals and other needs to the attention of the Leadership Team and/or the whole Presbytery
- Members may be assigned to resource other teams as necessary

Tasks

The members of the Leadership Team will:

- make a commitment to spending time in prayer and discernment regarding individual congregations, pastors and ministries
- provide for the gatherings of the whole Presbytery
- provide oversight for Presbytery Teams, Networks, Commissions and Committees, with the primary goal of ensuring that the Vision and Values remain at the center of our life together
- delegate Presbytery operational concerns to appropriate teams and committees,
- appoint a Leadership Team member to serve in ex officio capacity on each of the "standing" teams
- evaluate and approve applications for Networks, which may be submitted at any time; and evaluate and approve Network applications for funding, which shall be submitted by April 1 or October 1 for a 12-month funding cycle beginning on July 1 or January 1
- assign a liaison from the Leadership Team to each Network to facilitate communication and advocacy for specific needs
- Continually ask these **Guiding Questions:**
 - How can we celebrate what is happening in our congregations with the whole presbytery?

- Do the Vision and Values of the presbytery match who we are in all our diversity?
- Are we doing what we say is important as a presbytery?
- Is what we have said is important, still important?
- Are we attending to concern and care of ALL our congregations?

- Review minutes of Presbytery meetings

Special Meetings of the Leadership Team. Special meetings shall be at the call of the Leadership Team Moderator, or by request of at least three voting members of the Presbytery Leadership Team.

Part 4. Operations Committee

Mission Statement

Ensures efficient, pastoral administration of the operating systems of the presbytery.

Members

- Committee Members: nine people represent the fullness of the diversity of our presbytery elected in three classes of three. Moderator of the committee will be elected from among the committee members on an annual basis
- Continue current annual nomination/election cycle
- Those nominated will provide a 250 word Leadership Statement outlining sense of call to this work to be included in the Presbytery papers for the meeting at which they are to be elected
- Committee members will be attentive to the need to help people of differing viewpoints work together, valuing differences as gifts rather than problems
- They will also be people with pastoral concern, human resources abilities, conflict resolution skills, excellent communicators, able to integrate details into the larger functioning of the presbytery

Tasks

- Serve as presbytery's Personnel Team
- Serve as presbytery's Nominations Team
- Maintain and evaluate the communication network, including the website, email, print, directories, assembly materials, telephone service, and social networks. Make system changes and upgrades as needed within budgetary constraints, and making recommendations for other changes through Resource Committee for budget consideration
- Receive and distribute overtures from Sessions for review and advice; receive Overtures from General Assembly and refer all related matters to a committee composed of the most recent Commissioners to General Assembly for review and recommendation to Presbytery
- Recommend to the Presbytery Leadership Team communication strategies for the Presbytery
- Review the records of each congregation on an annual basis in order to make recommendations to the Presbytery Leadership Team
- Responsible to Presbytery Leadership Team for the administration of Presbytery personnel
- Receive and act upon invitations for future meetings of Presbytery
- Continually ask these **Guiding Questions**:
 - How can we celebrate with the whole presbytery what is happening in our Team's areas of responsibility?
 - What is it like to be a congregation worshipping and serving God these days?
 - What would be helpful to offer in the coming year as a way to resource congregations?
 - Can we network congregational interests and offer training geographically? By size of congregation?
 - Who has the gifts/skills/desire to do this work?

Teams the Operations Committee May Establish

If determined appropriate by the Committee, the following teams will report to and be guided by the Operations Committee:

Nominations Team

- Moderator of the team will be elected from among the team members on an annual basis
- Nominating people to serve on Leadership Team, Operations and Resources Committees and Ministry Teams
- Attending to teaching/ruling elder parity and racial, ethnic and gender representation, for presbytery confirmation

- Prepare a slate of nominees annually and as needed to fill vacancies, to include all officers of Presbytery, except those officers otherwise elected, as well as team, committee and commission members. Permission must be given by any nominee prior to presentation of his or her name for election
- Nominations for reader and alternate for the standard ordination examinations authorized by G-2.0607d shall be made in consultation with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry. The reader and associate reader shall serve for one year, with possible reelection for two additional terms. A reader may be elected who is not a member of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

Personnel Team

- Moderator of the team will be elected from among the team members on an annual basis
- Developing and reviewing personnel policies, position descriptions, salaries as needed;
- make hiring/firing recommendations to Leadership Team and Presbytery
- Facilitate and complete performance reviews
- Provide pastoral care and conflict resolution for staff

Part 5. Resources Committee

Mission Statement

Assure competent, transparent, equitable distribution and accounting of presbytery financial and other resources.

Members

- Committee Members: nine people represent the fullness of the diversity of our presbytery elected in three classes of three. Moderator of the team will be elected from among the committee members on an annual basis
- Continue current annual nomination/election cycle
- Those nominated will provide a 250 word Leadership Statement outlining sense of call to this work to be included in the Presbytery papers for the meeting at which they are to be elected
- Understand and effectively communicate the relationship between finances and ministry
- Elected committee members need to have one or more of these specialized skills
 - accounting,
 - funds development,
 - property law,
 - human resources/personnel

Tasks

- Develop budget in conversation with the Operations Committee, Ministry Teams and the Leadership Team, and in keeping with the vision and values of the presbytery, ensuring adequate provisions for officer expenses, meeting attendance expenses and other needs
- Communicate budget decisions in ways that adequately address concerns presented
- Monitor finances, reserves, asset allocation, investments and foundation resources making adjustments and communicating status as appropriate
- Work with individual congregations and the presbytery as a whole to promote mission interpretation and giving, and stewardship
- Provide forums, seminars and workshops on mission interpretation and stewardship
- Attend to per capita
- Function as Property Commission
- Attend to reporting needs for grants to NCDs, redevelopment and/or Transformation congregations
- Obtain Presbytery property and liability insurance to protect Presbytery's facilities, programs, staff, and officers whether elected or appointed
- Continually ask these **Guiding Questions**:
 - How can we celebrate with the whole presbytery what is happening in our Team's areas of responsibility?
 - What is it like to be a congregation worshipping and serving God these days?
 - What would be helpful to offer in the coming year as a way to resource congregations?
 - Can we network congregational interests and offer training geographically? By size of congregation?
 - Who has the gifts/skills/desire to do this work?

Relation to the Budget. The Resources Committee shall prepare a budget to reflect both the areas of program and administration in accord with the Bylaws and Manual of Operations, and be responsible for the administration of this budget. Accordingly, it shall be the responsibility of Presbytery Resources Committee:

- a. To develop, prepare, and propose the Presbytery budget
- b. To consider and report upon all proposals and appeals for money

- c. To compute the annual per capita apportionment based on the previous annual report to the General Assembly
- d. To annually provide for a complete audit/full financial review of Presbytery's accounts by a professional auditing firm
- e. To develop a budget that is consistent with the goals and priorities adopted by Presbytery
- f. Monitor the presbytery's finances, reserves and allocation of financial assets

Property Commission. The Resources Committee shall function as the Property Commission, with the following tasks:

- Understand current congregational property usage
- Consider long-term issues
- Provide advice/resources to congregations as needed
- Make decisions about property sales and leases up to \$1,000,000 or other limits as recommended by the Leadership Team and approved by presbytery
- Review and recommend for action all projects involving property and buildings related to Presbytery and its churches
- Prepare loan applications to Presbytery Trustees, Synod Trustees, General Assembly and other sources and assist sessions in the preparation of loans for first unit construction and other available loans
- Monitor the Presbytery insurance program for churches
- Monitor church mortgage payments
- Negotiate leases and write leases where applicable
- Carry out other assignments as directed by the Trustees

The Resources Committee shall have oversight of the Presbytery Endowment. The goal is to encourage, receive and administer gifts to the Presbytery such as bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, charitable gift annuities, life income annuities, assignment of life insurance, retirement plans, and transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate and other tangible assets), and to administer the Fund for the purposes and uses permitted and approved by Presbytery Leadership Team or Trustees.

Part 6. Omitted

Part 7. Congregational Resourcing Team

Mission Statement

- To resource congregations for effective witness

Team Members

- Team members: 15 people representing the fullness of diversity of our presbytery elected in three classes of five
- Team may invite additional team members to serve *ex-officio* to support the work of the Team.
- Moderator of the team will be elected from among the team members on an annual basis.
- Continue current annual nomination / election cycle.
- Demonstrate a passion for congregational support, missional ministry, evangelism or new worshipping communities

Tasks

1. Provide leadership training for congregations.
 - a. Such training should be responsive to needs articulated by the congregations and may include but not be limited to the following areas:
 - i. Effective church management practices
 - ii. Missional strategies and tactics
 - iii. Spiritual formation and care
 - iv. Age targeted leadership (e.g. youth ministry, elder care, etc.)
 - v. Use of technological resources and social media
 - vi. Church redevelopment strategies
2. Gather and distribute a list of mission opportunities connected to Grand Canyon Presbytery and its constituent members for congregational consideration, including:
 - a. Financial giving opportunities related to the presbytery (e.g. Agua Fria, Mission Co-workers, Peace and Justice Network supported projects)
 - b. Service opportunities generated by or serving GCP congregations, chapels and missions (Orangewood Presbyterian Church's Rocky Point trips, Border to Border, Native American, Habitat for Humanity, Disaster Relief Team)
 - c. Service and financial giving opportunities related to the Synod of the Southwest and General Assembly sponsored programs
3. Provide oversight and give encouragement for Missional Initiative Grants, New Worshipping Communities and New Church Developments
 - a. Promote and educate congregations and presbytery regarding the grant opportunities for these ministries at the presbytery, synod and General Assembly levels
 - b. Review, evaluate and give feedback on grant proposals:
 - i. The preliminary authorization of above grants and applications will occur only after initial review of written submissions and face-to-face conversations with applicants.
 - ii. The expectation is that the committee will engage applicants in conversation regarding the appropriateness of the grant in light of ministry context, other available resources and missional objectives.
 - iii. If given preliminary authorization, all grants and applications will be forwarded to Resources committee for financial review and then to Leadership Team for final approval.
4. Survey congregations at least once a year to gather input for the above tasks.

- a. The survey will include, as possible, all ruling elders and teaching elders currently serving on Session, as well as all currently serving deacons.
- b. The survey may use such web based sites as Survey Monkey or another, convenient, effective tool, and should be used in combination with other presbytery communications whenever possible.
- c. Survey information gathered will include listing of suggestions for opportunities for the annual presbytery training event.

Review and Accountability

- The Congregational Resourcing Team is accountable to the entire presbytery and its work will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Leadership Team.
- The list of tasks for this team will be reviewed every two years by a task force authorized by the Leadership Team which will make recommendations for possible changes.

Part 8. Presbytery Visitation and Connections

Mission Statement

To engage, connect and communicate with the congregations within the presbytery in order to facilitate mutual support and shared ministry.

Tasks

1. Visitation of congregations will occur as follows:
 - a. Primary responsibility for visiting with Sessions and congregations resides within the Commission on Ministry, through its liaisons, who are to visit each Session or congregation at least once every two years.
 - i. Use of videoconferencing technologies may be used for these visits
 - ii. Ongoing contact between COM liaisons, pastors, Sessions and congregations through phone, email, social media and other opportunities is encouraged
 - b. Secondary responsibility for visiting with Sessions and congregations resides with the Presbytery Pastor and Presbytery Associate, who, between them, are to visit with each Session or congregation at least once every two years.
2. Committees and Teams of Presbytery may, as appropriate, request to meet with a Session or congregation in order to fulfill their presbytery defined purpose as a committee or team (e.g. Resources Road Show for budget).
3. The Congregational Resourcing Team will survey each congregation annually to gather input for their work.
 - a. The survey will include, as possible, all ruling elders and teaching elders currently serving on Session, as well as all currently serving deacons.
 - b. Surveys may use such web based sites as Survey Monkey or another, convenient, effective tool and should be used in combination with other presbytery communications whenever possible.
 - c. Surveys may use such web based sites as Survey Monkey or another, convenient, effective tool and should be used in combination with other presbytery communications whenever possible.

Part 9. Networks

Mission Statement

Because Networks are intended to form independently around ministries of the Presbytery for which they have passion, each Network will provide its own Mission Statement.

Network Members

- People from at least three different congregations who desire to connect together to do ministry around a single program, event, issue or passion
- Network applications must be endorsed by at least one Session and approved by the Leadership Team of Presbytery
- Networks shall be authorized for one year periods, and may be renewed each year
- Leadership Team shall evaluate and approve applications for Networks, which may be submitted at any time; and evaluate and approve Network applications for funding, which shall be submitted by April 1 or October 1 for a 12-month funding cycle beginning on July 1 or January 1
- Authorized networks are granted voice at Presbytery meetings. If none of their key leaders are already members of Presbytery (either as teaching elder or ruling elder commissioner) the Network may designate one ruling elder to have voice but not vote at Presbytery meetings. The Network shall notify the Stated Clerk of the name and contact information for the designee, and the term of representation.

Tasks

- Live into the vision and values of the presbytery by bringing people from different congregations together
- Communicate with the Leadership Team and the whole Presbytery about the work they are doing
- Other tasks as determined by the individual network
- Participate in an annual evaluation of Network's effectiveness

Connection to the Presbytery

- Networks that are formed based upon mutual interests become advocates for those interests. As such, their authority lies only within that network and do not necessarily express the views or voice of the presbytery.
- Leadership Team shall provide for Networks to be able to communicate to the presbytery through E-Focus, the website, printed material provided by a Network for distribution in presbytery meeting packets, and displays as presbytery meetings.
- Leadership Team shall provide at least annually the opportunity for Networks to report at a presbytery meeting.
- Due diligence should be taken when communicating to the presbytery that the information and opinions shared by Networks are those of the Network itself and not necessarily of the entire presbytery.

