HANDBOOK FOR CLERKS OF SESSION

Beaver-Butler Presbytery

Revision Date: 03/15/2023

Table of Contents

This Clerk of Session Handbook was originally prepared in 2017 by Ms. Lynn Hargrove, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Covenant. After contacting Ms. Hargrove, she graciously granted the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler permission to adapt her original work for our Presbytery.

Introduction

Welcome to the office of Clerk of Session! You have joined a unique group of people by serving in this vital office in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The *Book of Order* mandates that each governing body of the PCUSA have a moderator and a clerk. Clerks of Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly are called Stated Clerks. Those serving Sessions are called Clerks of Session.

As clerk, you will record a good deal of the history of your church as you write the session minutes. Future generations will learn what your church did to further Christ's mission in the world by reading the minutes you write. It follows then, that it is important that you keep accurate records of all the proceedings in session meetings and in congregational meetings.

This handbook has been prepared to provide Clerks of Session with information and examples to assist them in their work and to insure that they have easily accessible information about what must be included in the session record books.

The Office of the Clerk of Session

The Clerk of Session shall be an elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine. The clerk may be a member of the session or may be an elder not currently serving.

If the clerk is not a current member of session, general privilege of voice may be given by session, but s/he may not make motions or vote. Session may ask the clerk to be its parliamentarian and in all cases **shall** give the clerk voice in matters pertaining to the minutes and the clerk's report.

The person chosen to be Clerk of Session needs to be knowledgeable about session responsibilities, to have an understanding of Presbyterian polity, and be willing to learn basic parliamentary procedure. The Clerk must be able to write a clear record of the proceedings at session and congregational meetings and make those minutes available promptly following the meeting.

When the pastor or elders need a strong lay leader, the clerk of session is the "first among equals." This responsibility flows to the clerk not because of any explicit statement in the *Book of Order*, but because the officer who receives the correspondence, keeps the records, and routinely discusses the work of the session with the pastor and all of the committee moderators to form the agenda and refer business, is the officer to whom they would take a problem. Presbyterian polity does not provide for any other lay officer to carry out these responsibilities. In spite of the fact that the core functions of the clerk are secretarial, the session, in electing a clerk should seriously consider the qualifications needed to carry out the very significant "silent" functions of being the primary administrative officer of the congregation.

Responsibilities at a Glance

Annually

1. Complete the Annual Statistical Report requested by the Office of the General Assembly accurately and report to the PC(U.S.A.) by the deadline indicated. Late reports are not received by the National Office and could affect per capita owed by your congregation. Additionally, return other paperwork requested by the Stated Clerk of Beaver-Butler Presbytery by the deadline noted for other annual forms.
2. Have your Session Records Reviewed with your fellow clerks, choosing a date and time from those set by the stated clerk of the presbytery. Bring your minutes since your last review and the Church Register. (See Appendix)
3. Communicate dates and other information on Presbytery meetings to the Session so that ruling elder commissioners can be elected.

Monthly

1. Send meeting notices by mail or email.
2. Develop the agenda for the meeting with the Moderator of Session.
3. Record the minutes of each meeting. It is helpful to use a template with room to take notes and minutes. This should be a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the session (G-3.0204).
4. Keep the roll of session membership and attendance (G-3.0104). The session shall "provide by rule" the number present for a quorum. (G-3.0203)
5. Bring all official correspondence to the attention of session, and respond as directed by the session.
6. Keep a list of unfinished business, including all matters referred to a committee or a staff member for later report to session, and remind the appropriate persons(s) if not reported expeditiously.
7. In consultation with the moderator, prepare a statement of highlights of session actions and reports following the meeting for information for the congregation (may be included in the next issue of the congregation's newsletter or bulletin insert). **Note**: confidential matters should not be included.

Ongoing

1. Arrange for the careful preservation of session records (G-3.0104), making recommendation to the session for the permanent safe-keeping of its records (G-3.0107).
2. Furnish extracts from the minutes when required by another governing body of the church (G-3.0104).
3. Maintain and preserve rolls and registers required of session (G-3.0204a & b). [*See Rolls and Registers, page 11.*]
4. Be responsible for the preservation of the records of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees (G-3.0107).
5. Be familiar with the responsibilities of the session as described in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0201).
6. Be prepared to respond to questions of parliamentary procedure in meetings if requested to be parliamentarian. [*Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except in those cases where the Book of Order*

provides otherwise (G-3.0105). Copies of Robert's Rules of Order and the latest Book of Order should be available at meetings.]

As Needed

1. Notify the session or congregation of special meetings, describing accurately the business that will be transacted. Congregations shall provide by their own rule for minimum notification requirements and give adequate notice prior to the meeting (G-1.0501 and G-1.0502).
2. Serve as secretary for meetings of the congregation (G-1.0505), seeing that the minutes are received by session and are inscribed in the permanent Session Minute book. The minutes of the congregational meeting may be approved by the session at the session's next stated meeting. The approved minutes of the congregational meeting shall then be distributed to the members of the congregation for informational purposes (not for approval) during the next stated meeting of the congregation.
3. Receive and submit communications from/to higher councils.
4. Assist the moderator in preparing the agenda for session meetings, as requested.
5. Assist in church officer training when requested.
6. May moderate the congregational meeting, if requested by the moderator, during the pastor's salary review.
7. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the session or moderator.

Constitutional and Important Documents

As stated above, the Clerk of Session is responsible for having a working knowledge of the church constitution and other guiding documents. These documents exist in a hierarchy as they relate to one another. For example, a document that is lower in that hierarchy must submit to those above it. The Clerk of Session should understand and have access to the following (in hierarchical order):

1. **The Bible** – our sole rule of life and faith. Guiding principles are not permitted to be in opposition to the Word of God.
2. **The Book of Confessions** – this is Part 1 of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It contains faith statements and expositions of how we, as Presbyterian Christians, have understood and interpreted the Bible in the history of our denomination.
3. **The Book of Order** this is Part 2 of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Any bylaws, policies, or practices of a local church in opposition to the Book of Order would be out of order. Note: Parts 1 and 2 of the Constitution are co-equal parts, no hierarchy exists between the two.
4. **The Bylaws of Your Church** – Your Church's Bylaws is a constitutional document approved by your church as a corporation. The Session may make recommended changes to the Bylaws <u>but these actions must be approved by the corporation during a congregational meeting</u>. A Church's bylaws normally contain a procedure for making changes to it. As the Clerk of Session, you should have: access to the Bylaws and a working knowledge of them.
5. **Manual of Administrative Operations** – Sometimes called a Policy and Procedures Manual or Session Handbook, Sessions are required to create this Manual (G-3.0106). The Manual of Administrative Operations is created and approved by the Session. And

the Session can make changes to it at any time by a 2/3 vote. Your manual $\boxed{\textbf{must}}$ have a Sexual Misconduct Policy and a Child and Youth Protection Policy. **For additional information, see "Writing a Manual of Operations" later in this handbook.**

Using Your Book of Order

The Book of Order is divided into four sections:

1) Foundations of Presbyterian Polity – foundational principles, designated "**F**"
2) Form of Government, - constitutional requirements, powers, designated "**G**"
3) The Directory For Worship, - direction regarding worship, designated "**W**"
4) Church Discipline – concerned with church discipline & trials, designated "**D**"

The index is very helpful in helping you to find what you need to know. Citations appear in the following format:

G-1.04 Categories of Membership
The membership of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) includes baptized members, active members, and affiliate members.

