THE PRESBYTERY OF SHENANGO PC(USA)

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Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

In an effort to communicate more clearly, the Executive Team (Our Presbytery's leadership team that includes the 4 paid Directors, the Stated Clerk, Moderator, and Vice Moderator of the presbytery) greets you. We are excited about what is happening in the coming months and want to extend some invitations to you.

First we want to remind you that we have a presbytery meeting on Tuesday February 28th hosted by Westminster College in their chapel. This will also be livestreamed but in order to have voice and vote, you must be physically present. In the course of this meeting we will celebrate the elders who have entered the church Triumphant this past year in our worship service. We will also hear from our next guest to our presbytery via a video interview and vote on the church dismissal policy that is included in this packet and described below by the Operations team.

> Most changes that occur in our communities over time are beyond our control. As particular congregations we do ministry and mission within the strengths and challenges of our communities. If a congregation comes to the place of considering closing, many issues and questions come up. The Presbytery of Shenango Church Closure Policy is intended to address those issues and questions as the Presbytery works with the congregation to move through the closure process in a way that honors and respects the history and ministry of the congregation.

The advancement team has been working hard to bring leadership and discipleship events that we hope will enrich your lives as followers of Jesus as well as your ministry in your church. Please mark your calendars and try to attend. There are flyers in the attached packet for all of these events.

We are particularly excited about an upcoming opportunity to bring Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger to our presbytery. Tod is on the faculty of Fuller Seminary and has written books on leadership and change. He will be doing a seminar on **Sunday May 7th** for all leaders: clergy, elders/ deacons, and other non-ordained leaders. This should be an excellent time to talk about how to lead in these changing times. This opportunity is brought to us by the generosity of both Shenango Presbytery and the Carolyn Knox Foundation. A flyer is included with all the details.

Following that leadership summit for all leaders, Tod will spend 2 days (full day 9 am- approx. 9 pm on Monday and through lunch on Tuesday) with our pastors and CREs at Villa Maria to dig deeper to discuss leading in the church in these uncertain times. A flyer is included with all the details.

We also are reintroducing our fireside chats. These are opportunities for leaders to come together in a more informal setting over coffee to talk about a certain topic. We want to talk about the "New Normal" after we have underwent more change in the last 3 years than any of us dreamed possible. Please come and share with us what you have learned, how you have changed, what you miss, and what you will never go back and do again as we both support each other, grieve together, as well as dream a little bit about what the future holds. A flyer is included with all the details.

We are also including a survey to fill out about elder/ officer training. The Advancement team has received feedback that individuals would like us to return to a form of officer trainings that were common before the pandemic. To ensure that we are trying to meet your needs, we have a short survey to help the Advancement team form something that will be fruitful. You can fill out a paper copy and either bring it to the presbytery meeting or mail to Autumn in the office (at 600 E. State Street, Sharon, PA 16146) or scan and email at office@shenango.org. There is also an online version that will be made available over eLink in the next week for your convenience.

And finally, we are including an invitation for all clerks. After a long hiatus, we are returning to the practice of a review of the books at a gathering of our faithful Clerks. Included in this packet is a checklist for your clerk to have ahead of time to make the process as smooth as possible as well as the dates for the upcoming gatherings. Please make sure you share this vital info with your Clerk of Session.

We know in the midst of the turmoil of the last few years, the new presbytery structure can be adding to the confusion. We want you to know that together we are the presbytery. We also know that sometimes it is hard to know where to go and who to call. It is always better to reach out than to wonder and if you are not sure who, we will try to put you in touch with the correct person. And if all else fails, we encourage you to contact Autumn, who remains our faithful admin and who is a wealth of knowledge and history with this presbytery and can help you figure out where to go to next.

In Christ,
Beth Creekpaum, Director of Presbytery Advancement

Shenango Presbytery Church Closure Policy (re. 1/4/23)

Supporting a Congregation in Dissolution

I. Work of the session, Presbytery staff and congregation.

A. The congregation and Presbytery determine whether dissolution is the best course of action.

1. The representatives from the Presbytery will meet with the session to explore various options in light of their call to ministry.

