

To: Teaching Elder and Ruling Elder Commissioners

Notice of Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Transylvania

The Presbytery of Transylvania will meet on Saturday, January 26, 2019, at First Presbyterian Church, 130 Windridge Drive, Winchester, KY 40391. (The Presbytery thanks the pastor, staff, elders and members of First Presbyterian Church for hosting the presbytery meeting.)

The Presbytery convenes at 10:00 AM. Registration opens at 9:00 AM. Lunch will be provided at the meeting at a cost of \$8.00. If you should need childcare, please respond to Robyn at rjustus@transypby.org by Monday, January 21st.

If you are unable to attend, please request an excused absence from the Stated Clerk. Email: statedclerk@transypby.org. To find the proposed docket, business items and reports, use the following link on the presbytery's website: <https://transypby.org/january-26-2019-presbytery-meeting/> Please email Robyn at rjustus@transypby.org with the names of your commissioners so that a printed nametag can be provided.

If you have questions or need further information, please respond to the email address above.

The meeting will include Worship with the Sacrament of Communion, consideration of proposed constitutional amendments from the 223rd General Assembly, reports, recognizing changes in pastoral leadership, and time for fellowship.

Presbytery Moderator Ward will present his theme for the year and has provided these words as an introduction:

LIFE TOGETHER: A GENERATIVE CONVERSATION

Among the various aspects of our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ is our calling to share *life together*. From the Lord's Prayer to Paul's instructions to various communities, it is clear that the Christian life, at its fullest, was and is intended to be a life together, with all of the possibilities and problems that accompany the sharing of life with others. Over the course of this year's presbytery meetings we will engage conversations regarding our life together, beginning with these simple questions...

*What do you imagine Jesus had in mind when he thought about his disciples' (then and now) life together? What scriptures come to your mind that provide insight into his imagination?

*Recall occasions in your own experience when you caught a glimpse of Jesus' imagination realized.

*What might be the possibilities of, and barriers to, sharing life together in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Transylvania Presbytery, and/or your particular congregation?

Jot down some of your thoughts. We will use those thoughts to guide subsequent conversations concerning our *life together*.

God's blessings to each one and see you soon in Winchester.
The Rev. Jerry L. Utt, II Stated Clerk

Docket
Stated Meeting, Presbytery of Transylvania
January 26, 2019
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester, KY

9:00-10:00 General Registration

10:00 Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Mike Ward, Moderator

1. Declaration of a Quorum *Jerry L. Utt, II, Stated Clerk*
2. Presentation of the Docket
(all new business must be introduced at this time) *Stated Clerk*
3. Welcome from First Presbyterian Church *Ryan Bradney*
4. Introduction of First-time Commissioners, Guests, and Seating of Corresponding Members;
Recognition of Comings and Goings
5. Consent Agenda *Stated Clerk*
 - a. Stated Clerk Report
 - b. KCC Delegate Report-Elizabeth Underwood
 - c. Commission on Preparation for Ministry
 - d. Van Kirk Matthew Ordination and Installation Minutes
 - e. Warren Installation Minutes
 - f. Bowman Ordination and Installation Minutes
 - g. Pastoral Transitions Commission
 - h. Leadership Development Ministry
6. Greetings by Edward Thompson, Board of Pensions
7. Presentation and Discussion of 2019 Theme- "Life Together" *Moderator*

11:00 Order of the Day Service of Word and Sacrament

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Decision Agenda

8. Coordinating Commission *Philip Lotspeich*
 - a. Proposed Amendments *Jerry Utt*
9. Presbyterian Women *Nell Line, PW Moderator*
10. Church Redevelopment & Revitalization *Jay Mumper, Chair*
11. Burnamwood *Matt Falco, Chair*
12. General Presbyter Report *Philip Lotspeich*

Report of Amendment Votes

New Business

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

**Report of the Stated Clerk
Presbytery of Transylvania
January 26, 2019**

Recommendations for Presbytery Action:

Approve requests for excused absences.

Approve/receive the following minutes:

Annual Meeting of November 2-3, 2018
Matthews Ordination/Installation on November 4, 2018
Bowman Ordination/Installation on November 10, 2018
Warren Installation on November 11, 2018

Accept the following resignations:

Teaching Elder Steve Pace, Commission on Preparation for Ministry
Ruling Elder Brad Marcum, Congregational Issues Commission
Ruling Elder Catesby Woodford, Presbytery Treasurer

Information Items:

Roster of former Permanent Judicial Commission members (see BOO D-5.0206b)

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION (Former Members)

Anne Chesnut	Ruling Elder	Hunter, Lexington	2018
Laura McKnight	Teaching Elder	Validated Ministry	2017
Nelson Rhodes	Ruling Elder	Danville	2017
Dan Hans	Teaching Elder	Validated Ministry	2015
Bob Wilson	Ruling Elder	Versailles, Troy	2015
Jack Haga	Teaching Elder	Retired	2015
Beau Weston	Ruling Elder	Danville	2013

Roster of Certified and Associate Christian Educators (see BOO G-3.0305)

The Rev. Lisa Eye, Corbin, KY
Ms. Vonnie Johnson, Danville, KY

Statistical Reporting:

All the information for 2018 statistical reports has been sent to clerks of session and moderators. If any church needs assistance in completing the year-end reports, please contact presbytery staff and we will assist you. You have until February 11, 2019, to enter your reports. Please don't wait until the last day. Sometimes there are system usage issues that lead to delay and extra frustration. Thanks to those clerks who have already entered their reports and thanks to those who will in the days ahead.

Report to Transylvania Presbytery

November 6, 2018

On October 25th and 26th I had the opportunity to attend the 71st Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches held at Jeffersontown Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky as a delegate of the Transylvania Presbytery. With the meetings coming one day after the horrific race-based attack at the Jeffersontown Kroger, just a few miles away, the gathering of brothers and sisters of the Kentucky Council of Churches community was an important face of unity and solidarity in the midst of a time characterized by so much hate.

The theme of this year's assembly, "A House Divided," brought to the forefront of discussion and prayer our divided society and divided Church. As I write this report on election day, 2018, I am reflecting on the vision of unity in the Church held up at the Council meetings. I cherish the gathering together reflected in the faces of those gathered around that rooms from different church bodies, different parts of Kentucky, and different social locations in our country. I pray that a united Church can show a model to our country, suffering so under division and alternate visions of our current social needs, of not just civil dialogue, but of loving dialogue.

Dr. Leah Schade, of Lexington Theological Seminary, was our keynote speaker on Thursday the 25th. Dr. Schade, author of *Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red/Blue Divide (forthcoming)*, presented work from her research on pastors' experiences with politically controversial issues and the response of their congregations. She offered examples of ways to broach these issues in Biblical and non-threatening ways that reflect our shared, common values. I highly recommend checking out her book.

On Friday, Bishop Marvin Frank Thomas of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church presented our second keynote presentation. Bishop Thomas strongly admonished the Churches for not doing more to actively unite our "divided house." As he reminded us, 11am on Sunday still remains the most racially divided time in our society. He urged us to consider ways of worshiping together on a regular basis.

Bishop Thomas also brought to our attention the importance of the work of the Council. Many state Councils are no longer supported by enough churches to hold gatherings such as ours, they are not as heterogeneous as ours, nor are they as able to be active in voicing concerns with their state legislatures. Our Council of Churches continues to be a strong voice for justice and mercy in our Commonwealth, and we are fortunate to be able to be active participants.

The theme for the 2019 assembly will be "Reclaiming Jesus." If you have not had the opportunity to read the statement released on Ash Wednesday of this year by an ecumenical group of Church leaders, I highly recommend checking it out. It can be found at www.reclaimingjesus.org.

I want to thank the Presbytery for allowing me to serve as your delegate to the Kentucky Council of Churches Assembly once more. Next year's meeting will be held in Morehead, and I encourage you to find a way to attend.