G-1.0401 Baptized Member
A baptized member is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in this congregation or elsewhere, and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session, but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members receive pastoral care and instruction of the church, and may participate in the Lord's Supper.

When using the Book of Order, pay careful attention to the way items are worded. In the Book of Order:

1. SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE signify practice that is **mandated**,
2. SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended,
3. IS APPROPRIATE signifies practice that is commended as suitable,
4. MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required.

Session Meetings

There are two kinds of meetings (G-3.0203):

A Session meeting may be "stated". This means that it is a regularly scheduled meeting. You may hear it called a "regular meeting" or a "business meeting". At a stated meeting, the Session may consider any business or items for action that fall within its responsibilities (the responsibilities of a Session are listed in G-3.0201).

A Session meeting may also be a "special" meeting, sometimes referred to as a "called meeting". A special meeting is called for a specific reason at a date and/or time that is outside of your normal meeting schedule. When a special meeting is called, the reason for the meeting must be stated when the members are notified and only business pertaining to the reason for the special meeting may be considered.

The moderator may call a special meeting when necessary, if requested in writing by at least two members of the Session, or if directed by the Presbytery.

The moderator of the Session shall be the pastor of that congregation. If the moderator is unable to preside over a Session meeting, he or she may invite another minister who is a member of the same Presbytery to preside. If the congregation is without a pastor, the Presbytery will assign a moderator.

A Session shall not meet without its moderator. Informal gatherings or straw polls conducted without the moderator are out of order.

The Session Agenda (a sample agenda is found in the Appendix)

The docket or agenda for a session meeting can be the responsibility of either the clerk or the moderator working together. In some instances, it is compiled by the church secretary. Input from the moderator and other members of session is essential. In the case of a pastoral vacancy, the moderator named by the presbytery often will rely on the Clerk of Session to formulate the docket.

Session dockets should be made available to session members prior to meetings so that the elders may be prepared to do the business of the church. Included in this information are the date, time, location, agenda or order of business, financial data, and other pertinent information as needed and available. Elders should be encouraged to read through the agenda ahead of time so that the meeting can be as efficient as possible.

The value of a printed docket or agenda is four-fold:

1. It provides for an orderly process in the handling of session business.
2. It informs the members of issues to be discussed.
3. It serves as a reminder of the necessary preparation for a meeting.
4. The clerk of session can take this opportunity to assist the moderator in handling administrative details and sharing in the ministry of the church.

Guidelines for Session Minutes

Minutes of each session meeting shall (i.e., *must)* include:

1. Whether the meeting is a stated (regular) or special meeting.
2. The name of the church, the place, date and time of the meeting.
3. The name of the moderator of the meeting.
4. The opening and closing of each meeting with prayer.
5. The roll, listing elders present, elders absent and any who are excused; the clerk,

moderator and other staff present or excused; others present and their identity. [Please use first and last names.]

6. The affirmation of a quorum. **Note:** Sessions shall provide by rule for a quorum for meetings; such a quorum shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session (G-3.0203).
7. The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. It is not necessary to specify the corrections. You may simply say "the minutes were approved as corrected."
8. Clerk's report: may include correspondence, announcements, and report of the serving of the Lord's Supper, in addition to listing of baptisms, marriages, changes in membership rolls.
9. Reports of pastor, other staff, treasurer and the committees of the Session should be summarized in the minutes.
10. All motions and amendments, if any, and whether they passed or failed. (Details of discussion should not be recorded, except when needed to give a sense of the action.)

Minutes shall include the following, *when applicable:*

1. Requests for marriage, baptism or funerals to occur in the church.
2. The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be reported at the next succeeding regular meeting. When the sacrament has been administered to those unable to attend public worship, the name of the minister officiating and the name of the elder or elders assisting should be noted. [*This may be part of the clerk's report, the pastor's report or that of the worship committee*.]
3. The administration of the Sacrament of Baptism must be reported at the next succeeding regular meeting, giving the full name of adults baptized including the maiden names of those married; the record of infants baptized, noting the name of the child, date of birth, and the names of the parent(s) or the one rightly exercising parental responsibility (W-2.3014), and including the mother's maiden name. [*This may be part of the clerk's report, the pastor's report or that of the appropriate committee*.]
4. The full name of applicants for church membership (include maiden names) and the manner of their reception:
    a. by profession of faith, previously baptized;
    b. by profession of faith and baptism;
    c. by re-affirmation of faith; or
    d. by letter of transfer, giving the name of the church from which received.
5. The name of the church to which a certificate of transfer is granted and the full name of the person transferred with the date of transfer, together with names of baptized children, if applicable.
6. Record (add to minutes as addendums/attachments) the job descriptions for employed personnel, both clergy and non-clergy, as they are approved by Session.
7. Name of elders elected to be commissioners to meetings of the presbytery, and the exact period for which elected [G-3.0202(a)].
8. Record that commissioner(s) to the presbytery reported to session. The report may be summarized.
9. When the session finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the "Form of Government" and

the “Rules of Discipline” should be carefully studied by a committee of the session and if discipline be administered, the minutes of the session must contain such a record of the proceedings which will enable the Presbytery to know who was disciplined, why and how. It is most often advisable for session to ask the presbytery to take jurisdiction of any matter of church discipline.

10. In case of a sale, mortgage, gift or lease of property, the session records must show:
    a. Name, address and legal description of the property;
    b. Name of buyer/lessee;
    c. Sale price;
    d. Loan amount purpose and terms, including the name of the lender;
    e. Lease terms and liability insurance; and
    f. Approval of the Presbytery for all items above (a-e).

Be sure the following is recorded ANNUALLY in Session Minutes:

1. Approval of the annual budget.
2. Record the Annual Review with each pastor of the compensation package (terms of call).
3. Record the recommendation to be made to the congregation for changes in the terms of call for each pastor.
4. Note the Annual Review by the personnel committee (or other responsible body appointed by the session) of the adequacy of compensation of all paid staff.
5. Note whether new officers have received training and been examined (G-2.0402).
6. Report the ordination and/or installation of elders and deacons at the next succeeding meeting.
7. Report the recognition of trustees (if any) at the next succeeding meeting.
8. Report that property and liability insurance has been obtained (G-3.0112).
9. Record report of annual financial review or audit.
10. Record marriages, births, deaths.
11. Record election of clerk and treasurer.
12. Record annual review of church rolls and if anyone is moved to inactive or removed.
13. Report reception of new members; dismissal/transfer of members to other churches.
14. Record approval of curricula, teachers for the educational program.
15. Attach copy of Annual Statistical Report (to OGA) to minutes.