Guiding Questions:

- How can we celebrate with the whole presbytery what is happening in our Networks?
- What would be helpful to offer in the coming year as a way to link together like-minded presbyters and congregations?
- Who has the gifts/skills/desire to do this work?

Part 10. Teams, Commissions, and Committee general provisions

Membership; election; and organization. Members shall be elected in classes of three-year (3) terms. No member having served two three-year terms shall be eligible for re-election to that committee until one year has elapsed. Elected members shall be eligible to attend meetings held between their election and the Annual Meeting and vote during an election for the following year's clerk of the commission, committee, or team.

a. Except as otherwise provided in the *Book of Order*, the Bylaws and the Manual of Operations, commissions, committees, or teams shall consist of at least three ruling elders or laypersons and three teaching elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. When the commission, committee or team consists of an odd number of members, the additional member may be either a teaching or ruling elder. These requirements do not apply to networks.

b. Each commission, committee, or team shall have a moderator, vice-moderator, and a clerk. If the moderator is a teaching elder, the vice-moderator shall be a ruling elder, and vice versa. The moderator and vice-moderator of each commission, committee, or team shall be elected annually by the commission, committee, or team. The clerk shall be elected annually by the commission, committee, or team. Officers may serve two successive terms in the same office.

c. When a member is absent from three consecutive meetings without being excused by the commission, committee, or team for good cause, it shall be deemed that such person has resigned. The moderator of the Commission, committee, or team shall contact the person and so inform the Operations Committee. The Operations Committee shall propose a name to fill the unexpired term of this person.

d. Commissions, committees, or teams may co-opt nonvoting members for special tasks.

Electronic meetings.

1. Meetings for the conduct of official business may be held by telephone conference call or by videoconference technology, provided that all members may participate.
2. Meetings may not be held by email. Email may be used to poll members on procedural items such as the time and date for a meeting, routine business, or to ratify the final language of an action taken at a previous meeting. In any such email usage, any member has the right to call for a regular meeting instead of an email consultation.

Records. Each commission, committee, or team shall keep a record of its work (minutes, policies, etc.) in a permanent record book similar to a session minute book or other ring binder.

Subcommittees. Teams, commissions, and committees of Presbytery may create subcommittees or task forces to assist in the execution of their responsibilities.

Temporary administrative commissions. The commission's charge shall specify when the commission shall report to Presbytery.

Part 11. COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

1. The Commission on Ministry shall provide direct access at all times to all teaching and ruling elders in the Presbytery in all matters relative to the spiritual or temporal welfare of the churches in which they hold office.
2. The Commission on Ministry shall recruit, train, and deploy liaison persons to work with Pastor Nominating Committees.
3. The Commission on Ministry shall receive and screen for approval Church Information Forms from Pastor Nominating Committees.
4. The Commission on Ministry shall provide background reference information to Pastor Nominating Committees when requested.
5. The Commission on Ministry shall interview potential candidates before a Pastor Nominating Committee arranges for personal interview.
6. The Commission on Ministry shall interview all who seek to transfer membership to the Presbytery.
7. The Commission on Ministry shall seek exit interviews with members leaving a pastoral relationship, including interims and stated supplies.
8. The Commission on Ministry shall visit and counsel with churches in which difficulties have been discerned.
9. The Commission on Ministry shall exercise oversight of churches without pastors in accord with the provisions in the Book of Order, and consult with the Presbytery Leadership Team regarding strategy in those particular churches.
10. The Commission on Ministry shall provide oversight for teaching elders not installed as parish pastors.
11. The Commission on Ministry shall be responsible for all matters relating to pensions, including major medical provisions.
12. The Commission on Ministry shall establish guidelines for salaries and remuneration of teaching elders, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators, with an annual review and report to Presbytery concerning salaries and salary guidelines.
13. When a candidate has been called, and is to be examined by the Presbytery, the commission shall ensure that the candidate's Statement of Faith shall be distributed and placed in the hands of Presbytery prior to the examination.

Part 12. CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP AND VALIDATION OF MINISTRY POLICY

Criteria for Membership in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon

In addition to the “Criteria for Ministry of Continuing Members” found in G-2.0502 and G-2.0503, the following shall apply:

1. A continuing member shall be:
 - (a) Under documented and approved call or contract to a particular congregation or governing body position;
 - (b) Entering a work defined in G-2.0503a or G-2.0506 for which the presbytery, through the Committee on Ministry, shall give its permission by validating it as ministry “Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church (meaning service in a calling other than a congregation, but within the physical jurisdiction of the presbytery);
 - (c) A Member-at-large who without intentional abandonment of ministry is no longer engaged in an occupation that complies with all criteria in G-2.0403b; or
 - (d) Honorably retired (G-2.0503c).
2. A continuing member shall take the initiative in establishing an active relationship to Presbytery evidenced by regular attendance. Regular attendance shall normally be understood to consist of attendance in at least three of the regular stated meetings each year; and request for excuse for all absences. Honorably Retired members are encouraged to attend meetings but are not required to request an excuse.
2. A continuing member shall exhibit and implement willingness to serve in the committee and committee structures of the governing bodies.

Criteria for Determining a Validated Ministry In Service Beyond the Jurisdiction

The determination of a validated ministry In Service Beyond the Jurisdiction shall be based upon whether the proposed ministry meets all of the following criteria (emphasis added):

1. Is a ministry that serves others, aids others and enables the ministry of others and relates to the service of people rather than to the production of goods or of profits.
2. Is a ministry that makes active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination.
3. Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character, conduct and performance results to a management committee, board of directors or to others responsible for the overall results of the total ministry program. (G-2.0503 does not suggest a “self-employed” validated ministry therefore self-employed ministers in private practice cannot be considered as having a call because they are not accountable to any organization.)
4. Is a ministry carried out in accountability for its character and conduct and is answerable to the presbytery for agreed upon end results or activities with a face-to-face review of the ministry on a yearly basis.
5. Each previously approved Validated Ministry Beyond the Jurisdiction status shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Commission on Ministry to determine whether the above standards are continuing to

be met.

Criteria for Members-at-large

1. Members from other presbyteries may be considered for membership in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon if they are a spouse of a minister who has received a documented and approved call or contract to a particular congregation or governing body position.
2. Members-at-large of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon shall continually be actively seeking and willing to serve a minimum of 1/2 time position, unless restricted by family responsibilities, health or other justifiable reason approved by the Commission on Ministry.
3. The Commission on Ministry shall review each previously approved Member-at-Large status on an annual basis.

Commission On Ministry Processes For Members-At-Large And Validated Ministries Beyond The Jurisdiction

COM will consult annually with all members-at-large and those in validated ministry beyond jurisdiction. Teaching elders in those categories shall provide an annual written report to the COM.

What Should Happen If One or More Criteria for Continuing Active Membership Cannot Be Met?

1. If one or more of the criteria cannot be met the continuing member should seek release from the exercise of ordained office until he or she receives a call to ministry that fulfills all criteria.
2. Restoration to the exercise of the office is possible without re-ordination by (a) application to and approval of the presbytery that granted release, (b) reaffirmation of ordination vows, and (c) resumption of a ministry that qualifies for continuing active membership in presbytery. These steps provide for ease in movement and are in no way judgmental. They are permissive in that re-ordination is not necessary. People should be encouraged to use them.
3. If the Commission on Ministry has found that a continuing member no longer meets the criteria for continuing active membership, has advised the member in writing of its intent to withdraw validation as a Active Member or Member-at-Large and place the minister on inactive status and the member refuses to seek release from the exercise of ordained office voluntarily or refuses to accept being placed on inactive status the member will be afforded the opportunity to appear before the Presbytery in a Stated Meeting to present their case for continuing active membership under this policy.

**Part 13. SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY FOR
PARISH MINISTERS AND EDUCATORS**

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon strongly encourages that all new pastor/educator calls provide for a sabbatical leave as part of the terms of call, as herein described. Existing calls would be encouraged to adopt a plan to have a sabbatical included in renegotiation of the terms of call. The sabbatical is granted as compensated sabbatical time away of at least three months after six years of service to an individual church.

II GUIDELINES FOR SABBATICALS

A. General Considerations:

1. The study undertaken during a sabbatical leave shall ordinarily be of a practical nature, designed to increase the skills of the church professional in his/her current call, or allow for theological study/reflection and/or spiritual renewal.
2. Before the church professional goes on leave, provision shall be made to cover the duties of the person on leave.
3. Sabbatical leaves shall be granted no sooner than the completion of six years of service, nor sooner than six years after a previous sabbatical.
4. Sabbatical leaves shall normally be three months.
5. Ordinarily, the normal study leave time that is due in the sabbatical year shall be a part of the sabbatical leave time, not in addition to it.
6. The church professional shall normally pledge to stay in his/her position for no less than one calendar year after a sabbatical leave.
7. Plans should be made by the session to fully inform the congregation about the sabbatical plans at least 6 months ahead of time, explaining the rationale and the expected benefits.
8. Ideally, written notice and a written plan shall be given to the church's personnel committee and to the church's Session 6 months prior to the Sabbatical Leave. The Presbytery's Commission on Ministry should be notified of all approved Sabbatical leaves.
9. The church Session is responsible for covering the duties of the person on leave, with the intent that the pastor would have no contact with the church, except for an emergency.
10. It is considered desirable for the person on leave to spend part of the time away out of town, away from one's home environment and community.
11. Upon returning from sabbatical leave, the church professional shall present to the personnel committee and to the session, a written summary statement of the sabbatical leave experience, including what was learned.
12. In a church where study leave (time) may be accrued up to six weeks, this time may be used in conjunction with the Sabbatical Leave.

B. Financial Considerations:

1. During a sabbatical leave, all salary and benefits shall continue to be paid by the church.
2. The church professional shall normally pledge to stay in his/her position for no less than one calendar year after a sabbatical leave. If the church professional chooses to leave the congregation within one year after the completion of a sabbatical leave, that person shall refund to the church the salary paid to him/her during the sabbatical leave.

3. While the church professional is on sabbatical leave, the employing church shall provide for payment of the expenses of whoever covers the duties of the person on leave. There may be retired pastors or pastors in non-parish positions who would assist with preaching, pastoral care, etc. on a voluntary basis. This could be considered.
4. All costs to the church professional for the sabbatical leave shall be borne by the church professional, but he/she may apply his/her study allowances to these costs. It is suggested that churches wishing to assist in the expense of a Sabbatical Leave create a designated savings account for this purpose. Costs to the church professional do not include the costs to cover the duties of the person on leave.
5. Plans should be made to investigate well ahead of time, possible funding for the sabbatical from the Lilly Foundation and other agencies.
6. Since this policy suggested as part of new calls, the Presbytery also strongly encourages churches to establish as part of all new calls a designated savings account that would accumulate over the six years prior to a Sabbatical Leave to help defray the additional costs of hiring someone to cover the Pastor while s/he is on Sabbatical Leave.
7. The church may, at their discretion, give a gift to the pastor to assist with the sabbatical leave.

C. Teaching Elder or Educator Responsibilities

1. Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form - a minimum of six months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Secure the approval of the session for the sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.
3. Assure the session of continued service to the church for at least one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical.
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to the Commission on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of the plans, including the personnel to fill in while the pastor/educator is away.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session and the congregation, (if possible), as well as the Commission on Ministry. The report should include information about what was learned and how that learning will be applied.

D. Session Responsibilities

1. Receive “for approval” the teaching elder’s proposal for a sabbatical, at least six months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the teaching elder during sabbatical leave.
3. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
4. Work with the pastor/educator to arrange for the necessary staff substitutes as needed.
5. In addition, if agreed upon by the session and the teaching elder, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended graduate study.
6. Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the teaching elder upon return.

E. Commission on Ministry Responsibilities

1. Beginning in the 5th year of a new call, begin counseling with the session and pastor concerning the development of the sabbatical plan. This could begin in the triennial review process.
2. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the minister.
3. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session, educator or minister relative to the sabbatical.
4. Assist with temporary supply pastors or support staff as needed during the sabbatical and determine who will moderate the session in the minister's absence.

F. Additional Information

If agreed upon by session and the teaching elder, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended graduate study.

Part 14. EXAMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon reaffirms its commitment to be guided by and to uphold the entire *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* in the examination of both Candidates for Teaching Elder and previously ordained Teaching Elders seeking membership in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon. Based upon a thorough analysis of the relevant provisions in the *Book of Order*, the history of constitutional interpretation through decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and the authoritative interpretations adopted by the General Assembly itself, we hereby adopt the following policy:

1. This policy is designed to assist the presbytery in its obligation to gain a broader vision of each potential Minister member's faith and manner of life and the presbytery's responsibility to conduct such examinations reasonably, responsibly, prayerfully and deliberately.
2. Persons being examined for ordination to the office of Teaching Elder shall be examined by the presbytery in plenary assembly during a regularly scheduled Stated Meeting or a Special Meeting of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.
3. Previously ordained Teaching Elders who are seeking membership in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon shall be examined by the Commission on Ministry (or a COM task force consisting of a least three persons from COM) for membership on behalf of the presbytery. During this examination process those seeking membership shall be specifically asked: "Are you able to answer all the ordination questions in the affirmative without exception? And if not, which ones and why not?" Those received by COM for membership in the presbytery without "scruple" (exception) shall be introduced to the presbytery at its next convenient presbytery meeting.
4. Persons being examined shall submit a brief statement of faith and a brief biographical history (ordinarily not to exceed two pages) which shall be reviewed as part of the examination. These documents shall be provided to the presbytery as part of the plenary examination or introduction to the presbytery.
5. Governing bodies do not possess a "right of conscience" that would permit them to violate provisions of the Constitution.¹
6. Individuals being examined for ordination and/or presbytery membership who are unable to answer all of the ordination questions in the affirmative without exception shall submit a statement of "scruple" (exception) expressing their disagreement to the presbytery in writing prior to their examination.²
 - a. Each person submitting a statement of "scruple" (exception) shall be examined by the presbytery in plenary assembly.³ Each exception requested shall be considered by the presbytery as to whether it

¹ Reaffirmed most recently in *Londonderry v. Presbytery of Northern New England* (Remedial Case 213-2, 2001).