2. If the session, following such exploration, determines that the congregation should be dissolved, it must arrange an opportunity for the Presbytery to consult with members of the congregation. Note that this does not occur at a Congregational Meeting.

3. If the congregation agrees, this is reported to the Executive Team and Presbytery and a Congregational Meeting is called to vote on dissolution. If not, the Executive Team will determine the course of action to recommend to Presbytery.

4. The Stated Clerk works with the Director of Congregational Support and the Director of Presbytery Operations to appoint an Administrative Commission with authority to dissolve the congregation. If practical, one or two members of the session or congregation should serve on the Administration Commission. Having the Clerk of Session and someone from the session or congregation who is familiar with the building and grounds serve on the Administrative Commission is very helpful. The "Commission" and the membership of the Administrative Commission is presented to and approved by the Presbytery.

5. The session should not renew or enter into new leases, service or equipment contracts, or the like during this time, but should ensure that all regular bills continue to be paid until the Administrative Commission and the Presbytery staff assume this responsibility. Consult with the Stated Clerk's office before signing or renewing contracts.

6. If the congregation determines to dissolve, all those who use the church property whether by formal lease or on-going consent of the congregation such as community groups, should be notified that the leases will be terminated or that they will not be able to continue using the premises. Consult with the Stated Clerk's office regarding lease termination.

B. The session and congregation arrange to celebrate the mission and history of the congregation in consultation with the Administrative Commission.

1. Plan a closing worship service, setting a date that will allow ample time for the event to be publicized and invitations to be issued. The Book of Occasional Services includes a suggested liturgy for dissolution of a church.

2. Decide what special features the service should include, such as the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

3. Decide how best to tell the history of the Christian ministry and witness of this congregation.

4. Identify a preacher and other participants and special guests. These may include former pastors, the members of the Executive Teams of Presbytery, or the Stated Clerk.

5. Have the session determine where the offering received at the service will be directed. If the church has sufficient financial resources to meet its final financial obligations, the session may wish to direct the offering to mission efforts that have been important in the life of the congregation.

6. Make appropriate logistical arrangements, including for ushers, "car parkers", and elders to serve the Lord's Supper, if that is to be included in the service. Prepare the church bulletin and the Communion elements, if needed. Arrange for cleaning the building, if required. Keep in mind that attendance at a well-publicized closing service may be higher than typical recent worship attendance.

7. Publicize the closing service and have church members prepare a guest list of relatives, friends, former members, etc. whom they wish to invite to the closing worship celebration. Consider whether to use written invitations, emails, social media, or some combination of them.

8. Consider whether to invite local media to cover the closing service.

9. Arrange for a reception following the worship service if desired.

   a) Determine what financial resources the congregation has to pay for a reception and decide how the food will be provided, whether by caterers of church members.

   b) Identify the location for a reception.

   c) Appoint a committee to oversee and carry out the arrangements for the reception, including clean up.

   d) Gather memorabilia for display.

10. If traditional worship service and reception is not possible or practical, determine whether and how the congregation might mark the closure with an outside or online service, compilation of a memory video, etc.

II. Work of the Administration Commission

A. The Stated Clerk will schedule the Administrative Commission's initial meeting and provide guidance and orientation.

1. If appropriate, it is advantageous for the initial meeting to take place at the church and to have the Clerk of Session present even if he or she is not a member of the Administrative Commission.

2. The Administrative Commission should select a chair and clerk. It is important that the Administrative Commission keep accurate minutes of its decisions. The chair will be the person authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the Administrative Commission.

3. The Administrative Commission should update the Executive Team and Presbytery regularly of its progress via the Stated Clerk.

B. The Administrative Commission arranges for pastoral care of the members of the former congregation.

1. Work with the session to identify where members wish their membership to be transferred. The church records regarding membership are retained by the Stated Clerk on behalf of Presbytery for approximately two years following dissolution of the congregation. The Stated Clerk can provide letters of transfer during this time.

2. If possible, arrange for a minister from a nearby congregation to provide for pastoral care until members are transferred.