Elizabeth Underwood, First Presbyterian Church, Richmond KY

Commission on Preparation for Ministry

CPM met on January the 8th with discussion and approval of the following:

- Welcomed Rev. Scott Cervas, Rev. Stephen Fearing, and Ruling Elder Ginny Shanda to our commission.
- Reviewed and approved December minutes.
- Reviewed candidate/inquirer assessments from the August 1018 retreat.
- Preparing paperwork to move Julia McCorvey and Scott Robinson from inquirers to candidates.
- Reviewed the 2019 budget and voted to give a onetime \$500.00 grant to each of our Inquirers/Candidates and CPL's.
- Reported on Inquirers/Candidates and CLPS.

Our next meeting will be February the 12th at 10:00 AM at First Presbytery Winchester.

Connie Turner

CPM Chair

Ordain &
COMMISSION TO INSTALL

The Commission of the Presbytery of Transylvania to install Rachel Van Kirk Matthews as
associate pastor of Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church, Lexington, KY,
 met at 2:40 p.m. on Nov. 4, 2018, (location) at Lexington, KY.

The following individuals were present:

Ruling Elders:

David Hoskins, Candace Purdom, George Van Kirk, and
Allison Weitkamp

Teaching Elders:

Sara Benedetti, Matt Falco, Jim Gilbert

Guests:

Jr. William Yoo, Rev Brandon Maxwell, Patsy Van Kirk, Rev Shellie
Latham

The meeting was convened with prayer by Jim Gilbert. The
 chairperson of the commission, David Hoskins, declared that a quorum
 was present and appointed Candace Purdom to serve as clerk.

Jim moved, Sara seconded
 The order and content of the service were reviewed and approved, being in keeping with the
 Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The minutes were read and approved. The
 Commission moved to the sanctuary for the service upon an approved *motion carried* motion that its meeting
 would be adjourned with the pronouncement of the benediction at the close of the service by
Rachel Van Kirk Matthews.

Sara moved we adjourn after the
Matt seconded
benediction

Respectfully submitted,

Candace P. Purdom Clerk CLERK

Date: Nov 4 2018

COMMISSION TO ORDAIN AND INSTALL
(OR TO INSTALL)

The commission of The Presbytery of Transylvania to ordain and install Rob Warren
as Pastor of The Presbyterian Church, 1st Pres, Mt. Sterling,
Kentucky, met at _____ am/pm on November 11, 2018, 2002. In the
Pastor's office at the Church. 2018

Present:

Ruling Elders

Teaching Elders

Candace Pardon, Perryville
Elizabeth Woodford, Mt. Sterling

Beth Garrod-Logsdon
Michael Ward
Lisa Eye

Note any others (e.g., teaching elder elect), who met with the

Commission. Absent:

T.E. - Mary Love, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky

The meeting was convened with prayer by Mary Love. The chairperson of
the commission, Michael Ward, declared that a quorum was present and
appointed Lisa Eye to serve as secretary.

The order and content of the service were reviewed and approved, being in keeping with the
Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The minutes were read and approved. The
Commission moved to the sanctuary for the service upon an approved motion that its meeting would be
adjourned with the pronouncement of the benediction at the close of the service by

Rob Warren.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa R. Eye
Secretary

**COMMISSION TO ORDAIN AND INSTALL
(OR TO INSTALL)**

The Commission of the Presbytery of Transylvania to ordain and/or install Andrew Bowman
as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Somerset, KY,
met at 1:30 am/pm on (date) November 10, 2018, (location) Somerset.

The following individuals were present:

Ruling Elders:

Brenda Wesley - Somerset, First
Zono Howard - London, First

Teaching Elders:

Rev. Michael Ward
Rev. Jack Wilhelm
Rev. Lisa Eye

Guests:

Rev. Kerra English - Presbytery of the James
Rev. Bob Tuttle - Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Ecumenical Guests: Chris Basil - Pastor, First UMC, Somerset
Rev. Amanda Musterman, Deacon-in-Charge, St. Patrick Episcopal Church, Somerset

The meeting was convened with prayer by Jack Wilhelm. The chairperson of the commission,
Michael Ward, declared that a quorum was present and appointed Lisa Eye,
to serve as clerk.

The order and content of the service were reviewed and approved, being in keeping with the Constitution of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Commission moved to the sanctuary for the service upon an approved motion
that its meeting would be adjourned with the pronouncement of the benediction at the close of the service by
Andrew Bowman.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa A. Eye, Clerk
Date: 11/10/18

COMMISSION ON PASTORAL TRANSITIONS
Presbytery Report
January 26, 2019

The Commission is currently working with **22 churches in transition** – from those planning for the departure of a pastoral leader to those who have just installed a new leader:

New pastoral leader is in place - continued follow-up during 1st year:

- Beaumont – Stephen Fearing – Pastor (FT) effective 6/15/18, installation 8/12/18
- Maxwell Street – Associate Pastor (FT) – Rachel VanKirk Matthews (9/11/18) – ordination & installation 11/4/18
- First, Somerset – Pastor (FT) – Andrew Bowman (10/8/18) – ordination & installation 11/10/18
- Mt. Sterling – Pastor (FT) – Rob Warren (10/21/18) – installation 11/11/18
- Maysville – Ruling Elder Commissioned to Pastoral Service (FT) – Jim Dougans (12/7/18) - commissioning 2/10/19
- Faith, Morehead – Temporary Supply Pastor (PT) – Rose Taul (1/6/19)

New pastoral call:

- Danville – Pastor/Head of Staff (FT) – Caroline Kelly
- Second, Lexington – Pastor/Head of Staff (FT) – John Leggett
- Troy – Solo Pastor (FT) – Jerry Utt

PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee) elected, MIF (Ministry Information Form) active in the CLC (Church Leadership Connection) system:

- Pisgah, Versailles – Pastor (FT)
- Middlesboro, First – Pastor (PT)

PNC elected, trained, working on MIF:

- London – Solo Pastor
- Hunter – Solo Pastor
- Lexington First – Associate Pastor (FT)

Transitional leader in place, working on assessment:

- First, Ashland – Bill Pollock – Non-Presbyterian Temporary Supply (PT)

Entered/anticipate entering transition process/determining transitional leadership needs:

- First, Pikeville
- Whites Memorial, Berea
- First, Hazard
- Frenchburg
- Graham Memorial, Whitesburg
- Millersburg

This list includes only those churches where a public announcement of transition has been made. We also work with pastoral leaders and churches before a transition has been announced, and in some instances, in partnership with the Congregational Issues Commission.

The Commission has taken the following actions since the last meeting of Transylvania Presbytery on November 3, 2018:

- 1) **Held a planning/extended working retreat, January 7-8, 2019.**

- 2) **Set 2019 monthly meeting dates:** 4th Wednesdays, 10:00 am, First Presbyterian Church, Winchester
- 3) **Reviewed and updated the Pulpit Supply List** (Current list is available on the presbytery website)
- 4) **Appointed an Administrative Commission to Install** Rev. Robert M. Warren as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Sterling, KY on November 11, 2018 at 4:00 pm
Teaching Elders: Michael Ward, Moderator; Beth Garrod-Logsdon, Lisa Eye
Ruling Elders: Elizabeth Woodford, Mt. Sterling; Candace Purdom, Perryville
Guest: Rev. Mary Love, TE, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky
- 5) **Granted Honorable Retirement** to Greg Kubar, effective January 1, 2019
- 6) **Received notice that the following Temporary/Stated Supply Covenants are ending/not being renewed:**
 - a) Jane Love, Interim Pastor, Danville
 - b) Tom Groome, Interim Pastor, Lexington Second
 - c) Tim Noel, Interim Pastor, Troy
- 7) **Received the following teaching elders/ministers into membership:**
 - a) Caroline Kelly from Baltimore Presbytery – Validated Ministry
 - b) John Leggett from Shenandoah Presbytery – Validated Ministry
- 8) **Dismissed the following teaching elders:**
 - a) Jim Stewart (HR) to Presbytery of East Iowa (11/14/18)
 - b) Cindy Harris (At-Large) to Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois (11/14/18)
- 9) **Recognized Ginny Shanda, Ruling Elder, Lexington, First, as certified to serve as a CLP (Ruling Elder Commissioned to Pastoral Service) in Transylvania Presbytery.**
- 10) **Appointed the following Moderators at the respective churches:**
 - a) Jim Gilbert (TE), Danville, effective 12/4/19-2/2/19
 - b) Greg Kubar (TE), Ezel, effective 1/1/19
 - c) Jack Robinson (TE), Bayless Memorial, effective 12/18
 - d) Rose Taul (TE), Faith, Morehead, effective 1/1/19
 - e) Philip Lotspiech (TE)/Lisa Eye (TE) Graham Memorial, effective 2/10/19
- 11) **Conducted training for the following:**
 - a) Lexington, First – Associate Pastor Nominating Committee
- 12) **Approved the following new/renewed calls/covenants**
 - a) New: Caroline Kelly (TE) as Pastor (FT) of The Presbyterian Church, Danville, effective February 3, 2019.