² On the limits of personal conscience, see Form of Government G-2.0105; while G-2.0105 specifically identifies only the *Constitution*, the COM has added "the Scriptures." The provision requiring a written statement is included to aid the presbytery in conducting its assessment of whether the departure constitutes an essential of Reformed faith and polity. Should a "scruple" be announced during the examination, the presbytery would be in order to suspend the examination to provide opportunity for the Candidate to provide the written statement. The presbytery could choose to resume the examination at such a place and time as would provide sufficient opportunity to consider the request carefully and conduct a reasonable and responsible examination. CPM and/or COM will be responsible for notifying persons to be examined of the presbytery policy sufficiently in advance so as to allow them time to prepare written statements prior to the meeting.

constitutes a rejection of an essential tenet of Reformed faith or polity. The person being examined shall be granted opportunity to defend the objection before the assembly. The assembly may take into account the depth and quality of theological reasoning in determining whether the position taken constitutes a rejection of an essential tenet.⁴

b. Persons who are judged by this presbytery to reject an essential tenet of Reformed faith or polity shall not be ordained as a Teaching Elder, or be granted membership in this presbytery, regardless of prior ordination or retirement status.

c. "So far as may be possible without serious departure from [the standards of the church], without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained" (G-2.0105).

d. The presbytery may not take any action which binds the judgment of future assemblies in the examination of Candidates, nor may it reject a Candidate's statement of exception without providing the Candidate an opportunity to defend the position or the presbyters the opportunity to weigh the position or its defense.⁵

7. Persons whose statements of "scruple" (exception) are deemed by the presbytery not to constitute rejection of an essential tenet are nevertheless required to act in conformity with the faith and polity of the church.⁶ Persons willfully violating mandatory provisions of the Constitution shall be subject to disciplinary action.
8. All steps in the above process must be completed prior to an individual assuming a call or contract within the Presbytery of Grand Canyon. If a plenary examination is necessary, a special meeting of the presbytery may be called to ensure that the examination occurs in as timely a fashion as possible.
9. It is the responsibility of Sessions and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to counsel with individuals under care of the presbytery as Inquirers/Candidates for Teaching Elder regarding the provisions of this policy. Sessions and CPM need to specifically ask whether the individuals under care are able to answer all the ordination questions in the affirmative without exception, and if not, which ones and why not, so as to have sufficient time to address concerns and/or the inability to comply. It is not fair to the Session, CPM and Inquirer/Candidate to proceed through the Care process, only to discover that noncompliance is grounds for a vote not to sustain the final ordination Exam.

³ Under 2.0105, the determination of departure from essentials is the responsibility of the governing body. The presbytery believes this decision may not and should not be delegated to any committee, task force, council, or commission.

⁴ "It was clearly the intention that this decision as to essential and necessary articles was to be made after the candidate had been presented and had declared his beliefs and stated his motives personally, and after the examining body, whether Presbytery or (General) Synod, had had full opportunity to judge the man himself, as well as abstract questions of doctrine." (Report of the Special Commission of 1925 ["Swearingen"], PCUSA, 1927, pp. 56-86).

⁵ "One fact often overlooked is that by the Act of 1729, the decision as to essential and necessary articles was to be in specific cases. It was no general authority that might be stated in exact language and applied rigidly to every case without distinction. It was an authority somewhat undefined, to be invoked in each particular instance." (Report of the Special Commission of 1925 ["Swearingen"], PCUSA, 1927, pp. 56-86.)

⁶ "The Commission recognizes the right of individuals to hold views contrary to the Constitution of the PCUSA but, for the sake of order, actions contrary to the Constitution are not sanctioned" (PCUS, 1983, *Hambrick v. PJC, Synod of North Carolina*, No. 1-1983). See also *Londonderry et al. v. Presbytery of Northern New England* (RC 213-2, 2001). An examination concerns fitness for office. A decision to grant a "scruple" in examination for ordination does not abridge the authority of the Constitution to govern conduct of ministry or limit the grounds for remedial or disciplinary actions.

⁷ See Footnote #6.

10. It is the responsibility of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and Commission on Ministry (COM) liaison to make sure applicants for Calls and membership in the presbytery are aware of this policy as early in the process as possible. When interviewing applicants, PNC's should raise the issue of whether or not the applicant is in compliance with the provisions of this policy and determine whether the answer permits all parties to proceed with integrity. It is not fair to all involved to proceed through the Call process, only to discover that inability to comply is grounds for a vote not to recommend membership.
11. It is the responsibility of every Teaching Elder of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon to stay current on *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)*. They are reminded that "the decision as to whether or not a person has departed from the essentials of the reformed faith and polity is [to be] made initially by the individual." Teaching Elders should notify the COM immediately upon determining they are unable or unwilling to comply with one of more of the standards of the constitution.⁷

Part 15. MINIMUM SALARY FOR TEACHING ELDERS

The Minimum Effective Salary for Teaching Elders in full-time pastor positions in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon is \$42,000. The Commission on Ministry is authorized to define "full-time" and to make adjustments for less than full-time positions.

Part 16. COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY.

1. The commission shall sit as the commission of Presbytery to conduct the personal interviews of applicants, inquirers, and candidates according to Form of Government, G-2.06.
2. The commission shall examine ministers from other denominations seeking transfer to the Presbytery, and forward its recommendation to COM.
3. The commission shall develop and supervise preparation of commissioned ruling elders, following the provisions of G-2.10 and the commission's own procedures.
4. The commission shall give guidance to and have oversight of applicants and candidates for Certified Christian Educators as provided in Form of Government G-2.1103.

Part 17

Gracious Dismissal Policy

Charitable, Viable, Responsible, Missional and Relational

I. Prologue

The mission of Presbytery of Grand Canyon is to pray together, worship together and work together to fulfill Christ's commission in the Southwest and beyond. We are a connectional church – parts of the body with one another. Of particular note is our historic and present relationship and mutual support with Native American Congregations. Our journey of faith is lived out in the unity found in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).⁸

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon is committed to pursuing reconciliation with pastors, sessions and congregations who are requesting or considering a request for dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Whether that reconciliation takes the form of mutually accepted recommitment to the presbytery-congregational-denominational relationship or dismissal to another Reformed body, Presbytery of Grand Canyon commits itself and invites all its congregations to pursue reconciliation with a graciousness befitting those who claim Jesus as Lord.

II. The Property Trust Clause

As a presbytery, we recognize that chapter four of the Form of Government (FOG) states that except where otherwise provided, "all property held by or for a particular church, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)...is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." Therefore, we affirm the responsibility of the Presbytery to provide for and insure the mission and government of the Church throughout its geographical district (FOG G-4.02; G-3.0303f).

Provided this Gracious Dismissal Policy and its procedures, guidelines and standards are followed by all members of the presbytery, the presbytery and congregations desire and intend to avoid litigation against one another in secular courts. In the Spirit of the Apostle Paul, we peacefully seek first to resolve any disagreements as brothers and sisters in Christ before seeking any civil remedies afforded by law in the state of Arizona. Though property is held in trust by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the presbytery affirms that the Trust Clause should not be used as a weapon to threaten civil action against a congregation, for Scripture calls us to seek in all humility to resolve our disagreements and avoid the harm that is done to the Gospel and Christ's body when Christians resort to civil litigation and public disputes over property.

III. Polity Foundations Relating to Dismissal/Dissolution

All conversations and actions regarding issues of dismissal/dissolution shall be undertaken in accordance with Book of Order, Book of Order Annotated Edition, and relevant Permanent Judicial Commissions cases. The following summary of pertinent decisions shall be considered when pursuing such conversations and actions.

- A. Each case must be considered on a case-by-case basis. (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al v. Pby of San Francisco]).

⁸ This policy has in part been developed in response to the urging of the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that presbyteries develop a process to assist congregations and the presbytery at those times when a congregation considers leaving the denomination, and that such process reflect the principles of consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, and openness and transparency.

- B. When dismissing a particular congregation within its geographic region, the presbytery must fulfill its fiduciary duty under the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) to consider the interest of the PC(USA) as a beneficiary of the property.
- C. A full fiduciary review must be undertaken in all cases (PJC [2014, 221-03, Tom et al v. Pby of San Francisco]).
- D. There is no unilateral right of a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation to depart from the denomination or its presbytery of membership. No authority is given to a congregation or to session to vote to leave the denomination. (GA [218th, Item 4-20]; see also PJC Sundquist v. Heartland, Remedial case 210-02, 2008. See G-1.0503 and G.-3.02).
- E. Presbyterian Churches may only be dismissed to another reformed denomination. The other option that a congregation has which desires to leave the PC(USA) is to seek to be dissolved. Those people may then reconstitute themselves as whatever type of community that they desire. It may be possible for the Presbytery to then sell or rent them the building at a negotiated rate, or otherwise work to seek the viability of that congregation (G-4.0205). The procedure for dissolution in this type of case, shall be the same as the procedure for dismissal in this policy. (This policy shall not guide dissolutions of local congregations for other reasons.)
- F. It is important for the presbytery to prayerfully discern and consider the mission of the church in its district and of the whole church as it decides whether to dismiss or dissolve a congregation (G-3.0301; G-3.0303a).
- G. The full presbytery, meeting in plenary, has exclusive right to determine the final terms of dismissal/dissolution (G-3.0301a).

In acceptance of the above polity provisions, the presbytery is disallowed from creating a formula by which all dismissals/dissolutions will proceed. Therefore, Presbytery will respond to each request for a dismissal/dissolution by negotiating an agreement with the congregation, through its Session or a Session authorized committee, according to the values articulated in section IV.

IV. Values to Guide Conversations and Negotiations

The following values shall guide Presbytery’s conversations with a congregation requesting dismissal/dissolution. It is hoped that the congregation will concur that these values are worthy guides for the conversation.

- A. Charitable – the presbytery commits itself to a process that seeks to be truly gracious. We intend to seek to be gracious to the congregation that seeks dismissal/dissolution; gracious to those with the initial vision to form a PC(USA) church in the particular locality; gracious to the Presbytery that has supported this congregation; and gracious to those members of the congregation that do not wish to leave the Presbytery. It serves neither the Presbyterian Church (USA), nor an individual congregation, nor the larger life of the Kingdom of God to seek dismissal/dissolution terms that create an undue burden upon the operating budget of a congregation moving forward.
- B. Viable – the presbytery commits itself to maintaining its own viability to continue the mission of the church of Jesus Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA) within its region as well as to maintaining the viability of congregations requesting dismissal/dissolution. It is our desire to dismiss churches that possess the resources, including either property or the ability to buy/rent property, so that they can continue in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The value of viability thus affirms a variety of possible options:
 - a. Dismissing/dissolving a congregation with its property intact;
 - b. Dismissing/dissolving a congregation with a payment to the congregation such that the congregation can find another location from which to continue ministry;
 - c. In response to the above option b, the presbytery may seek
 - i. to allow a minority from within the congregation to continue ministry on the property, or
 - ii. to initiate a new worshipping community or new church development on the property;
 or,

- d. Other options that promote the viability of the presbytery as well as the viability of a particular congregation.
- C. Responsible – the presbytery commits itself to a process that promotes fiduciary responsibility among all parties. A full, financial review shall be conducted in order to ascertain:
 - a. The amount of financial support a congregation has received from the presbytery,
 - b. The amount of financial support a congregation has shared with the presbytery,
 - c. The value of the church’s real property and
 - d. The other current assets, liabilities and operating costs that impact the congregation’s ability to continue as a viable ministry and mission.

This financial review shall be considered by the Presbytery as one factor, although not the only factor, in negotiating any proposed dismissal/dissolution settlement.

- D. Missional – the presbytery commits itself to a process whereby the missional calling of both the presbytery and the congregation is affirmed. Consideration may be given by the Administrative Commission to ways any proposed dismissal/dissolution settlement will adversely impact either the presbytery’s or the congregation’s missional ability and may seek creative ways to negotiate a settlement that allows for the continuation of both.
- E. Relational – the presbytery commits itself to a process that seeks, whenever possible, to continue in some form of relationship with a congregation seeking dismissal/dissolution. While continuing relationship is not always possible, it is to be affirmed, honored and pursued as a tangible expression of the Kingdom of God.

V. Initial Response

When the presbytery becomes aware that a congregation may be in disagreement with the presbytery and/or the denomination to the extent of considering withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this information should be brought immediately to the attention of the Stated Clerk who shall refer it to the Presbytery Leadership Team or Commission on Ministry for action. The initial response of the presbytery shall be pastoral and relational, seeking to listen to the concerns of the congregation and to engage in theological dialogue regarding those concerns as sisters and brothers in Christ. If, by letter to the Stated Clerk, a session requests dismissal/dissolution from the PC(USA), the Stated Clerk shall propose that Presbytery form an Administrative Commission which shall be empowered to initiate communication and discussion to ascertain the sense of the Session and congregation toward possibilities for reconciliation.

If it appears that progress can be made toward reconciliation through continued and constructive dialogue, the Administrative Commission will establish with the Session a mutually agreeable process for talks to be held and proceed to engage in such dialogue.