Clerk’s Annual Report

At the last meeting of each calendar year, please include the following in the Clerk’s Report:

1. Record changes during the year in the Session, the Board of Deacons and the Trustees through death, resignation, or removal.
2. State the composition of the session with regard to racial ethnic members, women, men and age groups, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation. (This requirement may be fulfilled by photocopying the annual statistical report required by the General Assembly into the session records.)
3. If congregation has a Board of Deacons and/or Trustees, report in the minutes where their records are kept, and that they have been reviewed by session.

4. Include an Annual Narrative Report. (Moderator's annual report, or periodic reports to the session of ongoing church life will satisfy this request.)

Nuts & Bolts of Session Minutes

The method of recording session minutes* is somewhat dependent on local circumstances. The following is the suggested procedure used by the majority of churches:

1. Clerk takes notes for the minutes at meeting.
2. Clerk writes the minutes and types or arranges for them to be typed.
3. Clerk makes copies and distributes (normally by email) before the next meeting.
4. At the next meeting, the minutes are either approved as distributed or approved with corrections.
5. Clerk types or arranges for someone to type approved minutes in the Session [permanent] Minute book.
6. If using a computer for minutes in the permanent minute book, a laser printer and the specified archival quality paper must be used.
7. Do not use erasures, whiteout, strikethroughs or footnotes; or insert in the records separate sheets of paper with written or printed matter on them.
8. The records of each session meeting are to be duly attested (**signed in ink**) by the clerk. The records of congregational meetings are to be attested by the clerk ***and*** the moderator. It is not sufficient to type the clerk's name or moderator's name with scripted font on your computer. **A signature is required for the minutes of Session or of your congregation**.
9. The minutes of congregational meetings, the annual report of the church treasurer or treasurers, and the annual statistical report required by General Assembly are to be included with session minutes. These are to be typed or photocopied into the permanent record book.
10. Minutes should be interesting, with enough information so that future inquirers will know what happened in the life and mission of the church years before. The minutes play a role in recounting the history of the congregation, often retrievable in no other way.
11. The minutes of a meeting should never reflect the clerk's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.
12. If a motion to meet in "executive session" is approved, the regular minutes of Session simply reflect the motion to enter executive session and the time. After the motion to end the executive session is approved, that motion and time shall be reflected in the regular minutes. The clerk will then keep a separate set of meeting minutes with the executive session details. These minutes will later be approved by the Session. The executive session minutes are kept in a separate location and are **not** included in the Minutes of Session book. Note: Unless invited to stay by action of the Session, visitors may not be present when the Session is meeting in executive session.
13. It is recommended that a "church office copy" of session and congregational meeting minutes be kept in a notebook for handy reference. This is not the set of minutes to be reviewed by presbytery.
14. Beaver-Butler Presbytery requires minutes to be bound in a Westminster Minutes of Session Binder. These are available from Cokesbury. The pages must be consecutively numbered and with no unreasonable gaps or spaces. If large gaps or blank pages exist,

write “Page Intentionally Left Blank” or “Balance of the Page Left Blank” in those spaces. This is to prevent the insertion of counterfeit pages.

*A sample of Session Minutes can be found in the Appendix.

Congregational Meetings

Congregational meetings may be called by the session, the presbytery, or by session by written request of one-fourth of the members of the congregation on the active roll (G- 1.0502). Like Session meetings, congregational meetings may be “stated” or “special”. A special meeting may only consider the business for which that meeting was called. Any other business, during a called meeting, is out of order.

The congregations’ pastor shall be the moderator of a congregational meeting. If the pastor is unable to preside, he or she may invite another minister who is a member of the same Presbytery to preside. If a congregation does not have a pastor, the Presbytery will assign a moderator. A congregation meeting shall not meet formally or informally without the moderator.

Your congregation’s by-laws **should include** what constitutes a quorum. (G1.0501)

We believe that the Holy Spirit guides us in our decision making, and one must be present in the room to be open to such guidance by the Spirit. Proxy voting, therefore, is not permitted in church meetings.

Be prepared for a ballot vote if needed. Minutes of all congregational meetings shall be included in the session record book along with session minutes in chronological order.

If your congregation desires the ability to meet using remote participation technology (i.e. Zoom or similar internet meeting platform where attendees can at least hear and be heard during the meeting) a provision may be made in the church’s Bylaws. Most Bylaws contain a procedure for making amendments to the Bylaws.

Minutes of these meetings ***shall*** include:

1. Indication of whether the meeting is “stated” or “special.”
2. If it is a “called” (special), the minutes shall include the purpose for which the meeting was called.
3. Name of the church.
4. Date, time, and place of the meeting.
5. Name of the moderator or presiding officer.
6. Presence of a quorum.
7. Opening and closing of the meeting with prayer.
8. Record of all actions taken.
9. When applicable, action by the congregation on any change in each pastor’s compensation, with terms of call specified.
10. Minutes of the meeting of the congregation and corporation at which the annual financial

reports are made should indicate, at least:

   a. report of a full financial review of the financial records (G-3.0113).
   b. a complete, itemized report of income and expenditures for the year
   c. provide the complete, itemized proposed budget adopted by the session for the coming year
   d. details of the status of loans from General Assembly, Synod, or Presbytery, if any are outstanding

11. If the congregation does not approve the minutes before adjournment, session may approve the minutes at its next scheduled meeting. The approved congregational meeting minutes should be distributed at the next stated congregational meeting for review (but not approval).
12. Congregational meeting minutes must be attested (signed in ink) by BOTH the Moderator and Clerk.

*A sample congregational minutes is available in the Appendix.

The Session's Relationship to Other Organizations

All organizations of the congregation are accountable to the session. All organizations should make a financial and programmatic report to session and the congregation annually.

The Session: Composition and Responsibilities - G-3.0201

… In light of this charge, the session has responsibility and power to:

a) Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.

b) Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.

c) Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ … including directing the ministry of deacons, trustees, and all organizations of the congregation …

Board of Trustees: G-4.0101

…The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons.

Board of Deacons or Individual Deacons: G-2.0202

…Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session.
Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need …

Nominating Committee: G-2.0401

The church nominating committee is a committee of the congregation, not the session. It does not report to the session, although the committee may wish to consult with session, and provide updates on their progress to the session.

> *…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. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote…

Pastor Nominating Committee (When there is a Pastoral Vacancy):
The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler requires the Session and Moderator work closely with the Ministry and Vocation Committee of the Presbytery **BEFORE** electing a Pastoral Nominating Committee. This is one of the most significant ways the presbytery serves the local congregation – in the procedures and process guidance of finding a new pastor.

G-2.0801 Pastoral Vacancy
When a congregation has a vacancy in a pastoral position, or after the presbytery approves the effective date of the dissolution of an existing pastoral relationship, the congregation shall, with the guidance and permission of the presbytery, proceed to fill the vacancy in the following manner.