C. Ascertain the Financial Status and Outstanding Financial Obligations of the Congregation/Corporation

1. The Administrative Commission consults with the church treasurer and session to ascertain the church's financial resources and obligations. This includes determining the location of all checking accounts, savings accounts, endowment accounts, and all other financial records and resources of the congregation/corporation, and all groups within the church that may have separate accounts, such as Sunday School classes, women's organizations, the choir, the youth group, etc.

2. The Administrative Commission consults with the session regarding any bequest stipulations with respect to endowment or memorial accounts. Note that restrictions previously imposed by the session may be discussed with the session, and set aside by the Administrative Commission. Restrictions imposed by the donor or testator may not. Consult with the Stated Clerk regarding accounts with such restrictions.

3. After all the financial obligations of the church, and the cost to close the church, are paid by the finances of the church, the session works with the Administrative Commission to determine the disposition of the remaining assets of the church.

4. If necessary, new signature card/s are submitted for all open accounts with at least two members of the Administrative Commission designated as signatories.

5. After the church closes the Administrative Commission assumes sole responsibility over the disposition of the church's remaining assets. This includes:

a) Closing all accounts except the primary checking account of the congregation/corporation, and transferring all account balances to such primary account;

b) Determining what outstanding debts/obligations exist by requesting the submission of all outstanding debts/obligations of the congregation/corporation by a certain date;

c) Meeting all payroll obligations, making payments to any contractors, paying all taxes, gathering all tax documents, and arranging to have year-end financial and tax documents sent to those who worked for the church as required by law (W-2's, 1099's, etc.);

d) Overseeing the discharge of all other financial obligations and the distribution of statements of contribution to all current year contributors;

e) Overseeing the final distribution of any stocks, bonds, certificates, or other financial instruments, as discussed by the Administrative Commission and session (note 3 above), including the transfer to any financial instruments to Presbytery ownership;

f) Wrapping up all congregational/corporation financial affairs, transferring all remaining balances to the Presbytery, and closing all remaining accounts;

g) Contacting local utility companies to have all billing come the Presbytery Office;

h) Contacting the Post Office to have all church mail forwarded to the Presbytery Office;

i) (If not done before the church/corporation closes) Ascertaining the assessment value of the church's real property, then following the procedures in "Section E;"

j) (If not done before the church/corporation closes, and the church had a cemetery) Overseeing the establishment of a separate corporation for the cemetery, referring to the "Consideration Involving a Cemetery" document.

D. Secure the session records

1. Locate all session and congregational minutes, the church rolls and registers, and all financial and legal records. Assemble records of temporary and permanent value according to the records retention policies of Shenango Presbytery and the Presbyterian Historical Society. Appropriately dispose of ephemera, consulting with the Stated Clerk regarding shredding if necessary.

2. Following the closing worship celebration, the Clerk of Session shall deliver all such records to the Stated Clerk of the Shenango Presbytery for safe-keeping and eventual transmission to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

E. Real Estate tax concerns when considering the dissolution of a church

1. All real estate properties have been assigned an assessment value for the land and any buildings. Assessed values do not change unless there is a county wide reassessment or a property specific request is made. The assessed value is used to determine the amount of taxes if the property is taxable. Church properties used in worship are exempt from real estate taxes. Most church properties have assessed values which do not reflect current values and are too high. If the property stops being used for religious purposes (such as a transfer to the Presbytery or an alternate buyer), six months after (?) taxes will be calculated based on the current assessment value which is often higher than market value. Such an event will damage the valuation of the property.

2. To determine if the property has an assessment problem, contact a local real estate agent, real estate appraiser or attorney familiar with real estate matters. Make them aware that the church property may change its use.

3. File a petition with the county to change the county assessed value to adjust to current market values. Such a petition must be filed no later than September 1st. A hearing is then held in September or October and will change the assessment value and potential taxes for the upcoming year. Consult with professional to prepare for the hearing.

4. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, THESE STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE THE CONGREGATION IS DISSOLVED.

F. Secure the legal rights to all church property, real and personal

1. Obtain a copy of the deed from the office of the Recorder of Deeds in the appropriate county and ascertain whether there are any deed restrictions or stipulations.