Cash Salary	\$55,000.00
Housing	25,000.00
Supplement for Social Security tax	6,120.00
Board of Pensions (full participation)	
Moving expenses up to	9,500.00
Reimbursable expenses:	
Auto Allowance	2,444.00
Business/professional expenses	1,500.00

Continuing education reimbursement	2,000.00
Paid Vacation – 4 weeks annually	
Paid Continuing Education Leave – 2 weeks annually (cumulative up to 6 weeks over a 3-year period)	
Consideration of 12 weeks of sabbatical leave after 2 years of service and then every 6 years thereafter.	
b) New: Bill Pollack as Non-Presbyterian (Disciples of Christ) Temporary Supply Pastor (Part-time) of First Presbyterian Church, Ashland, KY, effective 11/11/18-12/31/19.	
Cash salary	\$17,000.00
Housing	17,300.00
Auto Allowance – IRS rate up to	700.00
Vacation – 2 weeks	
Continuing education – 2 weeks	
Participation in PCUSA Transitional Leadership Training	
c) New: John Leggett (TE) as Pastor (Full-time) of Second Presbyterian Church, Lexington, KY, effective January 15, 2019.	
Cash Salary and Housing	\$93,000.00
SECA	7,114.50
Board of Pensions (full participation)	35,274.45
Dental	1,632.36
Supplemental Death	704.00
(Vision & FSA is paid by Pastor)	
Book Allowance	750.00
Continuing Education Allowance	2,000.00
Business Expense Allowance	1,250.00
Travel Allowance	1,200.00
Moving Expenses – not to exceed \$6,000.00	
Estimated visit to look for housing and schooling	1,500.00
Vacation – 4 weeks annually	
Continuing Education Leave – 2 weeks annually	
d) New: Jerry Utt (TE) as Pastor (Full-time) of Troy Presbyterian Church, Versailles, KY effective March 1, 2019:	
Total effective salary (Salary & Housing)	\$36,000.00
Manse fair rental value	12,300.00
Utilities allowance	4,000.00
Supplement for Social Security Tax	3,060.00
Board of Pensions (full participation)	
Other benefits:	
403(b) Retirements Savings (manse escrow)	1,000.00
Dental Insurance through Board of Pensions	310.00
Moving expenses up to	3,500.00
Reimbursable Allowances:	
Travel expenses at current IRS rate	2,000.00
Continuing education allowance	1,200.00
Paid vacation leave of 4 weeks annually	
Paid continuing education leave of 2 weeks annually	

(cumulative up to 6 weeks over 3-year period)

In the seventh year of service, a 3-month sabbatical for clergy renewal

Troy Presbyterian Church supports and encourages service to the presbytery and larger church, including Rev. Utt's current role as Stated Clerk of Transylvania Presbytery.

- e) New: Jim Dougans as Ruling Elder Commissioned to Pastoral Service (Full-time) of First Presbyterian Church, Maysville, KY effective December 7, 2018 for a period of three years, subject to renewal; and annual review by the Session and Pastoral Transitions Commission. Darryl Baker appointed as mentor/supervisor in accordance with *Book of Order* G-2.1004.

Terms per year:

Salary	\$31,000.00
Housing allowance	20,000.00
Board of Pensions (full participation)	
Travel expenses at the current IRS rate, up to	2,000.00
Supplement for Social Security tax	½ amount due
Continuing education & book allowance	4,750.00
Vacation time – 4 weeks	
Continuing education time – 2 weeks	
Other: Hospitality allowance	500.00

- f) New: Rose Taul (TE/Honorably Retired) as Temporary Supply Pastor (Part-time/18 hours per week) of Faith Presbyterian Church, Morehead, KY, January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019.

Salary	\$15,000.00
Continuing education reimbursement	1,000.00
Mileage reimbursement at IRS rate	
Vacation – 4 weeks/1 week per quarter	
Continuing education leave – 2 weeks or ½ week per quarter	

January 2019 report to Presbytery of Transylvania, from the Leadership Development Ministry

In November 2018, we held a weekend event for our first Commissioned Lay Pastor training. Five trainees attended.

Leaders/teachers were Mary Weese and Stephen Fearing, along with Philip Lotspeich and Melissa Bane Sevier, who coordinated the event at Jenny Wiley State Park. We centered on group formation and preaching, since several in the group are already preaching regularly.

Our next event will be February 22-24 at the Historic Boone Tavern in Berea. The event will begin with dinner Friday, and end after lunch Sunday. Here's what we'll cover: **sacraments, liturgy, form of worship, worship planning and leadership, funerals.** Each student will have posted a video of that student preaching, before the meeting and we'll offer helpful critique. And we'll make time during the weekend to do sexual misconduct prevention training.

It's not too late to start with the program; we can accept new students at any point.

- To be eligible to be commissioned for pastoral service, a person must be a **PCUSA ruling elder in good standing** with gifts and graces for pastoral ministry.
- The process begins when a candidate fills out an **application**. This application must be endorsed by the session where the ruling elder currently is a member, and must include references from others who know the candidate well.
- The application will be screened by the **Commission on Preparation for Ministry** (CPM) of Transylvania Presbytery. References will be checked and a background check will be performed. If the application is in order, the candidate will then be asked to meet with the CPM for an interview.
- Pending a **positive outcome of the interview**, the candidate will then be enrolled and brought under care of the Commission on

Preparation for Ministry. This care will include ongoing encouragement and contact, including psychological testing which will take place during the first year of the program.

- Once training and testing is completed and the CPM approves a candidate for commissioning, the **Pastoral Transitions Commission** (PTC) will work with candidates and sessions in determining when a church can be served by a CLP and which pastoral tasks are included in each commission.

Candidates will be trained in areas necessary for pastoral leadership, including introductions to both biblical testaments, preaching, Reformed worship and sacraments, pastoral care, Presbyterian polity, Reformed theology, Christian education, and sexual misconduct prevention. This training will take place over two to three years, at events conducted within the presbytery.

What's the cost? We have asked the sessions of the congregations that supports the candidates to invest in the training with \$50-100 per each event. (Lack of funds will NOT keep us from accepting a candidate.) The presbytery will absorb the remainder of the cost.

Do you know someone who would be interested in the training?

Contact Melissa Bane Sevier at melissa@mbswriting.com or 859-321-3568.

**Coordinating Commission Report
Presbytery of Transylvania
January 26, 2019**

Since the November presbytery meeting, the Coordinating Commission has met two times: November 27, 2018, and January 15, 2019.

Recommendation for Presbytery Approval:

Approve the following 2019 presbytery meeting dates, times, and locations:

Thursday, March 14, 2019, 5 PM, Midway Presbyterian Church

Saturday, May 18, 2019, 10 AM, location TBD (invitation from host church welcome)

Tuesday, August 20, 2019, at 5 PM, location TBD (invitation from host church welcome)

Saturday, December 7, 2019, at 10 AM, Lexington Korean Presbyterian Church

The Coordinating Commission has taken these actions:

Conducted a yearly review of presbytery activities and current organizational structure.