G-2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee
The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee's duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation…

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is a committee of the congregation, not the session. The PNC has several points of contact with the Session and the Presbytery through the Presbytery's Ministry and Vocation Committee (MVC). MVC will assign a liaison to serve as the PNC's contact person. While there are many steps to the call process, among those points of contact are:

- The pastor nominating committee develops the Mission Discernment Profile (MDP, formerly a MIF) which includes the position description.
- The session and then the presbytery (through the Ministry and Vocation Committee) approve the MDP.
- The pastor nominating committee negotiates the salary/terms of call of the new pastor in consultation with the session/board of trustees. The terms of call will later be approved by the Presbytery and congregation.
- The Executive Presbyter of Beaver-Butler Presbytery does a reference check on the final candidate(s) for the position.
- The committee requests session to call a congregational meeting when it is ready to bring a candidate.

The MVC liaison will work with the PNC to explore the step by step process of calling a pastor.

Session and Personnel Committee: G-3.0102 Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction
[Councils, like the session] … *They have the power to establish plans and rules for the worship, mission, government, and discipline of the church and to do those things necessary to the peace, purity, unity, and progress of the church under the will of Christ. They have responsibility for the leadership, guidance, and government of that portion of the church that is under their jurisdiction.*

The session supervises all ordained and non-ordained personnel, *often* through a Personnel

Committee. The session recommends to the congregation the "Terms of Call" (salary, including housing, benefits, etc.) of all ordained personnel; the congregation approves these terms of call or any subsequent future changes in the terms of call annually. The terms of call must meet the minimum guidelines set by presbytery unless a waiver is granted.

It is recommended that the Personnel Committee for each church consist of a majority of session members, and several congregation "at large" members.

Outside Organizations
Session controls the use of all church property, including granting permission for the sanctuary to be used for weddings. The purpose of an organization using the church should not be contrary to the mission of the congregation or the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is wise to have a written contract for all organizations using the church building, stipulating any rental fee, maintenance standards, and rooms of the church to be used.

Actions Requiring Approval of More Than One Council

One of the hallmarks of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is its connectional system. There are a number of actions that require approval beyond the session. Among them are:

- Application to presbytery to take an inquirer under care of the presbytery: session, and presbytery (Ministry and Vocation Committee).
- Loans that use the church or its property at collateral for a mortgage, and all sales of property: session and trustees and the Coordinating Team (trustees) of Beaver-Butler Presbytery. These also require the initial approval of the congregation.
- All leases of church property: session and the Coordinating Team of Beaver-Butler Presbytery.
- All changes of church location or church name: session, congregation (ecclesiastical and corporate), and presbytery (ecclesiastical and corporate).
- All changes in the annual terms of call for the pastor: session recommendation, congregational approval, and the presbytery.
- Dissolutions of pastoral calls and calls for new pastors: congregation, Ministry and Vocation Committee (MVC), and presbytery.
- Appointment of moderator of session, or temporary pastoral relationship: session and MVC.
- All waivers from the Book of Order terms of election (G-2.0404): congregation, and MVC.

Relations with Other Councils (G-3.0202)

Sessions have a particular responsibility to participate in the life of the whole church through participation in other councils. It is of particular importance that sessions:

- Elect, as commissioners to presbytery, ruling elders from the congregation, *preferably* for at least a year, and receive their reports.
- Nominate to Presbytery ruling elders from the congregation who may be considered as

commissioners to Synod and General Assembly, and to serve on committees or commissions of the same.
- See that the guidance and communication of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly are considered, and that any binding actions are observed and carried out.
- Welcome representatives of the Presbytery on the occasions of their visits.
- Propose to the presbytery, or through it to the synod and General Assembly, such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church; and
- Send to Presbytery and General Assembly requested statistics and other information according to the requirements of those bodies, as well as voluntary financial contributions.

Rolls and Registers

The Church Rolls of Membership

The Rolls of the church should contain information about those who are members of the local church. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain, or to oversee the maintenance of the Rolls as required in G-3.0204a.

Names of members shall be placed upon, removed, or deleted from the rolls of the church only by order of the Session (G-3.0204a)

Session shall maintain the following membership rolls (G-1.04):

Roll of Baptized Members (G.1.0401)
A Baptized Member is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in this congregation or elsewhere, and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session by who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Such baptized members receive the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and may participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Record the name, date of baptism (if known), church where Sacrament of Baptism occurred. Names should be removed from this roll when profession of faith is made, or when the person moves from the community.

Note: *When a church receives new members onto the Roll of Active Members (below) and they have children previously baptized at another church, their children are added to your roll of Baptized Members until they make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*

Roll of Active Members (G-1.0402)
An Active Member is one who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the Church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of the particular church, and participates in the church's work and worship.

Record name, date received into membership, and method of reception. Record date of removal from the particular role and whether by death, transfer to another church, placed on inactive roll, or removed.

Roll of Inactive Members (This category is no longer in the Book of Order)
You are not required to keep a roll of Inactive Members, but you may if you want. An Inactive Member is one who no longer participates in the church's work and worship.

Record name, date; indicate if inactive member is subsequently removed or reinstated with date of action.

Roll of Affiliate Members (G-1.0403)
An Affiliate Member is a member of another congregation of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the congregation of active membership is situated. A certificate of good standing from the appropriate council or governing body of that congregation should be presented. The person will be received by the session as an Affiliate Member. An Affiliate Member is not eligible to be elected to ordered ministry or other office in the congregation, and does not have a vote in congregational meetings. An example of an affiliate member would be a college student living in your community while attending school.

Record name, date of affiliation, name of home church, date of renewal, date of return to home church.

Roll books usually provide double pages for a chronological roll by date of reception into membership with columns for name, how received, name of church from which member transferred if that is the manner of reception, date of deletion from the active roll and reason—by death, inactivity, or transfer, in which case the name of the church to which the member is transferring is listed.

Pages may be provided in the same binder for an alphabetical listing of members along with the membership number that is assigned in the chronological roll.

Pages also may be provided for Baptized, Affiliate and Inactive member rolls in the same binder.

Pages containing columns for the information requested may be obtained through Cokesbury, (800) 672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com.

The Church Register

Registers are historical records and need to be carefully maintained. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain or oversee the maintenance of Registers as required in G-3.0204b. All information in the Register should be able to be cross- referenced to the minutes. Please do not erase, cross out, or use "white out." Use the remarks section to make any changes.

According to the Book of Order, there shall be registers of baptisms authorized by the session, of ruling elders and deacons, of installed pastors with dates of service, and such registers as the session may deem necessary.

Record the following information for the register:

Baptisms
Register of Infant and Adult Baptisms shall include name, parents' names, date of birth of those being baptized, as well as the officiant.

Elders
Register of Elders shall include each elder's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service, and record of removals.

Deacons
Register of Deacons shall include each deacon's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service, and record of removals.

Pastors
Register of Pastors shall include the names of pastors, co-pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates serving the church, with dates of service.

NOTE: Although no longer required by the Book of Order, Beaver-Butler Presbytery requires you to keep a register of marriages. Please record the following information:

Marriages
Register of Marriages shall include marriages of members of the church, all marriages conducted by the ministerial staff of the church, and all marriages performed on church property.