If it appears that progress cannot be made toward reconciliation and constructive dialogue, the Administrative Commission will proceed to determine the desire of the members of the congregation to be dismissed/dissolved or to stay in the PC(USA). This process may involve individual interviews with members, electronic polling, a straw vote, etc. at the discretion of the Administrative Commission. After discerning the desire of members, the Administrative Commission shall determine if a large enough proportion wishes to depart that it seems wise to proceed to negotiations for dismissal/dissolution. The Administrative Commission should also determine if there is a sufficient remnant of the congregation that wants to remain in the PC(USA) that it could continue as a congregation either in the existing property or in a new location. If appropriate the Administrative Commission shall establish a mutually agreeable procedure for negotiating a proposed dismissal/dissolution settlement in conformity to the values articulated in section IV. This negotiation shall begin with a full, fiduciary review.

VI. Fiduciary Review

The Administrative Commission shall begin working with the Session to review the property and financial records of the congregation.

- A. The Session will provide to the Administrative Commission copies of all executed documents concerning the congregation's incorporation and by-laws, real property and other assets including, but not limited to, current deeds of trust, loan agreements (both past and present), liens, property and casualty insurance, and statements of tangible and intangible assets. Representatives of the Session and the Administrative Commission will review these documents to determine whether the Presbytery of Grand Canyon, the Synod of the Southwest or any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) body is named therein and/or is exposed to any liability claims which exist or may arise under these documents.
- B. The AC shall review past support provided by the Presbytery, including but not limited to, purchase of land, payment of staff salaries, support of mission programs via operating budget, grants or other means, as well as financing and/or contributions to existing buildings.
- C. The AC shall review past support from the church for per capita, mission giving and any other support given to the presbytery, the synod or General Assembly.
- D. The AC will obtain a Fair Market Value assessment by a licensed assessor in order to have an understanding of the value of the property held in trust.
- E. In order for the dismissal/dissolution process to be finalized, steps must be taken to repay in full any indebtedness owed to or guaranteed by the presbytery, the synod, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or to refinance such indebtedness through an independent creditor without support from presbytery, synod, or Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- F. Appropriate action must also be taken to amend any organizational documents, as necessary, and to ensure that adequate insurance coverage of all property and activities of the church is maintained until dismissal/dissolution is completed.
- G. If the congregation has established a foundation or received grants or endowment(s), related documentation must be examined to identify any terms or restrictions affected by the proposed dismissal/dissolution or involving the presbytery, the synod or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Corrective action must be taken as appropriate.
- H. Expenses incurred in taking the above stated actions will be paid by the congregation requesting dismissal/dissolution.

Presbytery affirms its fiduciary responsibility to review the terms negotiated by the Administrative Commission and the congregation requesting dismissal/dissolution and reserves the right to modify said terms as it deems necessary.

VII. Considerations Particular to Native American Congregations

- A. **Background:** The establishment of churches on reservation land was a process that took both the national church and the federal government working together with agency directors who oversaw the particular reservation. Agreements were worked out which granted specific areas of land that were to be used specifically for the establishment of these Presbyterian missions/churches. This land would not be given to these missions/churches but permission was given for the Presbyterian church to build missions/churches and to establish their ministries within the designated property. As long as there was an active Presbyterian mission/church on the property it would be considered church property. Once there was no longer an active Presbyterian ministry the land would be "returned" to the tribal agency and would be available for tribal development. At one time all the land deeds/titles for Native American

congregations were held by the denominational offices. At the time of restructuring and the elimination of the Board of National Missions those deeds/titles were transferred to either presbyteries or local congregations themselves. There are only three pieces of reservation property (nationally) that have been deeded to the Presbyterian Church as owner of the property and are not considered a part of the reservation. One of these is Ganado.

B. Implications for Native American Congregations:

- a. Many of our Native American congregants and leaders are not aware that church property is held in trust. Many believe that church buildings are the property of each local church, regardless of who gave the money to build them. In its ongoing work with Native American congregations, it is important for the Presbytery to teach the content of G-4.02, "Church Property."
- b. In a dismissal/dissolution process of a Native American church, the Administrative Commission will research as to who holds the title/deed to the land. The AC will make careful inquiry as to whether the land will revert to the tribal government if a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation/mission is no longer on the land.
- c. According to the "Native American Churchwide Policy Statement" there would need to be a consultation with the Native American Consulting Committee or Native American Ministries Committee regarding the property issue: *Whenever consideration is given by any governing body or agency to the disposition of church property that is related to Native American ministries, the appropriate Native American consulting body will be given adequate prior notification requesting its comments or recommendations or both. Such consideration will occur even when the church owned building or land may not presently be used for Native American work.*
- d. An Administrative Commission should contact the Land Office of the particular community to discuss the past history of agreement between church and tribe regarding the land the church sits on.
- e. In many cases, the Presbytery of Grand Canyon is paying insurance for Native Congregations. The Administrative Commission and Session should make a plan for the departing congregation to secure and pay for its own insurance.

VIII. Status of Teaching Elder Members of Presbytery

If a congregation is to be dismissed/dissolved by the presbytery, one of the concerns of this process is to assure that the rights and status of teaching elder members are considered and handled properly. Teaching elders may request transfer to the Reformed body to which the congregation is requesting dismissal. Transfer may occur concurrently with the dismissal or at a later time not to exceed 24 months.

Transfers to another reformed body or denomination with whom we are in correspondence may be approved unless the minister is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative action (per D-10.0105). The reasons for not granting transfer may be communicated by presbytery's Stated Clerk to appropriate persons.

If transfer is not requested concurrently with the dismissal, the teaching elder's service to the dismissed congregation may be designated by the presbytery as a validated ministry of the presbytery for a period of up to 24 months, and the teaching elder may be granted permission to continue in his or her ministry. Following this 24 month period, the teaching elder will need either to transfer into other validated service or transfer his or her ecclesiastical membership into another Reformed denomination.

IX. Status of Inquirers and Candidates within the Presbytery

Special attention should be given to members of the congregation who are preparing for ministry and are under the care of the presbytery. Each inquirer or candidate under care, together with his or her liaison from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), shall be advised of the Session's desire to seek

dismissal/dissolution. The inquirer or candidate will be given the option of being dismissed with the congregation or transferring her/his membership to another congregation within the presbytery or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If transfer to another congregation within the presbytery or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is requested, the Administrative Commission and the CPM liaison will assist the member in seeking a waiver of the usual six-month requirement for church membership in order to maintain care status.

X. Status of Members of the Congregation

It is important that throughout the dismissal/dissolution process both the Session and Administrative Commission communicate carefully so that divisiveness is minimized between those in the congregation who wish to withdraw and those members who want to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Administrative Commission shall endeavor to contact all members regarding their membership status. Presbytery encourages its sessions to extend a warm welcome to those wishing to transfer to another congregation within the Presbyterian Church (USA), being guided by G-1.03 and G-3.0201b.

XI. Records of a Congregation Seeking Dismissal

Presbyteries have a constitutional responsibility to safeguard the historic records (official minutes of session meetings, rolls, registers, etc.) of the congregations that choose to leave the denomination. According to the *Book of Order* (G-3.0107) ownership of the records of dismissed or dissolved congregations passes to the presbytery and clerks are charged with the safekeeping of records that must be maintained in perpetuity. Records shall be deposited with the Presbyterian Historical Society, the official archives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the depository for preservation. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for obtaining digital copies of the records to be turned over to the dissolved or dismissed church for their use with one source of service being the Presbyterian Historical Society. The cost of these copies is the responsibility of the church. The Administrative Commission responsible for directing the dissolution or dismissal process shall discuss the turning over of records early in the process to be able to locate and itemize the records of concern. These records should not be turned over to the Stated Clerk until dismissal/dissolution is approved by the Presbytery, in order that the congregation will be able to record all actions of the process.

XII. Notice of the Meeting of the Presbytery

Written notice of the meeting to act upon a request for dismissal/dissolution shall be given electronically and via mail at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the presbytery. This notice shall include a written report from the Administrative Commission outlining their findings and recommendations regarding the church's request for dismissal/dissolution.

XIII. Report of the Administrative Commission

The Administrative Commission shall report to the presbytery, to include the following:

- A. The results of its full fiduciary review.
- B. What recommendations the Administrative Commission brings regarding the request for dismissal/dissolution, based on the guidelines noted above.
- C. What recommendations the Administrative Commission brings regarding (1) any financial transactions to occur between the congregation, the presbytery, the synod and/or all General Assembly entities, (2) what provisions will be made for those members who wish to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and (3) what provision will be made for any Teaching Elders, Christian Educators, inquirers, candidates, or Commissioned Ruling Elders associated with the congregation who request to remain within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D. An assessment from the Administrative Commission regarding how the congregation's dismissal/dissolution may affect the larger mission and ministry of the Presbytery.

E. If the Administrative Commission and the Session of the Church seeking dismissal/dissolution have been unable to reach negotiated terms for dismissal/dissolution, the Administrative Commission may recommend to Presbytery approval for the Administrative Commission to assume original jurisdiction of the Session in order to seek resolution of the situation. (G-3.0303)

It should be noted that renegotiation of the terms for dismissal/dissolution through use of amendments from the floor of Presbytery, though allowed under our polity, would invalidate months of work between the Administrative Commission and the congregation. Therefore, the proposal shall be presented with the hope that everyone present will acknowledge, understand and honor that the terms of dissolution/dismissal have been reached by good faith negotiations between the Administrative Commission and the congregation.

XIV. The Presbytery Vote

After hearing the report of the Administrative Commission, the Stated Clerk shall move the following: "The ____ Presbyterian Church shall be dismissed to the following Reformed body, _____, with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the Report of the Administrative Commission;" OR "The ____ Presbyterian Church shall be dissolved with the financial arrangements and other provisions listed as part of the Report of the Administrative Commission." Following discussion and prayer, vote will be taken by written ballot. The only choices shall be "Yes" or "No."

If two-thirds of those present and voting vote in favor of the motion, the congregation shall be dismissed/dissolved in accordance with the financial transactions and other provisions approved by the presbytery.

XV. Actual Departure

The Administrative Commission and the Session shall execute a contract outlining the entire terms of the departure, including the obligations of both the departing congregation and the Presbytery.

A final worship service will be conducted in which representatives of the presbytery, the congregation and the new Reformed denomination will meet, worship, and transfer the congregation to its new denominational home or dissolve the congregation. As part of this worship gathering, both representatives of the presbytery and the departing congregation will offer prayers on each other's behalf, give thanks for the years of ministry shared together, and share words of blessing even as we go separate ways.

XVI. Ministerial Conduct

Imputation of bad or immoral motives should not be a part of our conduct toward one another, toward local congregations, or toward the presbytery. How we treat one another will reflect and impact directly our witness to Christ in Arizona. Faithfulness to that witness compels us to conduct ourselves in a way that honors God and one another. We should conduct ourselves in such a way as to bring honor upon ourselves and the Gospel in the eyes of neighbors and potential members from our communities.

XVII. Presbytery Use of Property

If the group choosing to leave the PC(USA) does not buy the church property, the Presbytery shall (1) use the property as a new church development or mission station, or (2) sell the property on the open market, the proceeds from which shall be split between Account Number 22610 - Emergency Reserve Account and Account Number 22615 - Mission Growth Account allowing for all programming in the Presbytery.

Certified Approved by 2/3 Majority
Stated Clerk
Presbytery Meeting 11/07/2015

Part 18. Policy on Reimbursement of Committee Members for attendance at committee meetings

Travel

\$0.20 per mile for each committee member, plus \$0.02 for each additional passenger carpooling to the same meeting.

Meals

Meals not to exceed \$10.00 per meal (receipts required)

Part 19. CREDIT CARD POLICY

Policy Statement

Presbytery of Grand Canyon (PGC) has established authorities and accountabilities for issuing and usage of credit cards by designated senior staff in accordance with the relevant external regulations, and internal policies.

Policy Objectives

1. To outline the responsibilities of those individuals who have authority to use PGC's credit card for the approved and budgeted expenses incurred while conducting the affairs of the PGC.
2. To specify rules and limitations for the use of PGC's credit card.

Rationale

PGC recognizes that the same control procedures that are applied to expense reports must be exercised over the use of your PGC credit card.

Scope

This policy applies to all PGC staff and committees.

Responsibilities for Credit Card users

1. An expense voucher shall be completed for each credit card statement.
2. All expenditures shall correspond to an approved budget line item and shall be charged to the appropriate accounts.
3. All charges on the PGC credit card's statement shall be accompanied by receipts and supporting documents.
4. It is the sole responsibility of the credit card user to obtain the appropriate authorization signature on the "Voucher."
5. The completed "Voucher" shall be submitted to the Accounting Coordinator for the internal accounting controls.
6. As with an expense report, all charges on credit card statement shall be accompanied by a receipt.
7. Account codes based on the receipt details shall be recorded on the expense report.
8. Credit card statements shall be submitted for approval of appropriate authorities and forwarded to Accounting Coordinator within five days of the receipt of the statements.

Approval Authority

The PGC credit card shall be approved and authorized by the appropriate approval authorities that are specified in the Expense Reimbursement Policy developed by the Resources Committee, in consultation with the Operations Committee for personnel implications.

Lost or Stolen Credit Cards

Lost or stolen corporate credit cards shall be reported immediately the Presbytery Pastor and Treasurer.

Personal Use of Presbytery Credit Card

Presbytery of Grand Canyon credit card shall not be intended for personal use. Usage shall be restricted for PGC business purposes only. The cardholder shall be responsible for any personal expenses and shall report immediately to the appropriate authorities including Presbytery Pastor and Treasurer of any personal use. Continuous personal use of the card may lead to forfeiture of the card.