Called a joint 2019 planning meeting with the chairs of the various presbytery commissions and ministries for February 8, 2019, at 10 AM.

Suggested 2019 presbytery meeting dates (details above under recommendation).

Discussed the possibility of forming a Grants Commission to streamline the grant-making process.

Reviewed the proposed constitutional amendments from the 223rd General Assembly and provided feedback for the presbytery's consideration. (The GA booklet listing the amendments and a supplemental guide prepared by the Association of Stated Clerks follows this report and is shared for commissioners' study and consideration.)

18-A. Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons: On Amending G-2.0401
Coordinating Commission recommends approval.

18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction

18-B.1. On Amending G-2.0509: Coordinating Commission recommends approval.

18-B.2. On Amending D-10.0401d: Coordinating Commission recommends approval.

18-C. Officers: On Amending G-3.0104

Coordinating Commission recommends disapproval for these reasons:

language is vague, question definition of terms, premature action, possibly unnecessary, proposal raises more questions than answers.

- 18-D. Membership of Presbytery: On amending G-3.0306
Coordinating Commission recommends approval.
- 18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor: On Amending G-3.0307
Coordinating Commission recommends approval.
- 18-F. Welcoming to the Table: On Amending W-4.0202
Coordinating Commission recommends approval.
- 18-G. Disciplinary Offense: On Amending D-2.0203b
Coordinating Commission recommends approval.
- 18-H. Time Limit
 - 18-H.1. On Amending D-10.0401b: Coordinating Commission recommends approval.
 - 18-H.2. On Amending D-10.0401c(1): Coordinating Commission recommends approval.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*

Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and
recommended to the presbyteries for their vote.



Including: Note from the Stated Clerk, a list of the proposed amendments with advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, and an index.

NOTE FROM THE STATED CLERK

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved and recommended to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes proposed changes in the language of the *Book of Order* that, if approved, will amend the Constitution.

With each proposed amendment, reference is made to an item number that indicates the General Assembly Committee report and action related to each proposed amendment. These item numbers also indicate where to find other background information from various entities that was available electronically to the General Assembly commissioners. This information may be accessed through PC-Biz at <https://www.pc-biz.org>. The item number references will also be found in the *Minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018)*, which are expected to be available to the presbyteries by the time they consider the amendments. The full advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and other advisory entities can be found immediately following the item in the *Minutes* for which the advice is given.

Unless otherwise indicated, new language to be added to the *Book of Order* is in italics and any language to be stricken will have a line through it. In providing rationale and advice for each item, direct quotations from the various groups that presented or commented on these items before the General Assembly is used whenever possible.

Presbyteries must report to the Office of the General Assembly a separate vote on each proposed amendment. A presbytery may vote on the amendments in a consent agenda or omnibus motion, as long as each proposed amendment is identified separately. Presbyteries are required to report their votes by June 23, 2019. However, in order to make the changes and publish the 2019–2021 *Book of Order* in a timely manner, receipt of votes prior to this deadline would be appreciated (by May 10, 2019, if possible).

Thank you for your careful and prayerful consideration of these proposed amendments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Herbert Nelson, II".

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

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PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

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18-A. Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons On Amending G-2.0401 (Item 06-11)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0401 of the Form of Government be amended as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown in *italic*.]

“G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. ~~Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session.~~ *Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.*”

Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Grace as Item 06-11. The Presbyteries of Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Huntington, and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Grace provided the following rationale [edited].

This proposed amendment clarifies the somewhat ambiguous language regarding the nominating committee membership.

The proposed changes set the minimum size of the nominating committee at three members, not including the pastor. This is ideal for small congregations yet also provides flexibility for churches to add more from this minimum.

The goal is to provide clarity while preserving the overall permission-giving nature of the Form of Government.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-11 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

The Presbytery of Grace presents proposed language to clarify the minimum size of a congregational nominating committee and the requirement that a majority of the voting members of a congregational nominating committee be members-at-large of the congregation.

The proposed amendment provides helpful clarification to G-2.0401. The minimum size of a congregational nominating committee shall be three members, at least one member of which must be a ruling elder in active service on

the session. The minimum size of three is appropriate for smaller congregations. There is no maximum size for a congregational nominating committee.

The proposed amendment adds clarity and is consistent with past practice. The majority of a congregational nominating committee should be members-at-large of the congregation, not ruling elders currently serving on the session.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 54/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 478/3. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 69, 72, 592.)

For the full report of Item 06-11, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction

Background

These two proposed amendments, 18-B.1 and 18-B.2, (Item 06-09, Recommendations 1. and 2.) come out of the intent to clarify congregational prohibition and individual jurisdiction when a PC(USA) minister of Word and Sacrament renounces jurisdiction while in the midst of disciplinary proceedings and then wants to rejoin the PC(USA). [Editor's Note: The General Assembly approved the combination of two proposed amendments in one item. The advice on each of these proposed amendments come from the separate items, (Items 06-09 and 06-07) not on the combined items. In addition, the General Assembly asked that a third item similar be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force (Item 06-09, Recommendation 3.).]

18-B.1.

On Amending G-2.0509 (Item 06-09)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0509 be amended by striking the fourth paragraph and adding two new paragraphs to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

~~“Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process.~~

“No congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be permitted to employ, for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused.

“Any former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction and later wants to be restored to office can be restored only through application to the presbytery in which he or she renounced jurisdiction for restoration to office, in which case the provisions of D-10.0401d and D-12.0200 shall apply.”

Rationale

The proposed amendment 18-B.1 originated from the Presbytery of Central Florida as Item 06-09 and proposed amendment 18-B.2 originated from the Presbytery of The Twin Cities Area as Item 06-07 Recommendation 2 and added to Item 06-09 by the General Assembly. The Presbyteries of Albany, Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Newton, North Alabama, Tropical Florida, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with Item 06-09 and the Presbyteries of Albany, Denver, Grand Canyon, Missouri River Valley, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with former Item 06-07 including Item 06-07 recommendation 2. The Presbytery of Central Florida provided the following rationale for Item 06-09 [edited].

The [former] amendments to G-2.0509, while intended to protect the church and its entities from ministers who have left the church without submitting to the constitutional process for establishing guilt or innocence and providing for repentance when repentance is needed, have instead created a situation in which the administration of justice, as defined

by the amendment, is impossible to carry out. By definition of the section itself, a person who has renounced jurisdiction no longer holds membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The preamble to the Rules of Discipline defines the limits of church discipline as follows:

... The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the *individual within the life of the believing community*; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring *members* to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. ... (D-1.0101, emphasis added)

Since church discipline exists for the welfare of the believing community and applies to members of that community, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction is no longer a member by action of the presbytery that removes his or her name from its rolls. In any complaint, the Rules of Discipline would apply to the congregation or other entity which employed that former minister. Should a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who has renounced jurisdiction wish to be restored to the ordered ministry of minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder), the process for restoration is spelled out in the Rules of Discipline, D-12.0200.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-09 with action on Item 06-07 providing the following advice [edited]. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-07 recommendation #1 with disapproval and refer recommendation #2 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force. They provided the following advice [edited].

Both Items 06-07 and 06-09 would amend G-2.0509 on renunciation of jurisdiction. Each proposes correcting a perceived flaw in the language of the last paragraph of G-2.0509. The approaches are different and do not achieve the same end. There is a comprehensive description of the issues related to renunciation of jurisdiction in the advice on Item 06-07 that will provide helpful background for consideration of this overture as well.

There are particular issues inherent in Item 06-09 [18-B.1]. The first sentence of Item 06-09 addresses the actions of a congregation. The second sentence of Item 06-09 [18-B.1], addresses actions of a former minister. Each part is discussed separately below.

... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the first paragraph would place requirements on the congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA), rather than on a former minister who has renounced the jurisdiction of this church and, therefore, is no longer subject to its jurisdiction and discipline. Section G-2.0509 is about ministers of the Word and Sacrament and their actions in renouncing jurisdiction. Insertion of requirements for a congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) interrupts the flow and sense of this section.

... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the second paragraph presents some matters of concern.

- Having struck the requirement for rejoining the church in the existing text of G-2.0509, if approved, the new language would eliminate any requirement for membership before “application” for restoration.
- It would require “application” to the presbytery. “Application” is not defined, nor are there any criteria for considering such an “application.”
- Most significantly, it assumes that renunciation of jurisdiction is equivalent to removal from ordered ministry in judicial process. A person who seeks to be restored after the censure of removal (D-12.0201) has subjected him or herself to the discipline of the church and satisfied the requirements for restoration. A person who has renounced jurisdiction of this church in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding has avoided the discipline of this church. A 1989 authoritative interpretation specifies that one who renounces jurisdiction and seeks to return to ministry of the Word and Sacrament “should first come again under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of a particular church and then initiate the process and procedures found in G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry (formerly G-14.0300, Preparation for the Office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament).” The proposed language of Item 06-09 conflicts with this and would not require membership in the church.

[Editor's note: As noted in their advice above, the ACC provided advice on Item 06-07, which also applies to Item 6-09 since they recommended answering Item 06-09 with Item 06-07. The applicable advice is as follows.]

Return to Ordered Ministry

When a former minister renounced jurisdiction while a disciplinary case against him or her was pending, and now desires to return to ordered ministry in the PC(USA), additional process is required. Renunciation is not the removal of a person's status in ordered ministry, but a voluntary abandonment of it. A minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction may not be *restored* to ordered ministry and the office of minister of Word and Sacrament because the person voluntarily acted in a manner to negate that status. This is particularly true where the minister renounced while a disciplinary case was pending against him or her and thus refused to be subject to church discipline.

1. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is a minister in good standing of another denomination may seek to have those credentials recognized under G-2.0505.
2. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is not a minister in good standing in another denomination or whose credentials are not recognized by the PC(USA), must do so as a member of a congregation through the process of G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry.

18-B.2.

On Amending D-10.0401d (Item 06-09)

Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”~~

Rationale

The proposed amendment 18-B.1 originates from the Presbytery of Central Florida as Item 06-09 and proposed amendment 18-B.2 from the Presbytery of The Twin Cities Area as Item 06-07 Recommendation 2. The Presbyteries of Albany, Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Newton, North Alabama, Tropical Florida, Wabash Valley, and de Cristo concurred with Item 06-09 and the Presbyteries of Albany, Denver, Grand Canyon, Missouri River Valley, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with former Item 06-07 including Item 06-07 Recommendation 2. The Presbytery of Central Florida provided the following rationale for Item 06-09 [edited].

How the Book of Order's Currently Mandated Disciplinary Process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d Is Inconsistent with the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline

Recently adopted language in the *Book of Order* may seem to be merely a compassionate response to former ministers of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case, who may have done so because of pressing family or medical reasons, for example. The current process allows former teaching elders to rejoin the church, but does not require them to face accusations until sometime in the future when they themselves choose to come forward, in self-accusation, to resume the disciplinary process. However, requiring the disciplinary process to resume only when the accused chooses to come forward in self-accusation is inconsistent with

five out of seven of the purposes of discipline stated in the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline (D-1.0101), because such a process (1) tramples on victim's rights, (2) is not likely to remove causes of suspicion, and (3) is not likely to bring perpetrators of offenses to repentance, especially if many years pass between when the accused renounces jurisdiction and when the accused chooses to resume the disciplinary process.

The Preamble of the Rules of Discipline state that three of the purposes of discipline are:

- “to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved;”
- “to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses;”
- “to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.” (D-1.0101)

When an accusation is made, victims have a right to see a fair and impartial investigation go forward with all deliberate speed (up to and including a trial, if necessary), so that, whatever the outcome of the disciplinary process², victims feel free to put memories of painful events in the past, and move on with their lives. However, under the current process in the *Book of Order*, victims (and perhaps their families or friends) may feel compelled to have to constantly prepare to testify about abusive events, just in case they ever receive notice from a new investigating committee that the accused wants to resume the disciplinary process, which could be at any time in the future of the accused's choosing. It is cruel, inhumane, and anything but “speedy,” to expect victims to keep hanging on to evidence of abuse and to relive painful memories for months, years, or even decades in the future, on the perhaps slim chance that the accused might rejoin the church and choose to resubmit to the disciplinary process. In the words of a theological seminary advisory delegate to the 2016 General Assembly (2016), the process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d as now written “punishes victims.”

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-09 with action on Item 06-07 providing the following advice [edited]. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-07 recommendation #1 with disapproval and refer recommendation #2 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force. They provided the following advice [edited].

Part 2

Recommendation 2 of Item 06-07 would amend D-10.0401d to add words to make clear the section applies only to a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction of the PC(US.) while a disciplinary proceeding was proceeding against him or her as the accused. There is a task force working on a revision to the Rules of Discipline. The amendment to D-10.0401d (Recommendation 2 of Item 06-7) should be referred to it.

Advice from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending the *Book of Order*, G-2.0509 and approve Item 06-07 Recommendation 2.

While ACWC supports the above changes, they are inadequate. Unless victims have the right to a fair and impartial investigation with all deliberate speed, they will never feel free to put memories of painful events in the past and move on with their lives. Under the current ruling, however, former teaching elders are allowed to rejoin the church but are not required to face accusations and resume the disciplinary process until a time in the future of their own choosing. Thus, a predator can deliberately wait until after key witnesses have moved on with their lives, perhaps even died, or *the original* evidence is no longer available.

Advice from the Office of the General Assembly

The Office of the General Assembly advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) advises that all items, including Items 06-09 and 06-07, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is

currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 54/3. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 466/7. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 71–72, 588.)

For the full report of Item 06-09, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

18-C. Officers

On Amending G-3.0104 (Item 06-16)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0104 of the Form of Government be amended by adding the following statement as the last paragraph to read as follows? [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“No congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”

Rationale

The proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina as Item 06-16. The Presbytery of de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina provided the following rationale for Item 06-16 [edited].

Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has been a provision in the United States tax code prohibiting charitable organizations, including churches, from endorsing or opposing political candidates. This allows for charitable organizations to qualify for tax exemption and qualifies donations to these organizations as tax-exempt. In recent years, there has been discussion regarding the repeal of this amendment; those in favor of repeal claim that the amendment infringes on the first amendment rights of clergy and other leaders of religious and charitable organizations while those in favor of maintaining the statute fear that a repeal would lead to religious and charitable organizations becoming safe-havens for tax-exempt and un-reported political contributions.

While full repeal of the Johnson Amendment has not yet come to fruition, action has been taken to loosen the interpretation and implementation of the statute when churches and secular charitable organizations are found to be in violation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long supported the notion of the separation of church and state. We can see this throughout our Foundations of Presbyterian Polity. Section F-3.0101a and b affirms that “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” and that “We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.”

While it is clear that the principles of this overture are present in abundance throughout the *Book of Order* and *Book of Confessions*, there is no explicit guidance offered to governing bodies or to those in leadership positions regarding endorsing or opposing candidates running for political office. This amendment to the *Book of Order* precludes such activity while still allowing for churches and leaders to actively engage with secular issues that touch on the life of faith, to work towards bringing God’s reign of justice and peace ever closer to reality.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-16 providing the following advice [edited].