All registers may be kept in the same binder, or in the binder with the rolls. You must use the Westminster Binder with the specified acid-free paper. Special pages for the Westminster Binder may be obtained through Cokesbury Book Stores (800) 672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com .

You should also make digital backups of all of your records and store them in different locations.

Annual Statistical Report

Introduction
Each year, Clerks of Session submit the "Annual Statistical Report" to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). " Both the total active membership and the financial data for recent years are available on the General Assembly's web site (www.pcusa.org) for all churches that complete the Report.

Some of the information requested will likely need to be gathered from other people such as your treasurer, Christian Education leader, etc. It is important to begin collecting the necessary information as soon as possible.

The report is submitted online through the OGA's Statistical Report website:
https://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/statistical-reporting-faq/

First, however, you should visit the Beaver-Butler Presbytery's website at:
https://beaverbutler.org/clerks-of-session/
and download the "Statistics Workbook". The Statistics Workbook provides explanations of each item and allows you to create a draft before transferring the figures to the online form. Suggestions are made here to try to make the process easier. As with most jobs, keeping up on a monthly basis rather than waiting until the end of the year makes it easier.

The form is divided into two main parts:

1. Membership and
2. Finances.

For this discussion, Membership will be considered in two parts: active members and other data.

In order to collect the data, it is suggested that it be done regularly (each month) rather than waiting until the end of the year.

One way is to keep a notebook with pages labeled for various categories and enter the information after each Session meeting. This could also be done using Excel or setting up a table in a Microsoft Word file.

Reporting Active Members
The report gives the number of active members at the beginning of the reporting period. Places are given for active members added in two major categories. A third category is given (All other gains) which also allows for corrections. Places are given for losses in active membership in two major categories plus the All other losses category, which would include transfer to the inactive roll as well as corrections. The result of this portion gives the total number of active members at the end of the reporting period.

Two lines follow for number of persons on the inactive roll and the number of baptized members. The sum of Active Members, Inactive Members, and Baptized Members is called Total Adherents.

Reporting Other Membership Data
These data will need to be collected from a variety of sources. These may include:

Number of Female Members
Age Distribution of Members
Average Attendance at Sunday Worship
Church School Enrollment
Number of Baptisms
Gender Distribution of Elders and Deacons
Number of Persons with Disabilities

Racial Ethnic Composition of Congregation, Session, and Deacons

Note that it requests Church School *enrollment* not *attendance*. This includes groups that meet other than on Sunday Morning such as "The Tuesday Bible Study".

Look at the workbook for the definition of a person with a disability. This is not the usual definition.

The definition is that the disability "substantially limits participation" but the application of the definition is left to you. Just as in age distribution, use of personal knowledge is expected to be applied rather than a formal survey.

Reporting Finances
The financial reporting is broken down into broad categories. Note that the values to be reported are for the whole congregation. If there are several accounts in the main finances, all must be included. If groups within the church maintain their own accounts (such as Presbyterian Women, Building Fund, and so forth), all of these should be included if their finances are substantial. If these group's monies are small, they can be ignored as long as you do this consistently over the years. The financial reporting is really looking for trends. The workbook is reasonably understandable and gives some specific examples to help.

Reports Made to the Presbytery

Each year, you will receive a letter and/or email from the Presbytery Office requesting certain information:

Annual Review of Terms of Call
Each year the Session is required by the Book of Order (G- 2.0804) to review the adequacy of the salaries of all pastoral staff. If session wishes to make any change in the terms of call as they were last approved by presbytery, the changes must be brought to the congregation for approval, contingent upon the approval of presbytery that, finally, approves terms of call and all changes in terms of call. As soon as the congregation has approved new terms of call for its pastor(s), the terms of call forms must be returned to the presbytery office for the MVC to process.

Minimum Compensation for Pastors
The presbytery adopts minimum terms of call for all installed pastors. These terms are reviewed and updated annually. All terms of call must meet this minimum standard for presbytery to approve the call. This information is available on the presbytery's website.

Necrology Report
This is a listing of the ruling elders, deacons, and trustees from your congregation that passed away during the previous calendar year. The names are read and/or displayed during the Service of Remembrance at the January meeting of Presbytery.

Directory Forms
Clerks will receive a questionnaire to help Presbytery Office staff create a Directory of Beaver-

Butler Presbytery each year.

Ruling Elder Commissioners to Presbytery

Presbyterian polity is representative. It works when each church takes seriously its responsibility to elect ruling elder commissioners who attend the meetings, stay through the end of the meeting, and report back to their congregation. The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler holds 6 stated or regular presbytery meetings a year. The dates and times are published annually and are available on the presbytery's website, www.beaverbutler.org under the tab "Resources" and then click on "Presbytery Meetings."

Each session is responsible for electing ruling elder commissioners to presbytery. The number of commissioners depends on the size of the congregation. The number of ruling elders to which a congregation is entitled also varies according to the presbytery's Parity Plan. The Book of Order (G-3.0301) states that "the presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery, with a goal of numerical parity of teaching and ruling elders. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation …"

The docket and meeting packet are emailed out, normally two weeks prior to the meeting, with any additional meeting information available the day of the meeting (often referred to as the "Day Of Packet"). This information should be given to the commissioners so that they can access the meeting materials. Churches can receive a hard copy via the Postal Service if requested.

Commissioners are asked to report to their congregation about the meeting, including significant actions taken by the presbytery; a summary of issues deliberated upon; policy decisions made; implications of presbytery actions for the congregation; concerns and opportunities open to the congregation through presbytery; and any other matter which will help with the congregation's participation in the total ministry of Jesus Christ.

The presbytery will email a summary after each meeting, and can be helpful in this report. The summary should be forwarded to members of the session and the minutes of the session should reflect that elders received and reviewed the summary.

Session members, including presbytery commissioners, should bear in mind the opportunities and need for nominations to presbytery committees. We are committed to finding Presbyterians with skills and interests in serving on a presbytery committee, and welcome your suggestions. We strive for inclusion so that all voices are represented at the table. Please share the gifts of your congregation with the presbytery.

Writing A Manual of Operations

One of the changes under the New Form of Government (nFOG) was the requirement for each council to develop a manual of administrative operation that specifies the form and guides the work of mission in that council (G-3.0106). Prior to the Book of Order 2011/2013, this was required of those entities above the session. It now includes the session which is considered to be a council of the church.

A manual of operation differs from the church by-laws. Since it falls under the session, it does not need congregational approval. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for how the structures of the congregation operate, especially in light of their Mission and Vision statements. **This manual must also contain the policies that the Office of the General Assembly mandates churches to have (currently a Sexual Misconduct Policy, Child and Youth Protection Policy, Harassment Policy, and Antiracism Policy).** Sample policies are available at The Presbytery Office.

Introductory paragraphs might include a general description of the work of the congregation though the various committees / ministry teams (which would include the session). It could include a line saying, "The contents remain flexible allowing amendments and additions to be made as recommended by the committees and approved by the session." The creation, purpose, and mission of a particular committee are defined by the session (unless stated otherwise in your church's bylaws).