Part 20. PERSONNEL POLICIES

Introduction

The following policies are intended to guide the employment, oversight, and conclusion of service for all members of the Presbytery staff. These policies do not supersede the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). **These policies are not intended to be a contract (express or implied), nor are they intended to otherwise create any legally enforceable obligations on the part of the Presbytery or its employees.** These policies supersede and replace all previous personnel policies, practices, and guidelines.

These policies reflect commitments made by employer and employees. The Presbytery will endeavor to recognize and affirm the full potential of each employee. Employees will focus their interests and energy on their work and the goals of the Presbytery.

Employer Responsibilities

- To be faithful to the purpose of the Presbytery.
- To assure employees that its policies and personnel practices are attentive to the rights of an employee.
- To provide equal opportunity for all employees, including an affirmative action program.
- To provide fair compensation to all employees.
- To assist employees in meeting their career goals in a manner consistent with the interests of the Presbytery.
- To conduct performance evaluation and work with each employee to set clear and achievable work objectives.
- To maintain open communication with employees.
- To administer a procedure that provides employees with the opportunity to resolve complaints and grievances.
- To make every reasonable effort to provide for a safe work environment.

Employee Responsibilities

- To give their best performance to their assigned work.
- To demonstrate a commitment to the goals and purpose of the Presbytery.
- To demonstrate an understanding of their work in the larger context of the Presbytery's life.
- To participate in various groups and meetings that assist in fulfilling the goals of the Presbytery.
- To demonstrate good stewardship of the resources entrusted to them.
- To act in accordance with the employer's rules and regulations.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Presbytery to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The Presbytery does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status. This policy applies to all areas of employment,

including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, and social and recreational programs.

Nature of Employment (At Will)

The nature of the employment relationship at the Presbytery is at will, meaning either party may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any or no reason. Statements in this Personnel Policies booklet do not constitute a contract of employment for a specified time, or any limitation on the Presbytery or any employee to terminate the employment relation, with or without prior warning or notice, and without the use of progressive discipline. Some situations may warrant exceptions to these policies and procedures as determined by the Presbytery Pastor or the Committee on Personnel. Policies may be changed at any time with the Committee on Personnel's approval. Any such change will apply to existing, as well as future employees.

Hiring Procedure

The principles of inclusiveness and affirmative action stated in the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be followed, where feasible. All positions will be authorized by the Leadership Team of Presbytery. Consultation with Presbytery will occur for specific positions. Consultations may be with the Presbytery Pastor or the Synod, as the case may be for specific positions. The Presbytery Pastor, Committee on Personnel Representative and appropriate Supervisor will arrange and conduct interviews for prospective employees, and make a final selection and salary determination. References will be required for all positions. All employees should understand that their references may be consulted and questioned at any time, not only during the orientation period but also afterwards.

Employee Classification

Employees may be designated in these Personnel Policies by classifications as follows:

Number of Hours Worked

Full-time employees have a regular work schedule of thirty-five (35) or more hours per week.

Part-time employees have a regular work schedule of twenty (20) to thirty-four (34) hours per week.

Part-time employees without benefits have a regular work schedule of less than twenty (20) hours per week.

Eligibility for Overtime

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.

Non-exempt employees are eligible to be paid for overtime work in accordance with the provisions of applicable wage and hour laws.

Length of Employment

Temporary employees are hired to work for the Presbytery on special assignment with the specific understanding that such work will be completed within a short period of time.

Orientation employees are non-exempt and exempt employees within their introductory period (that is, their first 90 days of employment), or any extension of their introductory period.

Regular employees are all exempt employees and all non-exempt employees who have satisfactorily completed their introductory period.

Method of Payment

Salaried employees are paid a fixed salary, not by the hour.

Hourly employees are paid by the hour, and their wages fluctuate according to the number of hours worked.

Orientation Period

All new employees will have an orientation period of at least ninety (90) days. The minimum 90-day orientation may be extended at any time by an employee's supervisor and/or the Presbytery Pastor without cause or justification. If an extension is requested by the employee's supervisor or the Presbytery Pastor, the employee will be notified in writing within one week. Every attempt will be made to give the employee additional notice by telephone or facsimile within three working days. The successful completion of the orientation period, however, does not mean that the employee is guaranteed employment for any specific duration, nor does it change the at-will status of employment.

Termination & Discipline

Where applicable, *Book of Order* G-3.0104 and G-3.0110 provisions will be followed in connection with the termination of salaried executive, administrative, or professional employees.

Termination

Voluntary Termination

The Presbytery will consider an employee to have voluntarily terminated employment if the employee does any of the following:

- elects to resign from the Presbytery;
- fails to return from an approved leave of absence on the date specified by the Presbytery; or
- fails to report for work without notice to the Presbytery for three consecutive days.

Involuntary Termination

Employment at Presbytery is **at-will**. ***At-will means the employer or the employee has the right to terminate employment with or without cause or prior notice.***

Termination Due to Reorganization, Economics or Lack of Work

From time to time, the Presbytery may need to terminate employees as a consequence of reorganization, job eliminations, or lack of work. Should the Presbytery consider such terminations necessary, the Presbytery will attempt to provide all affected employees with advance notice when practical. Layoff benefits associated with such terminations, if any, will be as specified in the notice.

Discipline

Job Performance

Employees may be disciplined up to and including termination for unacceptable job performance, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. below-average work quality or quantity;
2. poor attitude (for example, rudeness or lack of cooperation);
3. excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or abuse of break and lunch privileges;
4. failure to follow instructions or Presbytery procedures; or
5. failure to follow established safety regulations.

Misconduct

Employees may be disciplined up to and including termination for misconduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. insubordination;
3. dishonesty;
4. theft;
5. discourtesy;
6. misusing or destroying Presbytery property or funds, or the property or funds of another on Presbytery premises;
7. disclosing or using confidential information without authorization;
8. falsifying or altering Presbytery records, including the application for employment;
9. interfering with the work performance of others;
10. altercations;
11. harassing, including sexually harassing, employees or members;
12. sexual misconduct (as defined by adopted Presbytery policies);
13. being under the influence of, manufacturing, dispensing, distributing, using, or possessing alcohol or illegal or controlled substances on Presbytery property or while conducting Presbytery business;
14. gambling on Presbytery premises or while conducting Presbytery business;
15. sleeping on the job or leaving the job site without authorization;
16. possessing a firearm or other dangerous weapon on Presbytery property or while conducting Presbytery business (the Presbytery may define or redefine what is a dangerous weapon at any time);
17. being convicted of a crime that indicates unfitness for the job or raises a threat to the safety or well-being of its employees, constituents, or property; or
18. refusing to submit to testing for drugs and/or alcohol.

Attendance

Employees may be disciplined up to and including termination for failure to observe the following specific requirements relating to attendance:

1. reporting to work on time, observing the time limits for rest and lunch periods, and obtaining approval to leave work early; or
2. notifying the supervisor in advance of anticipated tardiness or absence.

An oral warning and a written warning may be given, at the Presbytery's discretion. The Presbytery reserves the right to proceed directly to a written warning, or to termination, without resort to prior disciplinary steps when the Presbytery deems such action appropriate. Employment is at will and as such may be terminated at any time with or without cause and with or without notice.

Exit Interview

Employees who leave the employment of the Presbytery for any reason will be asked to participate in an exit interview. This interview is intended to permit terminating employees the opportunity to communicate their views regarding their work with the Presbytery, including job duties, job training, job supervision, and job benefits. At the time of the interview, employees are expected to return all Presbytery-furnished property, such as equipment, keys, credit cards, documents, and handbooks. Arrangements for clearing any outstanding debts with the Presbytery and for receiving final pay also will be made at this time.

Performance Reviews

All employees will, under normal circumstances, receive a performance review approximately once every 12 months.

The purposes of a review are:

- to evaluate the current level of performance;
- to examine the progress made since the last review; and
- to establish goals for the next review.

If circumstances warrant, a performance review may also lead to the development of a projected program to help the employee correct performance deficiencies or to help the employee develop new skills and knowledge.

Review of Presbytery staff will be by the Presbytery Pastor and the Presbytery Committee on Personnel. Review of the Presbytery Pastor will be by the Committee on Personnel.

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY FOR EXEMPT PRESBYTERY STAFF

Policy:

The Presbytery may grant Sabbatical Leave to the Presbytery Pastor and full-time Associate Executives. Sabbaticals shall be for no more than three months with pay, but vacation time may be

added to the Sabbatical leave. The leave will be for professional development and related to the life of the Presbytery. Only one presbytery staff person may be on sabbatical leave at any given time.

Eligibility:

The Presbytery Pastor and full-time Associate Executives must have been employed with the Presbytery for a minimum of six consecutive years and not interrupted by prolonged personal paid leave or leave of absence. A report on learning in relation to agreed upon goals must be reviewed by the Presbytery Operations Committee and Presbytery Pastor (when applicable, as with the Associate Presbyters) within one month after completion of the leave.

Study Plan:

The Operations Committee of Presbytery and the Presbytery Leadership Team must approve a detailed written plan of study with clearly identified goals and expected end products. This must be done long enough in advance so that budget and staffing needs may be met during the time the staff person is on leave.

Additional Personnel Policies

The Personnel Policies of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon may be supplemented by the Operations Committee, subject to Leadership Team review, or Presbytery review when required by the bylaws. Presbytery staff will be given the opportunity to comment during the development of any supplemental policies.

**Part 21. PRESBYTERY OF GRAND CANYON CHILD PROTECTION and SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION
POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES**

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery of Grand Canyon that all teaching elders, church members, church officers, nonmember employees, and volunteers of congregations, governing bodies, and entities of the church are to maintain the integrity of the ministerial, employment, and professional relationship at all times. Persons who engage in sexual misconduct are in violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, and also of the ministerial, pastoral, employment, and professional relationship. It is never permissible or acceptable for a church member, officer, employee, or volunteer to engage in sexual misconduct.

This policy applies to all teaching elder members of the Presbytery, Commissioned Ruling Elders, candidates, inquirers and all who serve in the staff, programs, and positions of leadership (volunteer or paid) in the presbytery. Others, who serve the local congregations, paid and volunteer, are under the jurisdiction of the Session of the particular church. Each congregation in Grand Canyon Presbytery is required to develop a policy; for non-minister professionals, officers, employees and volunteers which is consistent with this document.

Distribution

Copies of this policy and its procedures shall be distributed to all teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders, candidates for ministry, presbytery staff, and clerks of sessions of the presbytery. It is intended as guidance for teaching elder members, commissioned ruling elders, church sessions, presbytery staff, commissions, committees, networks and task forces. This policy and its procedures should be made available to persons who accuse others of misconduct, including those who are or claim to be victims of sexual misconduct and their families. Sessions may use this policy as a guide to develop their own policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct.

II. Standards of Conduct

... As [God] who called you is holy,

be holy yourselves in all your conduct;

... Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, ...

not under compulsion but willingly, ...

not for sordid gain but eagerly. ...

not lord it over those in your charge,

but be examples to the flock.

... You know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

1 Pet. 1:15; 5:2-3; Jas. 3:1, *NRSV*

The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because through these representatives an understanding of God and the gospel's good news is

conveyed. "Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world."

The basic principles of conduct guiding this policy are as follows:

1. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the role of pastors, employees, volunteers, counselors, supervisors, teachers, and advisors of any kind who are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship. It breaks the covenant to act in the best interests of parishioners, clients, co-workers, and students.
2. Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relation to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the parishioner, student, client, or employee initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the pastor's, counselor's, officer's, or supervisor's responsibility to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship.
3. Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of persons who are less powerful to act for their own welfare, including children. It is antithetical to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. It violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

Definitions

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:

1. **Child sexual abuse**; including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not "consented to" by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.
2. **Sexual abuse** as defined in the *Book of Order*: "Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of office or position" (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).
3. **Sexual harassment**; defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when
 - a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or their continued status in an institution;
 - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
 - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or

- d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.
4. **Rape** or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
5. **Sexual conduct** (such as offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) *that is injurious* to the physical or emotional health of another.
6. **Sexual Malfeasance**; as defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.
7. **Misuse of technology**; use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

III. Church Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

A. Principles

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, persons in ordered ministry, and employees of the church should seek healing and assure the protection of all persons. Where possible, the privacy of persons should be respected and confidentiality of communications should be maintained.

In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, members, persons in ordered ministry, and employees of the church should seek to uphold the dignity of all persons involved, including persons who are alleging harm, persons who are accused of sexual misconduct, and the families and communities of each.

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon has jurisdiction over its members, persons in ordered ministry, and employees such that if a member, officer, or employee is alleged to have committed an offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution, the church has the duty to inquire into the allegations and, if the allegations are proven, to correct the behavior of the member, officer, or employee and ensure the safety of others in the community. Allegations of sexual misconduct are always considered allegations of offense against Scripture or the PC(USA) Constitution that trigger the disciplinary processes of the PC(USA) set forth in the *Book of Order*. In the case of an active non-member who is employed or volunteers with the church, the individual will be covered by the procedures of the written personnel policies of the governing body or entity.

If the person accused of sexual misconduct is no longer a member, officer, or employee of the PC (USA), but the conduct occurred while the person was acting on behalf of the PC(USA), the church does not have jurisdiction to correct the behavior, but it does have a duty to hear the allegations of offense and to take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm. The Council may appoint an administrative committee or commission to hear the allegations of sexual misconduct. The Council may also take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm through education and policy.

B. Reporting Requirements

1. Reporting Sexual Misconduct

A person needing to report that a member, officer, employee, or volunteer of the PC(USA) has committed sexual misconduct is encouraged to seek guidance from a PC(USA) teaching or ruling elder regarding filing the report.