2. If necessary, secure clear title to the property.

3. Assure the integrity of the legal corporate status of the congregation. If the congregation is incorporated, obtain a copy of the Articles of Incorporation.

G. Secure the building and property

1. After the closing worship service, ascertain which utilities should remain connected and which may be disconnected. Arrange for termination of services and to have bills for remaining utilities transferred to Presbytery. It may be necessary to maintain heat during the winter to avoid damage. If heat will not be maintained, arrangements should be made to drain the pipes when utilities are turned off.

2. Inspect the building and grounds to determine if any maintenance or repairs are needed to make the building safe and usable.

3. Secure the building and change the locks. Identify who will need to have copies of the key. Arrange for a copy of the new key/keys to be delivered to the Presbytery.

4. Engage a caretaker until the final disposition of the property. The caretaker's services should include mowing the lawn and maintaining sidewalks (where they exist).

5. Transfer insurance coverage to the Presbytery's policy.

6. Notify local police and fire departments of the date when the building will be vacant and provide contact information in case of problems.

H. Arrange for the disposition of furnishings, etc.

1. The Administrative Commission shall arrange for the disposition of all items in the building in the most efficient way possible, arranging for donation or reuse whenever practical.

2. The Administrative Commission should consider whether reuse of the building as a house of worship is practical given the building's location and condition. If so, pews, pulpit and lectern, font, etc. should remain in place pending determination of the disposition of the building.

3. Consideration should be given to obtaining at least one appraisal by an antiques dealer/estate assessor before accepting any bids for items which appear to have particular value.

4. Whenever possible, those who donated items or their family members should be consulted regarding disposition of those items.

5. If there is a considerable quantity of items not suitable for reuse in the building, the Presbytery can arrange for a dumpster or removal service.

I. Dispose of buildings and grounds

1. Have the property surveyed, if necessary, and obtain an appraisal from at least two qualified appraisers.

2. Consider whether the property is suitable for reuse as a house of worship, and if so, whether any groups within the PCUSA or other religious organizations have an interest in taking over the building. Note that any such organization must be prepared to take over ownership of the building and responsibility for its upkeep.

3. Consider whether donation of the property to a community or other non-profit group is appropriate.

4. If the building is to be sold, hire a real estate agent with appropriate community or commercial expertise.

5. After the closing worship service, remove any identifying signs from the building. The Administrative Commission may wish to remove the cornerstone and check for a time capsule.

J. The Administrative Commission completes its work.

1. The Administrative Commission should complete and file corporate dissolution documents with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

2. The Administrative Commission submits a complete report of its work to the Presbytery to be included in the Presbytery's minutes via the Stated Clerk's report. The Administrative Commission may give a brief report at a Presbytery meeting by timely requesting docket time from the Ecclesiastical Committee via the Stated Clerk.

3. The Administrative Commission submits its minutes to the Stated Clerk.

4. The Administrative Commission is dismissed with thanks by action of the Presbytery.

LEADERSHIP

Lay Leader Seminar

TOD BOLSINGER MAY 7

Northminster Presbyterian Church, New Castle

Name: ______________________________ Phone: ________________

Congregation: __________________________ # Attending from Church: ________

Email: ______________________________

_ I am registering myself and enclosing the $10 registration fee

_ I am registering a group from my church and enclosing the $50 registration fee

_ I will be bringing ___ children with me for the children's programming and am enclosing $5 each for materials. Please list ages/grades: ____________________

Note:

- Snacks and beverages will be provided for adults. Children's snack and drink will need to be provided by their parents.
- Churches may bring 5 or more lay leaders for the $50 fee.

This event is co-sponsored by Shenango Presbytery and the Carolyn Knox Foundation

Register Online!

SHENANGO PRESBYTERY
Pastor Retreat

TOD BOLSINGER   MAY 8-9
Villa Maria Retreat Center

Name: ______________________ Phone: ______________
Congregation/Presbytery (if not Shenango): ______________________
Email: ______________________
_ I am a Shenango Pastor and will stay overnight with a private bath ($115 enclosed)
_ I am a Shenango Pastor and will commute ($70 enclosed)
_ I am non-Shenango and will stay overnight with a private bath ($125 enclosed)
_ I am non-Shenango and will commute ($80 enclosed)

Note:

- Costs for Shenango Presbytery pastors are subsidized by Shenango Presbytery
- This is a full-day Monday/half-day Tuesday style retreat.