A manual that uses more "guidelines" than hard and fast "rules" often makes it easier for the work of the church to be accomplished, and to become more "permission giving." Using the word "ordinarily" instead of the word "shall" assists in that effort.

Committee/Ministry Team (C/MT) structure could include its membership composition (how many members, terms of service), and skills and abilities that are helpful in its work. It could address how meetings are convened – how often, face to face or electronically. It could outline how committee members are assigned tasks and how reporting is done. The tasks or functions of the C/MT could be included, whether written generally or specifically. A C/MT could be able to set up task groups as needed without having to revise the manual of operations.

Use of the property might be addressed. This could include the use by outside groups, who is responsible for maintenance and clean up, any costs for using the facility. Wedding and/or funeral policies could be included.

The manual of administrative operations should be the reference that answers questions about how we do things in this congregation. Each manual will be as unique as each congregation. Writing a manual of operations will help define the policies, procedures and practices of a congregation and to discern what is working and what might need to change. A question to ask is, "What do we need to do to do the work we are called to do?"

Mandated Policies for Your Manual of Operations

The Book of Order requires all councils (including Sessions) to adopt certain policies and include them in the manual of operations. Our Presbytery Office has a number of resources, including templates and sample policies, that Sessions can adjust to meet their needs.

Sexual Misconduct Policy
The Book of Order 2011/2013 contained a new directive for all councils of the church which was to “adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy” (G-3.0106). Many have wondered how this differs from a “Child Protection Policy.” A sexual misconduct policy is broader in order to protect the whole congregation, and those outside as we engage our communities to make disciples.

Having a sexual misconduct policy gives people language and a framework for discussing these types of issues as an abuse of power. Recognizing that power is given by individuals and communities gives us a greater responsibility to ensure that no one is being abused or mistreated. A sexual misconduct policy helps us to set up appropriate boundaries in our ministry – defining appropriate friendships, counseling limitations, and the complexities of communication technology. No one on the church staff or in a position of leadership is exempt, nor should be the members of the congregation.

The sexual misconduct policy should include the basic principles of conduct and definitions of inappropriate behavior. Sexual misconduct can include sexual abuse including that with children, as well as sexual harassment of any person of any age.

The church must respond to allegations of sexual misconduct that includes reporting requirements as well as the response process. Prevention and risk management should be addressed in the policy, including issues of liability and insurance as well as employment practices.

Education and training is another area to include in the policy, in order to raise awareness of this problem. This could include the requirement for ministers, volunteers, elders, deacons, and staff to be trained, as well as how often. The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler requires its ministers to attend a Boundaries Training. Call the Presbytery office for more information.

Another area to consider is how to meet the needs of all involved – the victim, the accused, their families, as well as the congregation. The needs of each will be different, but should be fair and compassionate.

Child and Youth Protection Policy
This policy describes the policies that your church has in place that aid in the protection of children and youth. One such item of importance is the state requirement to obtain background clearances before working with youth.

Harassment Policy*
In 2023, G-3.0106 was amended to require all councils (including Sessions) to adopt a policy regarding harassment.

Antiracism Policy*
G-3.0106 was also amended to require all councils to adopt a policy to combat racism.

*Sample policies are being developed for these items at this time.

Mandatory Reporting and Background Clearances
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all church workers (paid or volunteer) that work with children to obtain the state mandated background clearances. This includes, but is not limited to, Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Sunday School Teachers & Helpers, Nursery Workers, Vacation Bible School Leaders, Teachers, and Helpers…nearly everyone!

A locked and secure file should be kept in the church with copies of the clearances of your staff and volunteers. Your Pastor's background clearances should also be on file at the Presbytery Office (you'll want to have a copy too). Clearances are good for 5 years. After five years, they must be obtained again and resubmitted.

<u>This should be a part of your Child and Youth Protection Policy.</u>

Additionally, all church workers (including the pastor) are considered <u>Mandatory Reporters and must report suspected child abuse</u> to the state hotline.

To learn more, visit the Keep Kids Safe PA website at:
https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Pages/default.aspx

Financial Reviews

A Full Financial Review Defined
The "Form of Government" of the Presbyterian Church requires the following:

> *"A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be conducted every year by a public accountant or committee of members versed in accounting procedures. Reviewers should not be related to the treasurer(s). Terminology in this section is meant to provide general guidance and is not intended to require or not require specific audit procedures or practices as understood within the professional accounting community." (G- 3.0113)*

Therefore, a financial review is required for every church organization or group which has a treasury, and which receives and disburses funds. Groups within the local church whose financial transactions must be reviewed might include the General Operating Fund, Benevolence Fund, Memorial Fund, Wills and Endowments, Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Building/Maintenance Fund, Choir, Youth, Church School, Presbyterian Women etc. This review benefits the treasurers, the contributors and those who benefit from expenditures ... giving assurance that donations are used as the donor intended, for the benefit of the specific group, and as a witness to the Lordship of Christ.

The persons making the full financial review do not need to be C.P.A.'s, but there should be some understanding of accounting procedures. Look for persons who have been Trustees or who have some experience in business accounting. Remember that those doing the financial review must not be related to the Treasurer(s).

To be available for review are financial ledgers, records of all forms of income, deposit slips and bank account records, withdrawal slips and canceled checks, authorization of payments, copies of invoices and expense vouchers, and a balance sheet. Financial records from relatively small groups would require less validation; but it is important that each report a *Beginning Balance, Income, Expenses, and a Closing Balance.*

Unless a congregation and its income/expenses are very large, it is not necessary to have a professional audit made. A full financial review implies that the financial review committee has checked through the records, has spot-checked those records and (hopefully) has approved them, and (if helpful) has made suggestions for improvement to the Treasurer or Finance Committee. **The report of the financial review committee must be approved by the Session, Trustees or whichever body has created the committee, *and this approval must be recorded in the official minutes of that body.***

This report may be a simple statement such as: *"We have reviewed the financial statements of the various Funds of XYZ Presbyterian Church and affiliated organizations for the year ending December 31, (YEAR), as set forth in the (YEAR) Annual Report of XYZ Presbyterian Church. During the course of our review, nothing came to our attention that would require modification of these financial statements."*

Membership Review

Review the Active Roll of the Church (G-3.0201c)
Reviewing the church rolls is an annual responsibility of session. Under the current Book of Order, a person may be deleted from the Active Roll when they have ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years or more. The session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity.

A session may ask the clerk to bring recommendations to them of those who may be considered inactive; or may ask a committee to conduct the review and bring recommendations to the session for action.

Before any member is removed from the active roll, it is incumbent upon session to exhaust all possible avenues of inquiry and pastoral care.

Ordinarily, a person is considered potentially "inactive" if there is no evident support of the church (time, talent, treasure) for a period of two calendar years. While no longer required, a session may want to keep an "Inactive Roll."