Congregation: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a member, ruling elder, deacon, volunteer, or employee of a congregation, the report of allegations should be made to the pastor, the clerk of session, or the chair of the personnel committee. If the accused is a member or officer of the church, the church will respond by using the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the accused is a nonmember employee or volunteer, the church will respond by using procedures set forth by the session of the congregation.

Presbytery: If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a teaching elder member, the report of allegations should be made to the stated clerk of the presbytery. If the report of allegations is placed in writing, the presbytery will respond by using the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the person who is accused of committing sexual misconduct is a volunteer or nonmember employee of the presbytery, the report of allegations may be made to any of the staff or volunteers of the presbytery. The presbytery will respond by using procedures set forth by policy or bylaws of the presbytery.

2. Cooperation with Investigations

The Presbytery expects and requires the cooperation of all employees in the investigation of violations of the Code of Conduct, Ministry Standards or other misconduct, including a complainant, witness, and the accused offender. We may interview these individuals privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Any person who fails to cooperate with such an investigation or to provide complete and truthful information may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Notification of Parents

A minor child may be party to an incident either as an initiator or as the victim. Whether a child is initiator or victim may not be clear in all circumstances, such as a child-on-child incident. And violation of policy does not necessarily create a victim. While notification of parents of such circumstances may be warranted, utmost care in communication is required.

Therefore, a teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder having knowledge of an incident which warrants communication to a parent shall first advise their immediate supervisor, who shall consult with the Presbytery Pastor, Stated Clerk or Chair of COM. While communicating with a parent, and being mindful of the importance of timely communication, care shall be given to assessing:

- a. The specific facts;
- b. Whether a disciplinary or termination process is required;
- c. Whether a child should be dismissed from a program (requiring notification of other parents/guardians);

- d. Whether “mandatory reporting” is a factor;
- e. Who shall and in what manner communicate with the parents/guardian;
- f. Whether the Pastor should be involved in the communication;
- g. Tentative remedial steps to prevent a further incident.

Notification of parents shall not be delayed when immediate medical care is required.

4. Victim Needs

In the event of cases of reportable abuse, the policy of the Presbytery is to be responsive to the needs of victims within the constraints or obligations imposed under insurance contracts. In general, we will attend to the immediate needs of victims by providing support and pastoral care.

(Insurance Board clients only) An incident of alleged abuse that requires medical or psychological care for a victim or family shall be reported to the Insurance Board by the Presbytery Pastor, Stated Clerk or Chair of COM. The latter shall discuss with the Insurance Board Claims Department whether the circumstances warrant initiation of Crisis Management services which may include psychological counseling. Upon approval, counseling services may be offered to a perceived victim(s), which may include family members.

5. Responsibility of Employees and Volunteers

Each employee or volunteer is obligated to fulfill the Code of Conduct (Appendix D) and Ministry Standards (Appendix E) both by living the standard and helping others to do the same. Each is obligated to guide and gently correct others as they would in a circumstance of high personal risk. When another person, regardless of status, rank or power, repeats a violation of the Code of Conduct or Ministry Standards, the employee/volunteer observer must report the violation to his/her own immediate supervisor, or the next level of authority if necessary.

Reporting responsibility includes incidents of child-on-child sexual activity, dangerous behaviors, employee-on-employee “sexual harassment”, bullying of any kind, the exploitation of a “vulnerable adult” or circumstances which rise to the level of abuse requiring action by a “mandatory reporter.”

6. Receiving Reports of Sexual Misconduct

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways.

Because a Council or entity cannot control to whom the victim of sexual misconduct will speak first, it is important that officers, employees, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors understand how reports of incidents are channeled to the proper person. The allegations may come from persons who have or who do not have a formal relationship with the PC(USA) and may be made to a variety of persons in ordered ministry or leaders within the PC(USA). It is the duty of these persons in ordered ministry to see that any allegation of sexual misconduct is reported appropriately keeping in mind the mandatory reporting requirements for allegations of child abuse.

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the victim, the accused, and the church.

Reports of allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.

The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the victim or the accused unless the incident is divulged in the process of pastoral care, counseling, or a therapy session. If the victim is hesitant to talk to “higher authorities,” the person who has received the initial report has a special pastoral responsibility to build trust and willingness to speak with the accuser, lest the church be unable to respond because no one is able to give firsthand information.

The person receiving the initial report of allegations of sexual misconduct shall analyze the relationship of the person accused of sexual misconduct with the PC(USA) and shall make sure that the allegations of offense are filed with the Council with jurisdiction over the person accused. This may be done by the person alleging harm or by any member of the PC(USA).

If the report is made orally, the person receiving the report of allegations shall request that the person making the report of allegations place it in writing. A report of allegations of sexual misconduct in writing from a member of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed an offense must be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If a clerk or stated clerk receives a report of allegations in writing from a nonmember of the PC(USA) alleging another member or officer of the PC(USA) committed sexual misconduct, the report also should be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. If the person who makes the report is unwilling or unable to place it in writing, any member of the PC(USA) should make the written statement that will automatically trigger the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*.

7. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

All members engaged in ordered ministry (teaching and ruling elders, and deacons) and certified Christian educators are required to report knowledge of child abuse to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities according to the *Book of Order*. The *Book of Order* requires that:

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse (G-4.0302).

All persons covered by this policy have an additional duty to report knowledge of child sexual abuse to the employing entity, supervisor, or Council representative. All persons should be informed of and must comply with state and local laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected child sexual abuse. These reports should be made within a reasonable time of receiving the information.

These provisions of the *Book of Order* attempt to balance conflicting moral duties for officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For teaching elders, the provision strives to balance the duty to protect children from future harm with the duty of a minister to hold in confidence any information revealed to them during the exercise of pastoral care in any ministry setting as defined in G-4.0301 in the *Book of Order*.

For ruling elders, deacons, and certified Christian educators, the provisions strive to balance the duty of an officer of the church to protect children from harm and any secular duty the officer may have to hold in confidence any information revealed as a result of a secular relationship such as attorney/client, counselor/client, or physician/patient. The secular duties will be a function of secular law and may vary from state to state.

C. Responding

The appropriate Council or entity response will vary according to the relationship of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon with the person who is accused of sexual misconduct. Church members and persons in ordered ministry are subject to inquiry and discipline (censure and correction) under the *Book of Order*. Non church member employees and volunteers are subject to oversight and correction by the Council or entity that employs them.

1. Accused Covered by *Book of Order*

When an allegation of offense of sexual misconduct has been received by the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery, the clerk of the Council will report to the Council that an offense has been alleged and that the Council will proceed according to the procedures set forth in the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*. The Council should appoint an investigating committee to inquire into the allegations. The investigating committee must promptly begin its inquiry into the allegations. Delay may cause further harm to the victim and/or the accused.

Governing bodies and entities must cooperate with civil authorities in an investigation of child sexual abuse or other criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.

The session has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving members, elders, and deacons of the church, each congregation having jurisdiction only over its own members.

A presbytery has original jurisdiction in disciplinary cases involving teaching elders. A presbytery may dissolve a pastoral relationship when the Word imperatively demands it (G-3.0301). However, a presbytery may only place a teaching elder on administrative leave when allegations of child abuse have been received and the presbytery has followed the *Book of Order* procedures to conduct its risk evaluation to determine whether or not a teaching elder member accused of child abuse should be placed on administrative leave (D-10.0106). It is recommended that the permanent judicial commission (PJC) members who will conduct this risk evaluation based upon the allegations and a hearing should also take into account secular legal advice.

When a member in ordered ministry renounces jurisdiction, the clerk or stated clerk shall report the renunciation at the next meeting of the Council and shall record the renunciation in the minutes of the Council. The status of any pending charges may be shared with the Council at that time.

2. Responding to Media

Media publicity following an incident of abuse or exploitation may be detrimental to the reputations of individuals, the congregation and the Presbytery. Without intending ever to evade the media, contacts with media must be managed and conducted only by a person specifically designated by the Session to represent the church, the Board of Directors to represent a ministry, and Ministry for Leadership to represent the Presbytery. No other person(s) may speak on behalf of the church. Unless designated differently in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the church shall be the Moderator of Session or, if no Moderator is currently appointed, the Clerk of Session. Unless designated differently in a particular circumstance, the exclusive spokesperson for the Presbytery shall be the Presbytery Pastor or, if s/he is unavailable, the Stated Clerk.

Prior to speaking to media, the above designated spokesperson shall contact and consult with Legal Counsel, to obtain an understanding of appropriate statements or admissions and issues of privacy that may apply to the situation. (Insurance Board clients only.) Designated spokesperson shall give immediate consideration to securing Insurance Board media relations and crisis management resources. Considering the speed of news cycles, a prompt determination is required, erring on the side of seeking help.

3. Accused Not Covered by *Book of Order*

When a Council or entity of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon receives an accusation of offense of sexual misconduct against a nonmember employee or volunteer, the procedural response of the Council or entity will be guided by the written personnel policies of the Council or entity. Usually the Council or entity will have a personnel committee that will be responsible for the inquiry. If a Council does not have a personnel committee, it may appoint either a committee or administrative commission for the review of the allegation.

The committee or commission that will respond to the allegation of offense of sexual misconduct will do the following:

- a. Determine whether or not the allegation gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct by the accused.
- b. If so, gather additional information necessary to make a decision about correcting the behavior.
- c. Determine any remedies, including limiting ministry, suspension, or termination necessary and advisable under the circumstances. If the accused is a member of another denomination, that denomination will be notified of the allegations and the response.
- d. Inform the victim and the accused of the remedy.
- e. In all cases, the personnel committee shall prepare a written report, which shall be included in the accused's permanent personnel file. The accused shall be allowed to attach any written statements to said documents, also for permanent inclusion in the permanent file.

All procedures shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Council, employing agency, or entity of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

4. Council or Entity Record Keeping

The Council or entity should keep detailed records of its actions and minutes of its deliberations and its conversations with the accuser, the accused, and other parties involved, correspondence, and copies of the reports received from committees or commissions. Such records will be kept confidential as far as possible. In Case # 208-6, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) interpreted the Rules of Discipline to say that a Council or entity may share the contents of inquiry reports with other governing bodies or entities of the PC(USA) when necessary. The clerk of the Council or director of the entity will maintain the records while the inquiry is in process.

IV. Prevention and Risk Management

A. Implementation

The Presbytery urges all governing bodies and related entities including colleges, universities, and theological institutions, to establish policies and procedures that make it a violation of the employer's work rules to engage in sexual misconduct and that encourage reporting of sexual misconduct. Governing bodies and entities are strongly encouraged to take appropriate steps to inform members, employees, volunteers, and students of the standards of conduct and the procedures for effective response when receiving a report of sexual misconduct.

B. Liability and Insurance

A Council or entity can be held liable for harm caused by sexual misconduct of an officer, minister, or employee based on a number of legal theories. Governing bodies and entities should take such potential liability into consideration when establishing hiring and supervisory practices.

Governing bodies and entities should regularly inform their liability insurance carriers of the activities and programs they operate or sponsor and of the duties and responsibilities of officers, employees, and volunteers. The standard insurance policy should usually be enhanced by endorsements to cover specific exposures such as camps, day-care operations, shelters, or other outreach programs.

It is also recommended that governing bodies and entities obtain an endorsement to their general liability insurance policy specifically covering sexual abuse and molestation. Such coverage may provide for legal defense expenses and judgments in civil suits brought against the Council or entity, its officers, directors, or employees.

C. Employment Practices

1. Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping is an essential part of hiring and supervision practices of churches, middle governing bodies, and related entities. Every Council and entity should maintain a personnel file on every employee, including ministers. The file should contain the application for employment, any employment questionnaires, background checks, references responses, and all other documents related to an employee's employment, except records that may be required, by law, to be kept in separate files.

2. Prescreening Applicants

Governing bodies and entities are urged to establish thorough and consistent hiring practices. If an applicant is unknown to the employer, the employer should confirm the applicant's identity by requiring photographic identification such as a driver's license. The Council should perform a background check,

including a national criminal background check, on all applicants that may have interaction with children and youth.

Part of pre-employment screening should include specific questions related to discovering previous complaints of sexual misconduct. See Appendix B: Sample Exhibit E.

3. Background Checking

The Presbytery shall conduct a criminal background check on every employment candidate, teaching elder, commissioned ruling elder, candidate and inquirer. Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check. Criminal background checks shall be repeated for employees and volunteers who perpetually work with children every three years. Seasonal employees or volunteers who have been absent from work more than six months, shall have a new background check prior to resuming work.

4. Approval Procedure

When a background check indicates a potential cause for concern, a committee of three consisting of Presbytery Pastor, Stated Clerk and Chair of COM shall review the background check and agree that the applicant is eligible for service within the church.

Where a criminal record exists, consideration shall be given to:

- a. Seriousness of the crime;
- b. Statutes that may legally disqualify the person from working with minors;
- c. Length of time since the last offense;
- d. Pattern of criminal activity; and
- e. Activities the applicant has been involved in since the offense(s) occurred.

5. Review

Conviction for the following crimes shall require circumstances to evaluate suitability for employment:

- a. Violent crimes
- b. Sexual assault
- c. Sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- d. Drug offenses or driving offenses (depending upon position requirements)

Arrest data are not grounds for automatic disqualification. The status or relevance of other crimes will be considered on an individual basis.

Following the review, each committee member shall sign and date one of two documents that becomes part of the applicant's or employee's permanent personnel file:

"We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant would be acceptable for the position."

OR

“We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant is not acceptable for the position.”

