

Bylaws
of First Presbyterian Church, Inc. of
Greenville, NC (Incorporated on December 1, 1986)
Approved by the congregation January 22, 2012

I. Mission Statement

The vision and mission of First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, NC, come from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as reflected in the scriptures.

With God's grace:

We shall strengthen ourselves as God's people through worship, teaching, learning, and sharing the journey of faith.

We shall seek to show Christ's love by serving, individually and collectively, to meet the spiritual and physical needs of our brothers and sisters.

We shall accept the dynamic nature of the Christian faith and strive to grow in it.

Motto: Share the Journey; Grow in Faith

II. Relation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The First Presbyterian Church is a member congregation of the Presbytery of New Hope in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

III. Governance of the Congregation

This congregation shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) which includes *The Book of Confessions* (Part I) and the *Book of Order* (Part II). Consistent with that Constitution, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this congregation. The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order newly revised shall be used for parliamentary guidance. (G-3.0105)¹

The session is the council for the congregation (G-3.02). The session has stated meetings once a month typically on the third Sunday of the month.

IV. Meetings of the Congregation (G-1.05)

A. Annual and Special Meetings: (G-1.0501)

There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation in the church building in January. Special meetings may be called by the session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call.

Business Proper to Congregational Meetings (G-1.0503): Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to the following: electing ruling elders

¹ letter-numbers refer to "Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Part II 2011/2013" location

and trustees; calling a pastor or associate pastor; changing existing pastoral relationships, by such means as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution; buying, mortgaging, or selling real property; requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption as permitted in the Book of Order.

Consistent with the laws of North Carolina, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same annual congregational meeting.

B. Quorum of the Meeting (G-1.0501)

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and 10% of the active membership. The moderator shall determine if a quorum is present. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. Voting by proxy is not allowed at congregational meetings.

C. Notice of Meetings (G-1.0502)

Public notice of the meetings shall be given in printed, electronic and verbal form for at least ten days prior to the meeting. When the meeting is called for the purpose of electing a pastor, the notice shall be given in printed, electronic and verbal form for at least 10 days prior to the election, which shall include two successive Sundays.

D. Moderator (G-1.0504)

One of the pastors shall moderate the meetings. When the congregation is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another teaching elder of the presbytery to preside. When this is not expedient, and when both the pastor and the moderator concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

E. Secretary and Minutes (G-1.0505)

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary. The minutes of the meeting shall be recorded in the minute book of the session by the secretary of the meeting. The minutes shall be readily available in the church office and on the church website.

V. Incorporation and Trustees (G-4.01)

In accordance with the laws of the state of North Carolina, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, NC, caused a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same annual meeting of the congregation.

In the matter of corporate business, the pastor or moderator is not a member of the corporation. A member of the session shall be invited to moderate the meeting when corporate matters appear on the agenda.

In the matter of corporate business, consistent with the laws of the state of North Carolina, a quorum shall be 10% of the active members age 18 or above. The secretary will determine that a quorum is present. Consistent also with the laws of North Carolina, voting is restricted to active members age 18 or above. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

The congregation shall elect 3 active members who shall serve as trustees of the corporation. They shall be divided into three equal classes. Each year the congregation shall elect 1 trustee for a three year term. No trustee shall serve for more than 2 consecutive terms or for 6 years in continuum. A trustee having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the board of trustees for a period of at least one year.

VI. Nominating Committee (G-2.0401)

The congregation shall form a representative nominating committee which shall include both women and men, giving fair representation to persons of all age groups and of all racial ethnic members and persons with disabilities who are members of our congregation. The committee shall be comprised of the following:

- 4 members of the session designated by the session
- 5 active members of the congregation, not persons currently serving on the session, nominated and elected annually at a congregational meeting
- the pastor who shall be a member ex officio and without vote.

No member shall serve more than three years consecutively. Once the committee is formed, it shall elect its own moderator from within the committee.

The nominating committee shall bring to the congregation nominations only for the number of positions to be filled. The floor shall be open for nominations at the congregational meeting called for this purpose.