Here are some helpful hints:

1. In a large church the rolls might be divided so that a portion is reviewed each quarter, or month.
2. Active Members who do not meet the session's definition of participating in the work and worship of the congregation **MUST** be contacted and encouraged to resume active participation. A visit or phone call **by an elder** (not the pastor) is the best way of doing this. Alternately, the clerk may write a letter to such persons. This contact should:

a. offer to discuss any difficulties;
b. invite resumed participation in the work and worship of the congregation;
c. offer to assist them in finding a new church home, and
d. be sure they realize that failing to respond to this contact within a specifically set period of time (set by session) will result in removal from the Active roll or transfer to the Inactive Roll (loss of voting privilege or right to hold office).
e. assure them that at any future date they can be restored to the Active Roll by making that request to Session.

3. It is recommended that names never be physically deleted, rather applicable notations be made next to names.
4. At all times, anyone, regardless of membership status, should be welcome at worship and communion.
5. A member does not have to be returned to the Active Roll in order to transfer the membership to another church. It is a courtesy to the requesting church to indicate that the person(s) have not been active, but not necessary.

Church Records Review

Each year the Presbytery conducts a review of the Session Minutes, Rolls, and Register of every church as required by the Book of Order (G-3.0108). The purpose of this administrative review is to:

> *Determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church. It shall also determine whether lawful injunctions of a higher body have been obeyed.*

The Clerk of Session will receive a letter and/or email announcing the dates, times, and locations of the Records Review. There will be several locations in different regions of the Presbytery. Choose the location that works best for you.

The announcement letter will also include the Session Records Review Checklist. This checklist contains all of the items being reviewed. BEFORE the Records Review, you will work through the checklist comparing it to the Minutes of Session and the Church Register. Indicate in the spaces provided the applicable page numbers for each item.

Once at the Records Review, you will be paired with another church with which to exchange records. Here's what you'll bring with you to the Records Review:

- ✓ Another ruling elder (we work in pairs)
- ✓ Session Records Review Checklist (with your completed page numbers written in)
- ✓ The Church Register Book
- ✓ The Minutes of Session Book

You do not need to bring your church's Operation Manual or Mandated Policies but you will need to verify that you have them.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Session Docket/Agenda

Your Presbyterian Church
Stated Session Meeting
Month/Date/Year

Call to Order, Declaration of Quorum and Opening Prayer

Approval of the Docket and the Minutes of the previous stated meeting

Communications

Clerk's Report

Session class of (year) was ordained and installed at the 11:00 am worship service on (Date): list their full names.

Lord's Supper was celebrated at the 11:00 am worship service on (dates).

Membership report – transfers, deaths, marriages, baptisms.

Session Committee Reports

Action Items

Old and New Business

Spiritual and Pastoral Concerns

Motion for Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Appendix B: Sample Minutes of Stated Session Meeting

Your Presbyterian Church
Stated Meeting
Month Day, Year

The Session of Your Presbyterian Church held its Stated Meeting in the church library on (Month Day, Year) at (Time). The meeting was called to order by Moderator (Name), who declared a quorum was present and opened the meeting with prayer.

Attendance: Ruling Elders (name), Visitors (name), Moderator (name), Excused (name) Docket: It was moved and seconded that the docket be approved. The motion was approved.
Minutes: It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Stated Meeting of (date) be approved as written (corrected); motion approved.

Communication: *A letter was received from the Stated Clerk of the presbytery requesting the names of any elders or deacons who died in the past year for the presbytery's necrology report.*

Clerk's Report:

Membership
Updates/Deaths Weddings
Baptisms
Other information

Committee Reports: (indicate any actions taken)

Christian Formation/Education: ______*requested approval for the elementary students to use the XYZ Curriculum in Sunday School. The motion was approved.*

Finance*:* _______*reported that pledges received exceed last year at this time.*

Worship: _______*requested approval for communion to be served at the church retreat at Camp Lambec. The motion was approved.*

Property: *reported that bids for a new air conditioner are being received and be brought to the next meeting for approval.*

Old and New Business:
Report from commissioners to the presbytery meeting: *A & B attended the presbytery meeting held at First Presbyterian on (date). They reported on the keynote speaker, and were pleased to hear of the new worshipping communities in the presbytery.*

Financial Review Committee Report: *The* moderator *of the Financial Review Committee reported that the 2013 financial records of the church have been reviewed by the committee. No discrepancies were found, and the following recommendations were made:* .

Spiritual and Pastoral Concerns: *Requests for prayer were made for L&M and the birth of their baby; for M&E who are having marital difficulties; for P who lost his job and is seeking employment; for the teachers at the pre-school as the director just quit.*

Motion for Adjournment and Closing Prayer: *There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved. The meeting was closed at (time) with prayer led by (name).*

Respectfully submitted,

(Name)
Clerk of Session

Appendix C: Sample Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting

Your Presbyterian Church
Stated Congregational Meeting
Date

The congregation of Your Presbyterian Church was called to meet on Sunday, (date), immediately following the 11:00 am worship service. The meeting was called to order by the Pastor/Moderator (name) who opened the meeting with prayer.
Clerk/Secretary: (Name) was present and served as secretary. The clerk advised the moderator that a quorum was present. The moderator agreed. The clerk reminded everyone of the voting eligibility for this meeting.

Reading of the Call (for Special or Called Meetings): States the meeting purpose and that the call was found to be in order.

Minutes of the Congregational Meeting(s) (for last year): The minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of (date) and the Called Congregational Meeting of (date) were distributed. They have been reviewed and accepted by the Session as an accurate reflection of the actions taken at those meetings.

Review of the "Summary for (year)" and (year) Annual Report Supplement: The summary for (year) and the (year) Annual Report Supplement (with Minutes, Statistical and Financial reports) were distributed and discussed by the congregation. Copies of the full Annual Reports were made available in printed and/or electronic means, and upon request. Members asked questions about these reports.

Review of the Session Approved Church Budget for (year): The treasurer, (name), reviewed the (year) Church Budget which was approved by the Session on (date). Questions were asked, opportunity was offered for any member to make any budget recommendations to the Session for their consideration.

Approval of the Change in the Pastor's Terms of Call: The Session reviewed the Pastor's Terms of Call and made the following recommendation for changes:

	Past Year	Proposed Amount
Salary	$	$
Housing	$	$
Expenses	$	$
Board of Pensions	$	$

This change in the pastor's call represents a (number)% increase. The pastor spoke to these terms and left the room. The clerk assumed the chair. Discussion followed. The motion was approved. The pastor was welcomed back to the meeting with applause.

Congregational Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee is comprised of two members from the Session, (one from the Deacons), and (number) from the congregation. The following persons were nominated to serve in the committee: (names). A motion was made to elect (names) to the Nominating Committee. The motion was approved.

Old/New Business: (note, if any)

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the meeting, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting closed at (time) with prayer by (name), and the singing of "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds".

Attested:

____________________ ____________________

Moderator Clerk/Secretary

Appendix D: Inactive Member Sample Letters

The following are two sample letters to potentially inactive members – one for those still living in town; the other for those who have relocated.