6. Confidentiality

At all times, the privacy and security rights of individuals are to be protected with utmost care. The Stated Clerk shall assure that physical means and processes are in place to protect individual rights.

7. References

The employing Council or entity is responsible for contacting references for prospective teaching elders, employees, or volunteers. A written record of conversations or correspondence with references should be kept in the teaching elder or employee’s personnel file. (See Appendix B: Sample Exhibit B for a sample reference form.)

In dealing with teaching elders transferring from one position to another, the responsibility for previous employer reference checks will be the responsibility of the Presbytery Pastor or the authorized persons who would report to the Commission on Ministry or Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

The person within the Council or entity authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding allegations, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct of the applicant.

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.

V. Educating and Training—Awareness

Since the issue of sexual misconduct has become a present reality, there is an emerging need to educate and train a wide variety of persons. Persons needing this specific education include: teaching elders; volunteers; officers; nonprofessional and professional staff; ministerial candidates; professionals who will be working with this issue within the denomination; members of the congregation; and Presbytery staff including supervisors, employees, and stated clerks.

Education for these persons and groups will be different on a group-by-group basis. A primary requirement for all persons should be common knowledge regarding professional and ministerial boundaries, the Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy, and their own specific Council or entity policy.

It is further required that the presbytery provide training regarding sexual misconduct, especially including education on specific policies, procedures and standards of conduct that create safe environments for all children, youth and adults within the ministry setting. This training will be provided at least annually at a centrally located setting as well as through online course offerings and will be required annually of all inquirers, candidates, newly ordained teaching elders, teaching elders

new to the presbytery, Commissioned Ruling elders serving in active ministry, as well as all teaching elders serving in active ministry. Failure to fulfill the annual requirement for training will elicit one of the following responses, as appropriate, until the training requirement is fulfilled: (a) for inquires and candidates – denial of advancement to the next level of the ordination process; (b) for newly ordained teaching elders and teaching elders new to the presbytery – denial of approval of entrance into presbytery membership; (c) for Commissioned Ruling Elders and teaching elders serving in active ministry – in ascending order of response: report of non-compliance to one’s employing organization, report of non-compliance to the presbytery, denial of approval in changes to one’s terms of call.

Much of a congregation’s education currently happens in response to an actual case of sexual misconduct. However, it is recommended that the congregation be as proactive in this area as possible offering education in a variety of settings. There are already numerous resource materials available that could be adapted to a congregation’s setting.

Employing entities need to make sure all employees are well acquainted with, understand, and abide by their policy and procedures. Employing entities should offer additional training and resources, such as: a workshop during staff meeting; lunchtime discussion group; articles and books made available; etc.

Any professional (therapists, attorneys, advocates, mediators, arbitrators) used by a Council should have access to experts qualified in the field of sexual misconduct if they themselves are not.

Grandfathering Not Permitted –

Each employee or volunteer now serving and regardless of length of service must be willing to set an example for all others who follow in their ministry. Therefore, at the time this policy is first adopted and whenever it is amended, all active teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders and paid employees of congregations and ministries of the Presbytery who work with children shall sign an acknowledgement form that they have received this policy and agree to comply with its requirements.

VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Appendix A – Definitions

Appendix B – Employment Procedures with Forms

[The Presbytery recommends to its churches the following template to be adapted and used within its congregations:](#)

Appendix C – Template for Limited Access Agreement for Cases of Convicted Sex Offenders

Appendix D – Template for Code of Conduct

Appendix E – Template for Ministry Standards

Certified Approved by 2/3 Majority
Stated Clerk
Presbytery Meeting 11/06/2015

Appendix A. Definitions

Accused is the term used to represent the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is made.

Accuser is a term used to represent the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not have been the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct. A person such as a family member, friend, or colleague may be the accuser.

Church when spelled with the initial capitalized refers to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Church when spelled with the initial in lowercase refers to local churches. The word congregation is used loosely for members and participants.

Council is a representative body composed of teaching and ruling elders, sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. A Council may establish entities such as day-care centers, conference centers, camps, or homes for the aged. A Council may have both church members and nonmembers as employees.

Employee is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the Church for salary or wages.

Entity is the term used to refer to any program or office managed by a board, committee, Leadership Team, or other body whose membership is elected by a Council.

Inquiry is the term used in the Rules of Discipline to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations of an offense received by a Council. See *Book of Order*, D-10.0000.

Mandated Reporter is described by some states' laws as a person who is required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse that come to their attention. State laws vary from defining "all persons having knowledge" as mandated reporters to specifying very limited lists of professions whose members are required to report.

Persons Covered by this policy includes church members, church persons in ordered ministry, and nonmembers who are employees or volunteers of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations including through use of social media through e-mail, texting, Tweeting or Facebook comments;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Response is the action taken by the Council or entity when a report of sexual misconduct is received. It may include (1) inquiry into facts and circumstances, (2) possible disciplinary action (administrative or judicial or both), (3) pastoral care for victims and their families and others, and (4) pastoral care and rehabilitation for the accused and care for their families.

Secular Authorities are the governmental bodies, whether city, county, state, or federal, who are given the responsibility to investigate, criminally prosecute, and/or bring civil charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or offenses against adults and children.

Secular Law is the body of municipal, state, and federal laws and is often referred to collectively as civil and criminal law. Prohibited behavior addressed by this policy may result in criminal and/or civil charges filed under secular law.

Sexual Exploitation Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a Minister engaged in the work of the church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the Minister.

Sexual Harassment Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Sexual Harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is not permissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. For example, it is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Suspected Abuse Actual abuse consists of physical, sexual or mental abuse inflicted by a person responsible for a child's health, welfare or care, who may be a parent, guardian or other person having access to a child. Abuse may include neglect of a person's health as a result of failure to properly feed, clothe or attend to apparent illness or mental well-being. As a caregiver in ministry, one need not

directly witness, nor is one likely to directly witness actual abuse. It is sufficient to suspect abuse based upon observations of general health, physical condition, patterns of irregular behavior and environmental factors. Examples of observations might include: bruising on multiple occasions, weight loss, chronic physical illness, and anti-social or excessively withdrawn behavior. Environmental factors may include highly contentious divorce and custody battles, or parental drug use. One must use judgment in assessing multiple factors which lead to suspicion of abuse.

While “suspected abuse” is defined here for the benefit of “mandatory reporters”, the definition, for the purpose of this policy, includes “suspected abuse” of a “vulnerable adult”.

Victim is a person claiming to have been harmed and/or abused by a person covered under this policy.

Volunteer is the term used for those who provide services for Presbytery of Grand Canyon. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are to be treated in the same way as employees.

Vulnerable Adult Any adult person who by reason of profound physical disability or dependence, developmental disability, mental illness, relative social power or cultural circumstances may be susceptible to physical abuse, sexual exploitation, financial exploitation or manipulation as a consequence of being unable to physically resist, or render judgments regarding physical, mental, financial or environmental well-being. Such persons may be unable to act independently and may, to their detriment, manifest high levels of trust or fear of persons of perceived power or authority.

Appendix B. Employment Procedures—With Forms

Each “Employing Entity” should have already established and implemented entity personnel policies that include employment procedures for the search, selection, and call of entity staff. The employment procedures should spell out the process to be followed during the election of chief administrative officers and other staff, the appointment of exempt and nonexempt staff, and the call of ministers of the Word and Sacrament, chief administrative officers, and elected staff. These employment procedures should also include candidate/applicant reference checks prior to employment. Employing entity personnel policies should contain a clearly defined grievance process, a periodic performance review process, and a section that prohibits sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment). These provisions should be applicable to all full-time, part-time, temporary, and interim staff. The personnel policies should also provide for confidential communication channels whereby staff members can voice concerns or apprehensions without fear of retribution.

Church-wide and public advertisement of vacant positions as a part of an employing entity’s search procedures to fill vacant positions is required of Presbytery entities and related bodies and is recommended as a guideline for governing bodies by the church-wide personnel policies as well as the Church-wide Plan for Equal Employment and Affirmative Action. In support of this policy and its procedures on sexual misconduct, all vacant positions of religious leadership forwarded to publications for advertisement, distributed to units of the church, as well as posted on local bulletin boards, will include the following statement: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an equal opportunity employer. In addition the church has a strong policy opposing sexual harassment or abuse. References and records will be checked during the employment process.”

This statement will also be included in all information distributed through the Personnel Referral Services of the Office of Vocation. The following forms are included in Appendix B:

- Exhibit A, Employee Questionnaire
- Exhibit B, Confidential Employee References
- Exhibit C, Form for Implementing Policy of Sexual Misconduct
- Exhibit D, Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct
- Exhibit E, Employment Questions

Exhibits A and B will be used by Presbytery entities and institutions and are recommended for use by all other employing units of the church

Exhibit C is to be used by each employing entity as it distributes its sexual misconduct policy to employees and others.

Exhibit D is for gathering basic information to be passed along to the appropriate person or group handling sexual misconduct cases for a unit or other entity.

As required by acceptable personnel procedures, an employee handbook should be written, published, and distributed to each employee of church employing entities. All existing personnel policies and employee handbooks should be updated to include a child protection and sexual misconduct prevention policy.

It is advisable to seek legal advice as other Councils, related bodies, and entities develop and publish policy and procedures on sexual misconduct using this Presbytery policy as a guide.

All forms should be checked for compliance with state laws.

Sample Exhibit A - Employment Questionnaire

This is a sample employment questionnaire. In addition to the usual questions one finds on an employment questionnaire, the writing team has added certifications and releases that focus on past incidents of sexual misconduct. All entities are urged to have this or any substitute form they design examined by their legal counsel before using it.

Employment Questionnaire

Name:

Last

First

Middle

Address:

Street

City State Zip

Business Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

Have you ever been known by any other name? Yes___ No___

If yes, please provide other name(s):

Employment Record (List current and previous employers for the last five years.)

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)

Why did you leave? _____

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)

Why did you leave? _____

Employed by: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Supervisor: Phone: _____

Supervisor's Title: _____

Employed from _____ (month/year) to _____ (month/year)
Why did you leave? _____

I certify that (a) no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending against me for sexual misconduct; (b) I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.

Signature

Date

Note: If you are unable to make the above certification you may instead give in the space provided a description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation and any explanatory comments you care to add.

Employment Questionnaire (continued)

Release

The information contained in this questionnaire is accurate to the best of my knowledge and may be verified by the employing entity. I hereby authorize (*Name of Employing Entity*) to make any and all contacts necessary to verify my prior employment history, and to inquire concerning any criminal records or any judicial proceedings involving me as a defendant. By means of this release I also authorize any previous employer and any law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities to release any and all requested relevant information to the _____
(Name of Employing Entity)

I have read this release and understand fully that the information obtained may be used to deny me employment or any other type of position from the employing entity. I also agree that I will hold harmless the employing entity or judicial authority from any and all claims, liabilities, and cause of action for the legitimate release or use of any information.

Signature _____

Witness _____

Witness _____

Sample Exhibit B - Face-to-Face or Telephone Reference Checks

This is a sample form that may be used to keep a record of all face-to-face or telephone reference checks. Additions that have to do with sexual misconduct or child abuse may be needed by the entity to justify to a court of law that they have done reasonable and prudent screening before hiring a person for a position within that entity.

Confidential Employment Reference

1. Name of applicant:

2. Reference or church contacted (if a church, identify both the church and person contacted):

3. Date and time of contact:

4. Person contacting the reference or church:

5. Method of contact (phone, letter, personal conversation):

6. Summary of conversation (summarize the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for the position, any convictions for or actions pending related to sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or child abuse):

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Sample Exhibit C – Implementation of Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy

This is a sample designed to implement the sexual misconduct prevention policy. It is necessary that all employees acknowledge being in receipt of the sexual misconduct policy. The policy provides protection and empowerment for the employee.

Form for Implementing Policy of Sexual Misconduct Acknowledgement of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that I received on _____ (date), a copy of the “Policy and Its Procedures on Sexual Misconduct of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” dated that I have read the policy, understand its meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy.

Signature _____

A similar acknowledgement should be signed at the time amendments to the policy are made and distributed.

Sample Exhibit D - [Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct](#)

This exhibit provides entities with a sample Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct. It provides space for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of victims, the accused, possible witnesses, and others involved. It also provides space for a description of the offending behavior as well as other pertinent information. This form or a revision of it should be filed with the appropriate supervisor, office, or administrator of an entity who is required to file this with the constituting authority or its response coordination team. (See section on Subsequent Reporting in this policy and its procedures.)

Reported by:

Name

Title

Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Telephone

Date of Report

Person suspected of misconduct:

Name

Title

Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Telephone

Other person(s) involved (witness or victims):

Name

Title

Age _____ Sex _____

Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Telephone

Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct (Continued)

Describe incident(s) of suspected sexual misconduct, including date(s), time(s), and location(s):

Identify eyewitnesses to the incident, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, where available:

Sample Exhibit E – Employment Questions

Employment Questions to Ask of Potential Employees

Governing bodies and entities should ask persons seeking ministerial calls or employment in non-ordained positions questions such as:

1. Has a civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical complaint ever been sustained against you involving sexual misconduct by you?
2. Have you ever resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons relating to allegations of sexual misconduct by you?
3. If so, indicate the date, nature, and place of these allegations, and the name, address, and telephone number of your employer at that time.
4. Have you been required to receive professional treatment, physical or psychological, for reasons related to sexual misconduct to you?
5. If so, please give a short description of the treatment including the date, nature of treatment, place, and name, address, and telephone number of the treating physician or other professional.