VII. Ruling Elders & the Session (G-2.03, G-2.04 & G-3.02)

The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of 30 ruling elders serving a three year term, and 2 ruling elders serving a two year term, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors (G-3.0201). The 2 two-year term ruling elders are high school students elected to serve between their sophomore and senior years. Each year the congregation shall elect 11 ruling elders, 10 for a 3 year term and 1 for a 2 year term. No ruling elder shall serve more than 2 consecutive terms or 6 years without taking a mandatory rest for at least one year.

The congregation should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. (G-2.0301) After being elected, the person shall be prepared, examined and ordained into the ordered ministry (G-2.0402). Once ordained and while they are active members of any congregation of this denomination, ruling elders continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained in accordance with the Rules of Discipline (G-2.0404)

The session has the responsibility and power to: provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard; provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received; and nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. (G3.02 a, b, c)

The session has stated meetings once a month (typically on the 3rd Sunday of the month). The moderator shall call a special meeting when he or she deems necessary or when requested in writing by any two members of the session. The business to be transacted at special meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting. A quorum for the session shall be the moderator and one third of the ruling elders. An exception to this quorum shall be for the reception or dismissal of church members. In this case there shall be a quorum of at least four ruling elders and one teaching elder. Each member is allowed to vote and a teaching elder shall moderate the meeting. (G-3.0203)

VIII. The Clerk of Session, Minutes and Records

The session annually, at its last meeting in December or its first meeting in January, shall elect a ruling elder to serve as clerk of session. (G-3.0104) This person does not have to be an active ruling elder. The term shall last one year and the clerk of session may be re-elected to that term indefinitely.

The minutes of the meetings shall be recorded by the clerk in the minute book of the session and the minutes shall be readily available in the church office and on the church website (G-3.0107). The session shall maintain the following rolls and registers: membership roll and rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members; registers of baptisms, of ruling elders and deacons, of installed pastors with dates of service and other such registers as session may determine.(G-3.0204a&b)

IX. Treasurer and Finances(G-3.0205)

The session annually, at its last meeting in December or its first meeting in January, shall elect a treasurer. The term shall last one year and the treasurer may be re-elected to that term indefinitely. The session shall prepare and adopt a budget and determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences.

X. Termination of the Exercise of Ordained Ministry

Should a ruling elder be unable to fulfill the duties of the ordained ministry there are specific provisions and conditions in the Book of Order under which the exercise of this ministry may be terminated.

1) Dissolution of Relationship: A ruling elder may resign from the session, with the session's consent. On ceasing to be an active member of a congregation, a ruling elder ceases to be a member of the session. When a ruling elder, because of change of residence or disability, is unable for a period of one year to perform the duties of the ministry to which he or she was installed, the active relationship shall be dissolved by the session unless there is good reason not to do so, which shall be recorded. (G-2.0405)

2) Release from Ministry as a Ruling Elder: If a ruling elder who is in good standing, against whom no inquiry has been initiated, and against whom no charges have been filed, shall make application to the session to be released from the exercise of the ordered ministry, the session of the congregation in which he or she holds membership, upon granting the release, shall delete that person's name from the appropriate register of ruling elders of the congregation. No judgment of failure on the part of the ruling elder is implied in this action. Release from the exercise of the ministry of ruling elder requires a discontinuation of all functions of that ministry. The status of one so released shall be the same as any church member. Should a person released under this section later desire to be restored to that ordered ministry, that person shall make application to the session that granted the release, and upon approval of the session, that person shall be restored to the exercise of the ministry from which he or she was released without re-ordination. (G-20406)

3) Renunciation of Jurisdiction: When a ruling elder submits to the clerk of session a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a ruling elder persists in work disapproved by the session, the session shall consult with him or her and shall give notice of its disapproval. If, after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the ruling elder persists in the work, the session may then conclude that the ruling elder has renounced the jurisdiction of this church.

Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the ruling elder from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of the ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the clerk of session at the next meeting of the session, which shall record the renunciation, delete the name of the ruling elder from the appropriate register, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by the Constitution of the PC(USA). (G-2.0407)

Vacancies on the session may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the session may determine.

XI. Amendments to the Congregational Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of North Carolina and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the congregational meeting, providing that the proposed changes in printed and electronic form have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.