SAMPLE A - Letter to those who have relocated: ***next page***

CHURCH LETTERHEAD

Date

(inside address)

The Session of [name] Presbyterian Church is in the process of fulfilling its responsibilities as defined in the **BOOK OF ORDER**, Paragraph G 3.0201c, which states: *"The Session shall review the roll of members at least annually."* Since your move to , we hope that you have found a new community of faith near home. If, in fact, you have become members of another church, please advise us of the name of that church, so that we might note it in our Church Register.

If you have not yet sought a local church, the Session would like to encourage you to seek the fellowship, support, and spiritual nurture of a faith community. We would be glad help find another church if that is your desire.

Please let me hear from you. You may e-mail me at , or return the bottom portion of this letter to me in care of the church, marked appropriately. If I have not heard from you by December 31 (concerning your wishes), your name(s) will be placed on our Inactive Roll. At a later date, should you desire to be restored to the Active Roll or transfer your membership to another church, we will be delighted to facilitate your active membership.

Please know that you will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers, and we particularly wish you a blessed Christmas and a joy-filled New Year.

Sincerely yours,

[your name] Clerk of Session

Please complete as appropriate, and return to [name of church] at the above address.

____ has / have joined another church.
Name of Member(s)

Church name: ___________________________

Church address: ____

I wish to speak to **the Pastor**, or **an Elder** concerning this matter. (Circle one, if applicable)

SAMPLE B - Letter to those still living locally. ***next page***

CHURCH LETTERHEAD

Date

(inside address)

Dear_ _,

The Session of [name of your] Presbyterian Church is in the process of fulfilling its responsibilities as defined in the BOOK OF ORDER, Paragraph G-3.0201c, which states: *"The Session shall review the roll of members at least annually."* We have missed you during the past year and wonder if you have become involved in another community of faith. If so, we can transfer your membership to that church.

It may be possible, however, that you have not become active in another church. The Session would like to encourage you to return to active participation in the ministry of our church, or to seek the fellowship, support, and spiritual nurture of another community of faith. If there is something I, or another member of Session, or our Pastor can do to facilitate your active participation in a Christian ministry, whether at [name of church] or another church, please do not hesitate to let us know. You can reach me by e-mail _____________ or at home ( ) 555-5555. The Pastor may be reached at the church office.

Please let me hear from you, either by e-mail, phone call or returning the bottom portion of this letter, marked appropriately. If, however, we have not heard from you be December 31, your name will be moved to the Inactive Roll. At a later date, should you desire to be restored to the Active Roll, or to transfer your membership to another church, we will be delighted to see that your request is honored.

Please know that you and your family will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers, and we pray that you and yours have a blessed Christmas holiday season and joy-filled new Year.

Sincerely yours,

[your name] Clerk of Session

Please complete as appropriate, and return to [name of church] at the above address.

____ has / have joined another church.
Name of Member(s)

Church name: _________________________

Church address: ____

I wish to speak to **the Pastor**, or **an Elder** concerning this matter. (Circle one, if applicable)

How Well Do You Know Our Constitution?

Fill in the blank, or circle the letter for the correct answer.

1. The *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of two parts; they are:
   Part I: _________________________ and Part II:___________________________

2. "…The church is a community of people known by its …
   a. membership size.
   b. building and grounds.
   c. historical documents.
   d. convictions and actions. (F-2.01)

3. The elected leaders who govern the Presbyterian Church are called
   a. Bishops.
   b. Priests.
   c. Clergy.
   d. Presbyters.
   e. None of the above. (F-3.0202)

4. (T) or (F)? When session, presbytery, synod or the General Assembly votes, those voting must reflect the will of their constituencies. (F-3.0204)

5. Session must meet
   a. at least quarterly.
   b. at least monthly.
   c. at least twice a year.
   d. at least once a year. (G-3.0203)

6. According to the Book of Order, when does the moderator vote in a congregational meeting? (Find the citation for your answer.)
   a. to break a tie.
   b. to dissolve the terms of call.
   c. to decide matters of special importance.
   d. never.

7. (T) or (F)? A person who is not baptized may join the church in a private ceremony with friends and family present. (G-1.0301 and G-1.0301a)

8. Meetings of the congregation shall include approval of
   a. the annual budget.
   b. matters related to changes in the sanctuary.
   c. matters related to fund raising.
   d. matters related to the calling of a pastor or pastors. (G-1.0503)

9. The two officers required of a governing body are:
   a. an executive and a treasurer.
   b. an executive and a clerk.
   c. a moderator and a vice-moderator.
   d. a clerk and a moderator.
   e. none of the above. (G-3.0104)

10. An associate pastor is related to the session:
    a. strictly as an observer, without voice or vote.
    b. an observer with voice.
    c. a member with voice.
    d. a member with voice and vote. (G-3.0201)

11. A candidate for ministry is ordinarily ordained:
    a. by the presbytery of care.
    b. by the calling presbytery.
    c. by the calling presbytery jointly with a commission of the presbytery of care.
    d. by the presbytery selected by the candidate. (G-2.0702)

12. The installed pastoral relations to which candidates may now be called are:
    a. pastor, associate pastor.
    b. pastor, associate pastor, assistant pastor.
    c. co-pastor, pastor, associate pastor.
    d. co-pastor, pastor, associate pastor, assistant pastor. (G-2.0504a)

13. The pastoral relationship between a pastor and a church is dissolved by:
    a. the congregation.
    b. the session.
    c. the presbytery.
    d. the moderator of the Congregational and Pastoral Care (CPC). (G-2.0901)

14. (T) or (F)? Ordained ministers serving churches are members of those churches. (G-3.0306)

15. (T) or (F)? Pastors in local churches serve on session and the privilege of voice and vote. (G-3.0201)

16. The session has the responsibility and power to
    a. develop and supervise the church school and the educational program of the church.
    b. to challenge the people of God with the privilege of responsible Christian stewardship.
    c. to lead the congregation continually to discover what God is doing in the world and to plan for change, renewal, and reformation under the Word of God.
    d. to serve in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.
    e. none of the above.
    f. all of the above. (G-3.0201)

17. The session shall:
    a. hold stated meetings at least monthly.
    b. review and approve the nominees for officers of the particular church.
    c. review the pastor's sermons.
    d. keep a complete register of marriages. (G-3.02)

18. The congregation shall:
    a. approve the annual budget.
    b. review the adequacy of the pastor's compensation.
    c. determine the mission of the particular church.
    d. elect an assistant pastor. (G-1.0503)

19. Who sets the quorum for a stated session meeting?
    a. set by the presbytery.

b. set by the pastor.
c. set by the session.
d. one third of the members (plus moderator). (G-3.0203)

20. All property held by or for a particular church is held in trust for the use and benefit of

a. the presbytery.
b. the synod.
c. the General Assembly.
d. the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (G-4.0203)

The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler

Physical Address: 134-B South Main St, Zelienople, PA 16063
Mailing Address: PO Box 279, Zelienople, PA 16063

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Telephone: (724) 452-7515
FAX: (724) 452-7522
Email: office@beaverbutler.org

Web: www.beaverbutler.org