Appendix C:
SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR
Limited Access Agreement for Cases of Convicted Sex Offenders

_____, referred to below as “we”, “the congregation” and “clergy”;
(Your Church)

And

_____, referred to below as “you” and “your”
(Petitioner Name)

_____, is an “open and affirming congregation” and as such affirms the dignity
(Your Church)

and worth of all persons as expressed in our Welcome Statement. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshiping with us, especially in times of distress and serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in worship services, coffee hour, meetings, adult education, and all adult social events. Do not enter the classroom wing or the lower level of the church building. You are to avoid all contact with children and youth on church property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Do not talk with children.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- You will remain in the presence of a Parish Associate who knows your situation at all times. You must meet that person before coming onto church property (or before arriving at any church-sponsored event), remain with him at all times, and depart with him.
- If a child or youth in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Avoid being in the church or any church-owned building or church-rented space at any time without a Parish Associate present with you at all times.
- Do not ask for, seek access to, nor remove from the church any materials, files, directories, etc. listing members and friends of the church.
- We ask that you limit your time in coffee hour to about ten minutes.

As a part of this agreement it is understood that you will have three (3) members of this congregation, approved by the clergy, who know thoroughly your history and are willing to serve as your Parish Associates. You will be welcome on church property and at church-sponsored events but must be accompanied at all times by one of the church members named below:

(Named Church Member 1)

(Named Church Member 2)

(Named Church Member 3)

To engage your integration into the congregation and to assist you in maximizing your experience with the church it is agreed that you will meet on a bi-monthly basis with the Parish Associates and a member of the clergy together or separately to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. These meetings will also serve as an ongoing review of the implementation of this agreement.

Implementation of this agreement is based upon a review by the clergy of the most current supporting documents as follows:

- A statement from the court as to the nature of the conviction.
- A risk assessment from a qualified therapist.
- A report from a certified treatment provider indicating that you are not at too high a risk for recidivism.

Any change in the above must be reported immediately to a member of the clergy.

REASONS FOR EXCLUDING A PERSON FROM ALL CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Refusal to allow the clergy to contact the treatment provider and parole officer. Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high a risk for recidivism. Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

This agreement will remain in effect until/unless:

- You fail to honor the terms of the agreement, thus nullifying it.
- It is superseded by any policies and procedures put in place by the church's SafeConduct™ Committee. The SafeConduct™ Committee in consultation with the clergy is the body responsible for providing you with guidelines, support and counsel for your participation in the life of the congregation.
- You, the clergy, and the SafeConduct™ Committee mutually agree to change the terms of this agreement.

ATTEST: I have reviewed the terms of the above limited access agreement and agree to abide by its provisions. Failure to honor its terms will result in my being denied access to church property and all church events.

Signature

Date

Petitioner Name

Address

WITNESS FOR THE CHURCH:

Signature

Date

Name

Church Official Title

YOUR CHURCH

(Address)

Appendix D
SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR
Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct defines individual responsibilities as teaching elders, ruling elders, employees or volunteers to meet the expectations of (Your Church) with respect to behavior or conduct in the service of the ministries of the church, especially those which serve children and “vulnerable adults”.

General Requirements --

Each person subject to this Code shall

1. Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives
2. Treat children and “vulnerable adults” (clients) with respect, and fairly without regard to race, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion
3. Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive as well as to refrain from those behaviors which have been defined as prohibited.

General Prohibitions –

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child/client in privacy.
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
3. Discuss their sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues.
4. Date or become romantically involved with children.
5. Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
6. Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Church property.
7. Have secrets with clients
8. Stare at or comment on children’s bodies.
9. Engage in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children.
10. Work one-on-one with children in a private setting.
11. Abuse clients in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
 - Permit children to engage in the following: Hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity
12. Manipulate or exploit a “vulnerable adult” in any way.

Reporting Obligations --

Each teaching elder or statutory “mandatory reporter” shall report:

1. Concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or children to a supervisor. (Appendix D – Leadership & Reporting Roster)
2. Allegations or incidents of “suspected abuse” to the designated law enforcement or child welfare authority. (Appendix D – Leadership & Reporting Roster)

Specific Interaction Standards –

This Code of Conduct defines individual responsibilities as teaching elders, leaders, employees or volunteers to meet the expectations of (Your Church) with respect to behavior or conduct in the service of the ministries of the church, especially those which serve children and “vulnerable adults”.

General Requirements --

Each person subject to this Code shall

1. Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives
2. Treat children and “vulnerable adults” (clients) with respect, and fairly without regard to race, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion
3. Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive as well as to refrain from those behaviors which have been defined as prohibited.

General Prohibitions --

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child/client in privacy.
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
3. Discuss their sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues.
4. Date or become romantically involved with children.
5. Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
6. Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Church property.
7. Have secrets with clients
8. Stare at or comment on children’s bodies.
9. Engage in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children.
10. Work one-on-one with children in a private setting.
11. Abuse clients in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly

- Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
 - Permit children to engage in the following: Hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity
12. Manipulate or exploit a “vulnerable adult” in any way.

Reporting Obligations --

Each teaching elder or statutory “mandatory reporter” shall report:

1. Concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or children to a supervisor.
2. Allegations or incidents of “suspected abuse” to the designated law enforcement or child welfare authority.

Specific Interaction Standards –

Each teaching elder, employee or volunteer worker of (Your Church) shall conduct him/herself in a manner that fosters understanding of SafeConduct™ in the context of serving children and “vulnerable adults”. The standards articulated below serve two purposes:

To protect children and “vulnerable adults” from abuse or grooming for abuse elsewhere; and To protect/prevent church staff from engaging in patterns of behavior that may be construed as abusive or predatory. While a single infraction of guidelines may not constitute abuse, a pattern of repeated violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from ministry.

1. **Approval and Affection** – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Verbal praise • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg • Any type of massage given by or to a child • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer • Compliments relating to physique or body development • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

2. **Verbal Interactions** – The manner of speaking with children establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children • Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family

3. **Out-of-Program (Off-Site) Contact** –

(Your Church) strongly recommends that teaching elders, employees or volunteers observe the following forms of outside contact as appropriate and inappropriate:

<i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i>	<i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking groups of children on an outing • Attending sporting activities with groups of children • Attending functions at a child's home, with parents present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking one child on an outing without the parents' written permission • Visiting one child in the child's home, without a parent present • Entertaining one child in the home of a church employee or volunteer • A lone child spending the night with a church employee or volunteer

In addition, when outside contact is planned or occurs, the following steps are to be taken:

- A supervisor shall identify for employee and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate (above)
- A supervisor shall assure that the employee or volunteer has the parents' permission to engage in outside contact with the child. When time permits, parents shall execute a permission form with a waiver of liability (if permitted by state law).

4. **One-on-One Interactions –**

Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a child, private one-on-one meetings with a child are prohibited unless approved in advance by (Chair, Employment Committee). When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:

One-on-One Interaction Guidelines

- When meeting one-on-one with a child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a child and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child.

5. **Social Media – Electronic Communications –**

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each teaching elder, employee or volunteer who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized teaching elder, employee or volunteer shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children (or other client group) and parents/guardians.

If offered a position as teaching elder, employee or volunteer, I affirm that application disclosures are complete and truthful. I agree to comply with all code of conduct standards described above relating to children/clients as defined above. If requested to do so, I will cooperate with any investigation of a possible violation of church policies and rules by providing complete and truthful information in an oral and/or written statements.

Signature

Date

Name

Appendix E:
SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR
Ministry Standards

These ministry standards are intended to provide a safe environment for children and “vulnerable adults” in a variety of circumstances. From time to time it may not be possible to fulfill the standard to the letter. Permission is granted to Ministers in leadership to waive a standard with justification. If it is found that consistent fulfillment of a standard is not practicable, the matter shall be elevated to the (Your Committee) for resolution or amendment of these standards.

Adult-Child Ratios –

For all activities an adult-child ration of (xx):1 shall be maintained, except that a ratio of (yy):1 may apply to a classroom environment with children above the age of (zz). Employees or volunteers under the age of 18 are not included in the ratio.

In all cases, an employee or volunteer under the age of 18 working with minor children shall be under the supervision of an adult over the age of 21.

Employees or volunteer leaders under the age of 21 shall not supervise or lead a youth group in which the oldest participating minor child is less than three years younger than the supervisor/leader.

Bathrooms, Locker Room and Out-of-the-Way Locations –

The following practices shall apply to supervision of bathrooms and changing areas:

1. Minimize presence of diverse child age groups at the same time.
2. No employee/volunteer shall enter with a single unrelated child unless the entry door is ajar (propped open) in a way that (s)he can be observed by others.
3. Children shall not enter alone in pairs.
4. Children shall not enter unsupervised.
5. Require children to ask permission before using bathrooms.

Employees and volunteers in leadership are to frequently and randomly check bathrooms to assure their security.

The following areas are to be locked at all times: **(Your rules)**

The following areas are to be off-limits: **(Your rules)**. Typically a place where a predator and child might find unsupervised privacy, such as an unsupervised floor, basement, balcony, or adjacent building.)

Transition and “Free” Time --

Especially during day long, off-site or overnight activities, children will periodically not be engaged in a supervised activity. Supervision shall be maintained during transition times through the use of chaperones, hall monitors and escorts to minimize the opportunity for security breach or child-on-child incidents. (Leadership titles) shall assess at what times and places additional duties are to be assigned to employees and volunteers to assure supervision of transition and free time.

Transportation of Children –

Transportation of children, whether on buses, motor coaches or private passenger vehicles, is a serious responsibility. Especially when utilizing church owned vehicles or private vehicles of employees and volunteers, utmost care shall be taken in view of the risks associated with managing transportation.

The following standards shall apply:

1. No employee or volunteer shall transport a single child that is not his/her own, except as may be required in an emergency with the approval of a supervisor. Communications shall be established to verify the whereabouts, expected arrival and change of custody of the child.
2. Any driver operating a vehicle which holds 16 passengers or more, including the driver, shall possess a valid Commercial Driver License (CDL).
3. Any person who drives on behalf of (Your Church) sponsored programs shall be previously qualified under our transportation and driver qualification procedure.
4. Adult-child ratios shall be maintained and within the safe loading limits of the vehicles being used.
5. As practicable, mixed age groups are not to sit together.
6. Employees and volunteers are not to make unauthorized or unplanned stops.
7. On each trip, a vehicle log shall be maintained which documents the departing time, arrival time, destination, mileage, names of passengers and supervising staff and volunteers and any unusual occurrences.
8. All passengers are to be seated and to use safety belts as available.
9. Employees and volunteers are to be seated on larger vehicles in a way that permits them to supervise young passengers.
10. When passengers must disembark at a rest facility or destination, care shall be taken to obtain a headcount on arrival and departure. All passengers shall be required to complete a trip on the same vehicle to assure accountability.

Off-site Activities (Day Trips) --

Off-site activities require special additional planning, taking into account the nature of the destination and exposure to the public at large. For example, attendance at a public venue, such as an amusement park, will require greater supervision than a visit to a sister church. Due to the increased risk of a child becoming lost or injured during an off-site activity, extra care shall be taken to assure adequate supervision.

The following are minimum requirements:

1. All off-site activities shall be approved in advance by **(Leadership title)**.
2. The trip leader shall provide a plan outlining transportation and supervision for the activity.
3. Parent/guardian permission shall be obtained. Permission forms are to site the destination(s) and activities in which the child might engage (e.g., climbing wall, horseback riding, soccer, baseball, etc.)
4. Parent/guardian providing permission shall indicate who will receive the child on return if other than the person signing the permission.
5. Adult-child ratios shall be increased by at least one person, which may include a person age 16 or older who is qualified to drive. One adult may supervise only one person under the age of 18 (employee or volunteer).

6. Each employee or volunteer shall be assigned to a specific group of children to supervise. Each employee or volunteer must then maintain a roll sheet listing all of the children in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks will be conducted routinely.
7. Standards for bathroom activities, transition time and transportation shall be maintained.
8. Parents/guardians shall be provided a means to make emergency contact with the trip leader.

Over-night Activities --

Camps generally have the experience and staffing to adopt different standards than these below. The assumption for the purpose of this standard is lodging at a public hotel in an unfamiliar city. As with off-site activities, over-night activities present an even higher level or risk to children than day trips due to isolation from parents and the 24-hour supervision that is required throughout the activity.

The following standards will apply in addition to standards for off-site activities:

1. All overnight activities, whether on the church site or not, shall have prior approval of **(Leadership title)**.
2. All overnight activities include a minimum of two adult chaperones over 21 years of age.
3. All volunteers and employees under 18 years of age must be supervised at all times.
4. Parent/guardian permission shall be obtained. Permission forms are to site the destination(s) and activities in which the child might engage (.e.g., climbing wall, horseback riding, soccer, baseball, etc.)
5. The parent/guardian providing permission shall indicate who will receive the child on return if other than the person signing the permission.
6. At all times through the night an employee or volunteer must remain on duty at a location to supervise the coming and going of any child and to assure safe evacuation during an emergency and to prevent children sneaking out. (Maximum two hour watches through the night are recommended.)
7. Trip leaders or other designated adult shall conduct routine walk-throughs of high risk areas
8. For the event of a building evacuation, an outdoor rally point will be designated in advance.
9. A roster will be maintained of the room assignments for each child and adult.
10. A bed check will be conducted at a specific time known to all.
11. Adult-child ratios are to be maintained for outings away from the lodging site.
12. A daily schedule of events shall be maintained with supervisory duty assignments included.
13. Double-queen lodging is preferred at hotels, four to a room. Children in each room will be of similar age. No adult will share a bed with a child.
14. Adult rooms will be scattered among rooms occupied by children. There shall be at least one adult lodged on any floor on which children are sleeping.
15. Standards for bathroom, out-of-the-way, off limits locations and transition time shall be maintained as the site circumstances and facilities may require