This event is co-sponsored by Shenango Presbytery and the Carolyn Knox Foundation

Fireside Chat

@ THE CONFLUENCE, NEW CASTLE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19 @ 10 AM

"THE NEW NORMAL"

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT OURSELVES, OUR CHURCHES, AND OUR MINISTRY IN GENERAL SINCE THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC

QUESTIONS: CONTACT BETH CREEKPAUM, 724-977-3013 OR ADVANCEMENT@SHENANGO.ORG

Elder Trainings

The Advancement Team of the Presbytery has been asked to provide elder training at a presbytery level. It would be helpful to understand what you hope to receive from an event and what you would find helpful.

What is your role at your church?

- ☐ Pastor/ CRE
- ☐ New Elder
- ☐ Clerk of Session
- ☐ Returning Elder
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Other:

What is the current state of your church's elder training?

- ☐ We send our leaders to the presbytery event for their training.
- ☐ We have an elder training or retreat on a semi regular basis.
- ☐ Elders are trained by the pastor on an as needed basis.
- ☐ We currently don't have a need for elder training.

Do you perceive that you have a need for elder training at a presbytery level.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Depends

What would make you decide to come to a presbytery elder training?

- ☐ Speaker/ Presenter
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Time
- ☐ I want this training, so unless it does not work in my schedule, I would prioritize being there.
- ☐ Other:

The Advancement Team is thinking about providing a more localized elder training for our churches. Would you be interested in attending such an event with a few of your neighborhood churches?

- ☐ Yes with Neighborhood churches
- ☐ Only my own elders
- ☐ Only at the Presbytery Level
- ☐ I am not interested in a presbytery level training of elders.
- ☐ Only if my pastor is involved in the training. (or if you are the pastor, only If you are involved in the leadership)
- ☐ Only if my pastor is not required to lead the training. (or if you are the pastor, as long as you are not responsible for creating/ leading the training.)
- ☐ Other:

When Ralph Hawkins was our Executive Presbyter he created an elder training that was given at "Leaderfest"- the presbytery's yearly leadership training event. This was recorded, and with Ralph's permission/ blessing, it has been uploaded to our presbytery's Youtube Channel. In what capacity, if any, would you find this helpful? Pick the strongest preference and if there is nuance, please include in the short answer in the next question.

- ☐ We would be willing to use this training with a presbytery facilitator for our own elders.
- ☐ We would be willing to use this training if the presbytery would provide the computer equipment to make viewing this possible.
- ☐ We would be willing to use this training on our own with our own leaders acting as facilitator.
- ☐ We would be willing to work nearby presbyterian congregations to have a regional presbytery elder trianing.
- ☐ We would rather have an in person training and would not be interested in this video training.
- ☐ We would like to encourage our elders to watch the video on their own and not have a group training.
- ☐ We have no interest in this training at this time.

If there is other information that would help the presbytery leadership decide how best to move forward with potential officer training (including but not limited to Elder training), please include here.

Are there any other topics you would find helpful?

What is the Name of the Congregation that you represent?

If you would be willing to talk to the director of Presbytery Advancement Further about this, please leave your name and an email or contact number.

Session Minutes & Records Review

Note: We will be reviewing registers for ALL churches to get back on track!

Please save the date & be prepared:

- Minutes from Session meetings
- Registers with baptisms, marriages, ordinations, new memberships

Please note page numbers on the attached checklists to save some time at the review sessions. Please contact Autumn at the office (office@shenango.org or 724-528-1610) with your preference of review session: 1 PM or 6:30 PM.

April 27th

1:00 PM at Northminster PC, New Castle OR 6:30 PM at 1st Sharon

More information :

www.shenango.org

GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF SESSION MINUTES AND CHURCH REGISTERS

PART 1 – EXPLANATION

(a) Annually, Session Minutes shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk or his or her designee(s).
(b) Every five years, Church Registers shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk or his or her designee(s).