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina summarizes the history of the “Johnson Amendment,” and anticipates change to that statute. Because the Johnson Amendment has not yet been revoked or altered, it is premature for the assembly to address anticipated statutory change. The overture would reverse long-standing foundational principles of our denomination and have long-reaching effects on the church,

Individual Discernment and Diversity of Religious Belief

Presbyterians begin with a firm and fundamental belief in the private discernment of religious belief. Section F-3.0101 sets forth and affirms the historic principle that “God alone is Lord of the conscience” and that “in all matters that

respect religion” “we consider the rights of private judgment ... as universal and inalienable.” Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith, and church power in matters of religious belief is limited as explained in F-3.0107. This first historic principle of church order (F-3.0101) was affirmed and explained in the policy statement, “God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience.”¹ The principle that God alone is Lord of the conscience both reflects and underlies many other foundational² and confessional³ statements in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Religious bodies and people of faith hold to a wide variety of convictions, ideas, and values that make important contributions to the shape and strength of public life. That life has been shaped by individuals and groups that have sought to create new forms, sustain traditional ones, challenge existing ideologies and reform or resist unjust institutions. Participation is thus viewed by the government sometimes as a blessing and at other times as a threat” (*God Alone*, p. 48; see also F-1.404). Because the individual is the bearer of conscience, it does not matter whether others of the same faith make the same conscientious claim. *God Alone*, p. 19. “Religious tolerance and pluralism are our political and societal norm. We do not perfectly achieve that norm and intolerance has not been eliminated....” (*God Alone*, p. 7).

Formation of Conscience in Community

While Presbyterians emphasize individual belief, we also recognize the importance of community and our shared expression of belief. Discourse and expressions of diversity within the church are important to formation of religious conscience. As Presbyterians, we recognize that “The formation of conscience occurs in community, but its exercise is very often finally an individual matter” (*God Alone*, p. 19). It is a fundamental principle for our church and our country that “The individual’s right to believe cannot be divorced from the right to exercise that belief in the company and community of others. For nearly every human being, the right to practice religion only as a solitary individual is virtually no right at all” (*God Alone*, p. 12). “The exercise of individual and corporate conscience must be affirmed as an integral aspect of religious liberty.”⁴

Separation of Church and State

The freedom to express religious views in public is as important as the freedom to determine religious beliefs for oneself. For Reformed Christians, “faith demands engagement in the secular order and involvement in the political realm” (*God Alone*, p. 48). The so-called “separation between church and state” is “particularly misleading when used to advocate the separation of religion from politics or from any other dimension of the public order. The First Amendment has never meant separation of religion from community or separation of the church from public life. On their face, the religion clauses [of the U.S. Constitution] constitute an absolute prohibition on government participation in religious life; there is no hint that that barrier was even thought to isolate religion from the life of the republic” (*God Alone*, pp. 47–48).

Responsibility for Involvement in Public Life

The freedom and responsibility to express religious and moral views in public is an important part of our denominational principles and history. The Gospel demands that we share our faith and that we seek to be a community of faith witnessing to God’s good news and Christ’s teachings to the world in words and deeds. According to the Reformed tradition and standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “it is a limitation and denial of faith not to seek its expression in both a personal and public manner, in such ways as will not only influence, but transform the public order and involvement in the political realm” (*God Alone*, p. 48). This principle reflects our foundational statements (F-1.0301, F-1.0304, F-1.0404), other parts of the *Book of Order* (e.g., W-5.0304), and our long-standing and important history of social witness to world.

Endorsement or Opposition to Political Candidates

“For these reasons, limitations upon the freedom of religious bodies to participate in public life are illegitimate and unconstitutional. The church is bound to reject any regulation limiting church advocacy or particular legislation or endorsement of candidates, or establishing religious qualifications for office holders” (*God Alone*, p. 50). Over the centuries, Presbyterians have stood up and spoken out against those who would silence the church and the faithful.

Internal Revenue Code provisions that limit tax-exempt religious organization from devoting “substantial” activity to attempts to influence legislation or participate or intervene in political campaigns on behalf of any candidate for public office, as well as recent public debate, heighten concerns about religious discourse about public life. There is a difference between discussion of issues and candidates, on one hand, and intervention in campaigns on behalf of specific candidates on the other” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

The 200th General Assembly (1988) specifically affirmed that: “We recognize that speaking out on issues will sometimes constitute implicit support or opposition to particular candidates or parties, where policy and platform differences are clearly drawn. Since such differences are the vital core of the political process, church participation should not be curtailed on that account; but we believe that it is generally unwise and imprudent for the church explicitly to support or oppose specific candidates, except in unusual circumstances” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

Each council should be mindful of these foundational principles and historical practice. “It is easy to step from advocating our vision to seeking to enforce it, from protecting religious liberty to requiring ‘right’ belief and action. The church must advocate its positions on public issues, but it should not seek to exercise political authority in its own right” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

Endnotes

1. *God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience* is a policy statement of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988), and affirmed or cited by numerous subsequent General Assemblies and entities of the church. Hereafter “God Alone.”

2. Section F-1.0301 states the “Calling of the Church” is to be a community of faith, a community of hope, a community of love, and a community of witness. “The Great Ends of the Church” (F-1.0304) include “the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.” Section F-1.0404 explains the “Church seeks a new openness to God’s mission in the world.”

3. See, e.g., the Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of 1967, which can be found in the *Book of Confessions*.

4. “The church is always obliged to respect claims of conscience lest it frustrate efforts to obey the will of God. We need not agree with the specific dictates of another’s conscience to respect and support the right to exercise that conscience. Paul told Christians that they were freed from Jewish dietary laws, but if the conscience of another is offended by eating certain foods, ‘for conscience sake—I mean his conscience, not yours—do not eat it’ (1 Corinthians 10:28–29). The obligation to respect the exercise of conscience is not only a dynamic of life within the church; it is both a demand and a dilemma of the First Amendment’s protection of religious freedom” (*God Alone*, p. 18).

Advice from the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy

The Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve 06-16 with suggested amendment providing the following advice [edited].

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval as amended below: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“~~No~~ [Except in cases of extreme danger to the common good, and even then with cautions against extreme partisanship, no] congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”

The substantial and generally fine General Assembly social witness policy on church/state relations, *God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience* (1988; <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-god-alone-is-lord-1988.pdf>) refuses to limit prophetic religious speech, but also recognizes the wisdom of our predominant practice. “The church is bound to reject any regulation limiting church advocacy or particular legislation or endorsement of candidates, or establishing religious qualifications for office holders.” But then, “There is a difference between discussion of issues and candidates, on one hand, and intervention in campaigns on behalf of specific candidates on the other.” And further, “... we believe that it is generally unwise and imprudent for the church explicitly to support or oppose specific candidates, except in unusual circumstances” (all three quotes from page 50).

The General Assembly spoke to the issues involved in the Tax Justice policy of 2014, reaffirming the principles behind the current 501.c.3 category, and further addressing the abuse of the 501.c.4 category of “social welfare institutions” for political purposes and personal enrichment:

Rules governing tax-exempt “social welfare organizations” (501(c)(4)s) should exclude or strictly limit the eligibility of donations for partisan political purposes, parties and candidates, and the individual and corporate donors to or through such organizations should be made public due to their influence on the political process (http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/acswp_tax_justice_42.pdf, p. 4).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed this matter even more directly, responding to Supreme Court decisions in the Citizens United and Voting Rights Act cases, which intensified the role of money in politics:

[The Assembly:] Endorses the continuing prohibition of partisan political endorsements by religious organizations or their leadership and other measures to respect both religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) strongly supports the freedom of religious organizations to speak on matters of policy, but personal endorsements and partisan ties may present the appearance of or opportunity for collusion, special treatment, and the violation of nonprofit tax status. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Election-Protection-and-Integrity-in-Campaign-Finance-2016-ACSWP.pdf>, pp. 2-3)

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 31/24. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 370/99. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 611.)

For the full report of Item 06-16, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

18-D. Membership of Presbytery

On Amending G-3.0306 (Item 06-05)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0306 of the Form of Government be amended by adding the following statement as follows? [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work validated ministry that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.”

Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida as Item 06-11. The Presbyteries of Central Florida, Greater Atlanta, Huntington, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Tropical Florida provided the following rationale [edited].

The current Form of Government lacks clarity with regard to the seeking of and granting of permission for a minister member of a presbytery to labor beyond the geographic boundaries of the presbytery of membership. This overture provides clarity to the seeking of permission to labor within the geographic bounds of a presbytery beyond that of the minister of Word and Sacrament’s membership.