PART 2 – GUIDELINES FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF SESSION MINUTES

[The following are items to be checked. The omissions or actions indicated will result in minutes that are not properly kept and exceptions will be noted upon examination.]

- ☐ 1. Omission of date, time, place of meeting.
- ☐ 2. Opening or closing prayer not recorded.
- ☐ 3. Elders present and absent not listed.
- ☐ 4. Pages not properly numbered.
- ☐ 5. Erasures, interlineation, footnotes should be avoided. If they are necessary, they should be initialed to certify authenticity.
- ☐ 6. Insertion of printed or written material.
- ☐ 7. Previous action referred to and page of that action not recorded.
- ☐ 8. Administration of Lord's Supper not recorded.
- ☐ 9. Administration of Baptisms not recorded.
- ☐ 10. New book: -- last entry in old book not recorded.
- ☐ 11. Defective record of members received.
- ☐ 12. Defective record of members dismissed.
- ☐ 13. Members transferred from one roll to another without indicating that it was done constitutionally.
- ☐ 14. Record of Congregational Meeting(s) omitted.
- ☐ 15. No indication that all active members of the church are eligible for election to the church boards.
- ☐ 16. No report of Annual Review of adequacy of minister's compensation.
- ☐ 17. Summary of Annual Statistical Report not recorded.
- ☐ 18. Report adopted, but not recorded.
- ☐ 19. No record of review of Minutes of Board of Trustees (if any such board).
- ☐ 20. No record indicating Session supervision of Church School and other organizations.
- ☐ 21. Minutes not attested by signature of Clerk of Session.
- ☐ 22. No record of Session action on previous exceptions.
- ☐ 23. Record does not indicate that regular (stated) Session meetings were held.
- ☐ 24. No record of review of Rolls of Active and Inactive Members.
- ☐ 25. No record of examination of elders and deacons elected by the congregation.
- ☐ 26. No record of ordination and installation of elders and deacons.
- ☐ 27. No record of appointment of delegates to Presbytery.
- ☐ 28. No record of report by delegates to Presbytery.
- ☐ 29. Blank spaces not ruled off.
- ☐ 30. Action not in accord with Constitution.
- ☐ 31. Action not prudent, equitable, and for the promotion of the mission and spiritual welfare of the church.
- ☐ 32. Other items, not listed.

EXPLANATIONS OF CHECK LIST GUIDELINES

(Corresponding to numbers in parentheses.)

The record at the beginning of each meeting must include:

(1) **Meetings: Where and When** – Time and place of the meeting

(2) **Opening Prayer** – That prayer was offered [also at the close of the meeting]

(3) **Attendance** – The Elders attendance [Present, Absent, and Excused]. If the pastor is listed as present, it is assumed that s/he presided; otherwise, the name of the person presiding must be recorded. If necessary, the Session may elect one of its own members to preside and record the reason for such action; or another minister of the Presbytery may be secured to preside. The pastor or minister of Presbytery MUST preside if any action of judicial nature is taken (such as transfer of names from one roll to another or their deletion.)

(4) **Numbered Pages** – Pages must be numbered consecutively by a numbering device. A rubber stamp is adequate. Reason for any break in consecutive numbers must be explained and be signed by the Clerk of Session. Typed numbers are NOT acceptable.

(5) **Erasures**, interlineation, and footnotes should be avoided. If they are necessary, they should be initialed to certify authenticity.

(6) **Minute Book Pages** – All material must be written or typed on minute book pages. No other paper of any kind may appear in the minute book.

(7) **Referencing Previous Action** – If a previous action is referred to, it must be readily found by giving the page number. This avoids the need to re-enter that action in full at the place where it is cited.

(8) **Communions** – The celebration of the Lord's Supper should be reported in the Session minutes, either as of the date of celebration or as an item at the following meeting of the Session. Home communions must also be recorded.

(9) **Baptisms** – Baptisms must be reported in the minutes of the Session Meeting following, or as a periodic report of the pastor to the Session. The former is preferable. The full details must appear in the Church Register. In the minutes, the full name must be given, and, in the case of a child, the names of the parents.