As “the presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district” (G-3.0301), the presbytery needs to have knowledge of and oversight for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) witness within its geographic district. Without the Form of Government making it clear that permission must be granted by the presbytery for all validated ministry taking place within its bounds, the particular corporate witness of a presbytery within a certain district may lack unity of strategy for mission under the Word. The addition of this paragraph to the Form of Government enhances the presbytery’s capacity for unity in its corporate witness as strategy for mission under the Word.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-05 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

Item 06-05 seeks to return to the *Book of Order* the mechanism for seeking permission to labor beyond the geographic bounds of membership of the minister of the Word and Sacrament. The ... text ... is based on the language that was in the 2009–2011 edition of the *Book of Order*.

The Form of Government (G-3.0306) establishes that each presbytery determines the ministers who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged, following the criteria of G-2.0503a(1)–(5) and the policy developed by the presbytery for validating the ministries of its members.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 52/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 442/13. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 71, 571.)

For the full report of Item 06-05, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>.

18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations

On Amending G-3.0307 (Item 06-02)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0307 of the Form of Government be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its ~~Pastors~~ *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament* and Congregations

“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ~~pastors, both ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders)), as well as the~~ *and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ~~pastors ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors,~~ and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.”*

Rationale

The proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Santa Fe as Item 06-02. The Presbyteries of Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Sierra Blanca, Southeastern Illinois, and de Cristo, concurred with Item 06-02. The Presbytery of Santa Fe provided the following rationale for Item 06-002 [edited].

The Presbytery of Santa Fe was one of the concurring presbyteries on the 2016 overture that became Amendment 16-C, Recommendations C.1 through C.8, ratified by a majority of the presbyteries. We are mindful of the valid criticism of Recommendation 16-C.6 (G-3.0307) raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as well as other concerns about repetitive wording. We believe this can be easily remedied by our proposed amendment.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-02 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

The rationale for Item 06-02 focuses on the issue of repetitive wording in this section, but there is a more important issue that is corrected by this amendment.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 06-08 on amending the *Book of Order* to clarify titles to Ordered Ministry. Item 06-08 (2016) was a large amendment with seven recommendations, most which dealt with switching the default term for the ordered ministry of “teaching elder” to “minister of the Word and Sacrament.” In the process of approval, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved an amendment to G-3.0307 (sixth recommendation) to strike out the term “teaching elder” and insert not “minister of the Word and Sacrament,” but “pastor.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution called the attention of the assembly to an unintended consequence of this amendment, that by inserting the word “pastor” into the action defining who had access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent, the amendment was cutting off all ministers of the Word and Sacrament not serving as installed or temporary pastors from access to this committee or entity. Item 06-08 (2016) was approved and referred to the presbyteries without addressing this concern.

Item 06-02, if approved, will restore constitutional access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent to all minister members of the presbytery. It also deals with the issue of repetitive wording in this section with language that is clear and concise.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 52/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 464/3. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 565–66.)

For the full report of Item 06-02, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

18-F. Welcoming to the Table

On Amending W-4.0202 (Item 14-03)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-4.0202 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.0202 Welcoming to the Table

“In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, ~~the session should provide an occasion to welcome them they shall be welcomed to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include and the session should ensure they receive ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”~~

Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Grace as Item 14-03. The Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Newton, and Palo Duro concurred. The Presbytery of Grace provided the following rationale [edited].

The current language “provide an occasion to welcome them” could be interpreted as the need to provide a “first communion” service for baptized children. If taken this way, the language could develop a mindset that baptized children must wait until a certain age or complete certain educational requirements before belonging at the table. This mindset would violate our understanding that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are linked (W-3.0408 “Welcome”) and that “all who come to the table are to be offered the bread and cup regardless of their age or understanding,” (W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper”).

Striking this phrase simplifies the wording while maintaining the intent—to welcome the baptized and provide them with ongoing instruction. The responsibility for instruction in baptismal identity and worship education and participation is addressed in W-4.0201 “Nurturing the Baptized,” W-2.0303 “Ruling Elders,” and W-2.0305 “Shared Responsibility and Accountability.” The issue of welcome to those not baptized is addressed in W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper.”

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-03 providing the following advice [edited]:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-03.

This amendment seeks to clarify that when children receive the Lord’s Supper for the first time, the Directory for Worship is not suggesting a service such as “first communion.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the overture has identified a possible contradiction between W-3.0409 and the current language of W-4.0202 and has provided an amendment to W-4.0202 that would resolve that contradiction. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with the stated intent of the overture.

The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions (14) voted to approve the proposed amendment with comment 50/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with a voice vote. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 17, 1205.)

For the full report of Item 14-03, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000016/business>.

18-G. Disciplinary Offense

On Amending D-2.0203b (Item 06-04)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall D-2.0203b of the Rules of Discipline be amended as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules.*”

Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of North Alabama as Item 06-04. The Presbyteries of Albany, Boise, Grand Canyon, Huntington, and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of North Alabama provided the following rationale [edited].

A recent ruling by a synod permanent judicial commission effectively indicated that actions in violation of a council’s sexual misconduct policy are not under the jurisdiction of the Rules of Discipline unless those actions are explicitly specified as contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires “all councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0106). In order to meet this requirement, actions or omissions in violation of these policies must have the capacity to be addressed through our disciplinary process; otherwise the policies are unenforceable. Furthermore, it should be implicit that actions that violate constitutionally required policies are by their very nature contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. Decisions in prior disciplinary cases have supported this concept.

The members and congregations of the Presbytery of North Alabama wish to stringently affirm that sexual misconduct is sin. We believe past failure to confront this behavior has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without. We humbly ask the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating this sin as an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-04 with comment. They provided the following advice [edited].

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-04 with the following comment.

“While sexual misconduct is not condoned by Scriptures or the Constitution of the PC(USA), adding this language to the *Book of Order* is unnecessary. All councils and judicial commissions are admonished to consider sexual misconduct as contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the PC(USA).”

Scriptures and the Constitution do not condone sexual misconduct or the abuse and endangerment of children and youth. Many acts involve impermissible sexual overtures, force, and misconduct. The assembly is reminded that the Constitution is not an enumeration of specific permitted or prohibited conduct, but rather a guide for all councils in administering their mission. Each council should be mindful that any act of sexual misconduct or child abuse is in violation of the Constitution. By singling out a particular violation of a particular policy, an inference might be made that violations of other policies are not contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution.

Councils have the authority to establish and enforce their policies. Not all violations of a particular policy may be found to be contrary to Scripture or the Constitution. Violation of a council's sexual misconduct and/or child and youth protection policy may be procedural and may not rise to the level of a constitutional offense. The Rules of Discipline set forth the process for determining proof of an alleged offense, including sexual misconduct.

The assembly may consider admonishing all councils and judicial commissions that sexual misconduct is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution and that all councils are required to adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and/or child/youth protection policy (G-3.0106).

Alternatively, the assembly may consider referral of this item to the Task Force on the Rules of Discipline for report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Advice from the Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns

The Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-04 providing the following advice [edited].

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) agrees that any act or omission prohibited by the council of authority's duly adopted sexual misconduct policy and/or child and youth protection policy should be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules. ACWC agrees with this overture that past failure to confront sexual misconduct has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without.

Because all sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power, certain populations are more vulnerable to such abuse. For instance, children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers are often the targets of sexual misconduct. Gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings based in patriarchy leave women within the church particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. It is essential that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating sexual misconduct to be an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 53/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 416/13. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 570.)

For the full report of Item 06-04, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>.

18-H. Time Limit

On Amending D-10.0401 (Item 06-24)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

18-H.1.

Shall D-10.0401b of the Rules of Discipline be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit for charging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-10.0401c(1) or (2) failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Both charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.”

18-H.2.

Shall D-10.0401c(1) of the Rules of Discipline be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone ~~over the age of eighteen years~~ without the mental capacity to consent; or”

Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution comment on a referral from the 222nd (2016) General Assembly to the Office of the General Assembly. The original item before the 222nd (2016) General Assembly originated from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to refer Item 06-24 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force or approve as amended. They provided the following advice [edited].