(10) **New Minute Book** – When starting a new book of minutes, the first entry must be a record of the last entry in the previous volume. e.g., "The last entry in the previous volume of Session Minutes was a Session (Congregational) Meeting on (date)." It may be a copy of the stamp of the Presbytery's Review Committee, if that is the last entry. In either case, this opening record must be signed by the Clerk of Session. The minutes of a particular meeting should not be started in one volume and be continued in the next book. It should be entered in full in the new volume. In the old volume, if there is any unused space at the end, the Clerk of Session should note after the last entry the fact that the volume was closed with the above entry, giving the date, and affix his/her signature.

(11) **Recording New Members** – In recording members received, give full name, manner of reception (i.e., profession of faith, certificate from (church name), re-affirmation, having been a member of _______________ Church.)

(12) **Recording Dismissed Members** – In recording members dismissed, the entry must include the full name and the church to which dismissed. Members may be dismissed only to evangelical Christian churches, which are not schismatic.

(13) **Recording Transferred Members** – Transfers from one roll to another, or deletions from any roll, must indicate that it was done in conformity with the Form of Government.

(14) **Congregational Meetings** – Minutes of all Congregational Meetings, including corporation meetings, must appear in the Session Minute Book.

(15) **Elections** – All elections are open to nomination from the floor, if the person nominated is present or has given consent to such nomination. The minutes must indicate that this provision has been followed.

(16) **Pastor's Call** – The minutes must indicate annually that the adequacy of compensation was reviewed <u>with</u> the pastor(s) before the church budget was adopted.

(17) **Annual Statistical Report** – The details of the annual statistical report to be recorded in the minutes are the complete record of membership gains, losses, and inactive members on December 31; the total Church School enrollment; and the totals in each category of the financial section.

(18) **Actions by Session or Congregation** – If a report or recommendation is adopted by the Session or Congregation, it must be recorded in full in the minutes.

(19) **Session review of minutes of Trustees and Deacons** – The Session must review the minutes of the Board of Trustees and Deacons at least annually, if the church has such boards. There must be a record of the review and any action taken thereon.

(20) **Session review of reports of Church School and Organizations** – The Session should require regular reports from the Church School and all church organizations, pursuant to its responsibilities listed in the *Book of Order.* Its minutes should indicate that such reports were received and acted upon.

(21) **Signature by Clerk of Session** – The Clerk of Session must sign the minutes of each meeting, even if not present at the meeting, thereby certifying that these are minutes of that meeting. The accuracy of the minutes is assured by their being read and approved by the Session or the congregation, as the case may be.

(22) **Exceptions to Minutes or Church Register** – When the Presbytery takes exception to the minutes, or the church register, the next meeting of Session must consider the exceptions and take such action as may be necessary to correct the record. This is done by appropriate action at that meeting, and not at the place in the record to which exception was taken. Once the minutes are reviewed by the Presbytery's committee, they must not be altered in any way. Registers may be corrected where needed, with due recording in the minutes.

(23) **Regular Session Meetings** – Sessions shall hold stated (regular) meetings. These should be at least monthly, except perhaps in the summer vacation period.

(24) **Membership Roll Reviews** – The Session should be continually reviewing its rolls of Active and Inactive members as part of its responsibility for the care of souls (G–3.0201c).

(25) **Training New Elders and Deacons** – After elders and deacons are elected, the Session is responsible for conferring with them as provided in (G–2.0402). Materials are available for training new elders and deacons, and Presbytery provides assistance in this task.

(26) **Ordination / Installation of Elders and Deacons** – A full record of the ordination and/or installation of elders and deacons must be made including date and time of the service(s) and notation that all the Constitutional Questions were answered in the affirmative by each person being ordained and/or installed (G–2.0403).

(27) **Election of Elder Delegates to Presbytery** – The Session is responsible for electing elder delegates to Presbytery and the minutes should indicate that this was done, either for a particular meeting or a longer period of time up to one year. An alternate should also be elected. If a Session is not represented at a meeting of Presbytery, it should assign reasons.

(28) **Delegates to Presbytery Reports to Session** – Delegates to Presbytery should report to the Session after each meeting attended.