[b.] The ACWC proposed and ACC recommended languages both impose a level of responsibility on persons that is not currently part of the Rules of Discipline. The ACC recommendation imposes a negligence standard for failure to respond to situations involving a reasonable risk of sexual misconduct, including the failure to report appropriately.

[c.1)] This language recognizes that minor persons cannot consent. The second clause clarifies that sexual abuse includes persons who lack of the capacity to consent for any reason whatsoever.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 47/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 455/16. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 73–74, 631–32.)

For the full report of Item 06-24, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

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ASSOCIATION OF STATED CLERKS

**Analysis of Amendments to the Constitution
Proposed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018)**

INTRODUCTION

As in prior years, the Association of Stated Clerks is publishing this *Analysis of Amendments to the Constitution* to assist presbyteries in studying and acting on the amendments proposed by this year's General Assembly (2018). The analysis includes a Brief Description of the amendment, the committee and Assembly Action, Arguments Supporting an Affirmative Vote, and Arguments Supporting a Negative Vote. Most of the proposed changes came from the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06). I sat in this committee and most of the controversial proposals were either referred or found little opposition once amendments to the original overture were approved.

Our purpose has been to present arguments made in favor of and against each amendment both in meetings of the assembly committee that considered the overture leading to the amendment and on the floor of the General Assembly. It is not the role of the Association to make a recommendation either in support of or against any amendment. This analysis is best used in conjunction with the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution published by Office of the General Assembly. Many presbyteries provide copies of this analysis to their committees responsible for making a recommendation on presbytery action, and we understand that this has assisted those committees as they have done their work. We are glad that these materials are used in that way. Please note that you are free to use them as you wish. We assert no copyright and do not require advance approval of their use.

Additional background information on any of the proposed changes can be found at <http://www.pc-biz.org>.

Thank you to the ASC members who diligently attended committee meetings and provided information about what the pros and cons were for each amendment and to the Office of Constitutional Interpretation for their assistance.

Michael R. Lochow
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of the Northern Plains

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

18-A Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons On Amending G-2.0401 (Item 06-11)

Brief Description

This amendment originated from the Presbytery of Grace. The amendment is intended to clarify the somewhat ambiguous language regarding the nominating committee membership. It sets the minimum size of the nominating committee at three members, not including the pastor. The goal is to provide clarity while preserving the overall permission-giving nature of the Form of Government.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 54/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 478/3.

Arguments Supporting an Affirmative Vote

- From rationale: Ideal for small congregations yet also provides flexibility for churches to add more from the minimum.
- From ACC: Adds clarity and is consistent with past practice.

Arguments Supporting a Negative Vote

- None

18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction

Brief Description

These two amendments (18-B.1 and 18-b.2), (Item 06-09, Recommendations 1. and 2.) come out of the intent to clarify congregational prohibition and individual jurisdiction when a PC(USA) minister of Word and Sacrament renounces jurisdiction while in the midst of disciplinary proceedings and then wants to rejoin the PC(USA). The General Assembly approved the combination of two proposed amendments in one item. The advice on each of these proposed amendments come from the separate items, (Items 06-09 and 06-07) not on the combined items.

18-B.1 On Amending G-2.0509 (Item 06-09)

Brief Description

The proposed amendment originated from the Presbytery of Central Florida as Item 06-09. The rationale provided was that the [former] amendment to G-2.0509, while intended to protect the church and its entities from ministers who have left the church without submitting to the constitutional process for establishing guilt or innocence and providing for repentance when repentance is needed, have instead created a situation in which the administration of justice, as defined by the amendment, is impossible to carry out. See the complete rationale on pages 3 and 4 of the Amendment Booklet.

18-B.2
On Amending D-10.0401d (Item 06-09)

Brief Description

The proposed amendment originated from the Presbytery of The Twin Cities Area as Item 06-07. See edited rationale on pages 5 and 6 of the Amendment Booklet.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 54/3. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 466/7.

Arguments Supporting an Affirmative Vote

- Seems reasonable and the process is understandable

Arguments Supporting a Negative Vote

- No articulated opposition expressed in committee
- See discussion in booklet by Advisory Committee on the Constitution

18-C Officers
On Amending G-3.0104 (Item 06-16)

Brief Description

The proposed amendment comes from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has been a provision in the United States tax code prohibiting charitable organizations, including churches, from endorsing or opposing political candidates. Action has been taken to loosen this prohibition. This amendment would offer explicit guidance to governing bodies or to those in leadership positions regarding endorsing or opposing candidates running for political office.

Assembly Action

The vote of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 31/24. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 370/99.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- Preferable to passing after Johnson amendment is removed by Congress
- Get in front of possible changes to Johnson amendment
- Assists in protecting 501(c)(3) status
- In plenary: divisive times, enables time honored separation of church and state
- In plenary: Not interfere with minister of Word and Sacrament speaking to social policy

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- Presbyterian sensibilities tells us not to advocate for or against a candidate
- Specific prohibition implies the absence of authority to speak from the pulpit with the authority of scripture
- See Advisory Committee on the Constitution's lengthy discussion

**18-D. Membership of Presbytery
On Amending G-3.0306 (Item 06-05)**

Brief Description

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida. This amendment would provide clarify to minister members seeking permission to labor within the bounds of a presbytery beyond that of the membership of the minister of Word and Sacrament's membership.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 52/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 442/13.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- Clarifies laboring outside bounds of presbytery of membership
- Brings back language from old Book of Order

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- None

**18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations
On Amending G-3.0307 (Item 06-02)**

Brief Description

The proposed amendment originated from the Presbytery of Santa Fe. The proposed amendment seeks to clear up repetitive wording in G-3.0307.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 52/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 464/3.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- Correcting language
- Limited discussion

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- None

**Amendment 18-F. Welcoming to the Table
On Amending W-4.0202 (Item 14-03)**

Brief Description

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Grace. This amendment seeks to clarify that when children receive the Lord's Supper for the first time, the Directory of Worship is not suggesting a service such as "first communion."

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions (14) voted to approve the proposed amendment with comment by a vote of 50/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with a voice vote.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approval

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- None

**Amendment 18-G. Disciplinary Offense
On Amending D-2.0203b (Item 06-04)**

Brief Description

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of North Alabama. The amendment is intended to insure that violations of a council's sexual misconduct policy are contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution and may be addressed through the disciplinary process.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 53/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 416/13.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- Makes offense definition clear
- No discussion in plenary

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- Concerns were expressed prior to approval of amendment to the overture
- None following approval of amendment

**Amendment 18-H. Time Limit
On Amending D-10-0401 (Item 06-24)**

18-H.1 & 18-H.2

Brief Description

This proposed amendment originates from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The amendment proposes to impose a level of responsibility on persons that is not currently part of the Rules of Discipline (H.1). The proposed language also recognizes that minors cannot consent (H.2). Motion to refer overture to Rules of Discipline Task Force ultimately failed and a substitute motion was approved.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended by a vote of 47/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment by a vote of 455/16.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

- None

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- None

Church Revitalization & Development

January, 2019

The Committee will be hosting the Spring *Missional Church Conference* at Stanford Presbyterian Church, Stanford.

PASTORS: Thursday, April 4th

LEADERS: Saturday, April 6th

Shannon Kiser, Director of Training, *phila* Consulting Group.

Develops and implements training for Fresh Expressions pioneer leaders and existing churches that desire to start innovative missional ministries.

Former director of the Coaching Network for the 1001 New Worshiping Movement in the Presbyterian Church USA, currently coaching multiple entrepreneurial ministry leaders.

A contributing writer to the starting New Worshiping Communities Discernment process and other significant material on new church development, author of Fresh Expressions e-book and regular blogger.

Serves on the Pastoral Staff at Riverside Presbyterian Church, Sterling, VA.

- Theme, goals and topics to be presented.
- Logistics are pending for reception of the overall objectives.

Together in ministry,

Jay Mumper, chair