(29) **Blank Spaces on Page** – No blank space should be left on any page of the minute book; but it should be ruled off, so that no entry can be made in that space. See also No. 10.

(30) **Action not in Compliance with Constitution** – Action not in accord with Constitution (*Book of Order*). Explain.

(31) **Action Inappropriate** – Action not prudent, equitable, and for the promotion of the mission and spiritual welfare of the church. Explain.

(32) **Other Exceptions** – It is impossible to list every ground of exception. This is the place to identify those for which there is no other appropriate designation and the place to make suggestions for the improvement of the Session records reviewed that will aid the Clerk of Session, but are not matters for exception.

PART 3 – GUIDELINES FOR 5-YEAR REVIEW OF CHURCH REGISTERS

I. Roll of Pastors:

- ☐ 1. Up-to-date and complete

II. Roll of Elders:

- ☐ 2. Up-to-date
- ☐ 3. Ordination date recorded
- ☐ 4. Reception of an ordained elder recorded with date and church of ordination.

III. Roll of Deacons:

- ☐ 5. Up-to-date
- ☐ 6. Ordination date recorded
- ☐ 7. Reception of an ordained deacon recorded with date and church of ordination.

IV. Roll of Trustees:

- ☐ 8. Up-to-date

V. Chronological Roll of Active Members

- ☐ 9. New Book properly started
- ☐ 10. Names properly numbered in consecutive order.
- ☐ 11. Full names entered.
- ☐ 12. Husband's name entered, if wife or widow.
- ☐ 13. Manner received recorded.
- ☐ 14. Date received recorded.
- ☐ 15. Dismission recorded fully (to which church & date)
- ☐ 16. Record of Death complete (also listed in Register of Deaths)
- ☐ 17. Transfer to Inactive Roll recorded including date of action
- ☐ 18. Deletion from the Roll recorded including date of action and reason.
- ☐ 19. Marriage Record complete. Women listed on Alphabetical Roll under married name, retaining original number.
- ☐ 20. Persons Restored retain original number (cf. No. 26 below)

VI. Alphabetical Index

- ☐ 21. Change of Status properly entered.
- ☐ 22. Members numbers listed properly.

VII. Roll of Affiliate Members (if any)

- ☐ 23. Complete recording of such members.

VIII. Roll of Inactive Members (if the congregation keeps one):

- ☐ 24. Up-to-date
- ☐ 25. Complete entries on Active Roll of Transfer to Inactive Roll
- ☐ 26. Restoration to Active Roll recorded including date and notation at original place of action taken. (Exception: If a new Register has been started, the name should be entered in new book with a new number, with name and number on Alphabetical Index with original number and new number.)
- ☐ 27. Date of Death recorded both on Roll of Inactive Members and on Register of Deaths.
- ☐ 28. Deletions must indicate date of action taken and whether it was taken at the member's request or under the 2-year rule.

IX. Register of Infant Baptisms:

- ☐ 29. Full name of the child must be recorded.
- ☐ 30. Full names of both parents must be recorded.
- ☐ 31. Date and city of birth must be recorded.
- ☐ 32. Must be up-to-date and in correspondence with records showing admission to membership; dismission with parents; and deleted by order of Session (whereabouts unknown)

X. Register of Adult Baptisms (Profession)

- ☐ 33. Full name must be recorded.
- ☐ 34. Date must be recorded.
- ☐ 35. Parents' names, if a child, must be recorded. In this case, date of birth is valuable.

XI. Register of Marriages:

- ☐ 36. Record of Marriages conducted at the church must be complete.
- ☐ 37. Record must be up-to-date.

XII. Register of Deaths:

- ☐ 38. Date of death must be recorded.
- ☐ 39. Date of death must also be recorded on Active Membership Roll or Inactive Roll or Infant Baptism Roll, whichever are appropriate.
- ☐ 40. The record must be complete otherwise.

XIII. Improper Rolls: (After 1974, when the new *Rules of Discipline* were adopted)

- ☐ 41. The Suspended Roll must be terminated and the names deleted or transferred by Session in each individual case.
- ☐ 42. The Non-Resident Roll must be terminated and Session action indicated for each name.