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## Per Capita Policy Beaver-Butler Presbytery

**Preamble:** The Presbyterian Church (USA) is experiencing a crisis that puts at risk our ability to self-govern and to remain biblical, connectional and representative. Some speak of the crisis in terms of lack of belief and even apostasy. For others, the crisis is spoken of in terms of anarchy and loss of connection. The Presbytery of the Beaver-Butler Presbytery chooses to craft a “way forward” for congregations who wish to faithfully remain part of the denomination.

In approving this policy the Presbytery seeks to be aware of issues of conscience as they arise in local congregations, and to attempt to address or advocate resolution of those issues. The local congregation is encouraged to express concerns about issues to the Presbytery and to attempt to advocate actions that address those issues of conscience.

The Presbytery will encourage congregations to consider all constructive forms of protest that are available. When all opportunities for protest have been explored, we encourage all presbyters and congregations to “concur with or passively submit to” (G-6.0108(b), footnote 1) the vote and wisdom of the majority. If their consciences will permit neither, the Presbytery will be generous in allowing congregations and presbyters with strong issues of conscience to pursue peaceable withdrawal according to the terms of the Beaver-Butler Presbytery’s “Principles and Processes When Churches Seek to Separate From Presbytery.”

### I. Book of Order Policy Regarding Per Capita

- A. According to the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and to subsequent constitutional interpretations, the payment of per capita by local congregations is strongly encouraged but not mandated.
- B. According to the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and to subsequent constitutional interpretations, the “presbyteries shall be responsible for raising their own per capita funds, and for raising and timely transmission of per capita funds to their respective synods and to the General Assembly.” (G-9.0404 d)

### II. Guiding Principles

As the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler, we, recognizing that what is not prohibited is permitted:

- A. Affirm that the local congregation is the basic mission unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and that the Session of each particular church has the authority and responsibility to “determine the distribution of the church’s benevolences” (G-10.0102(i)) including per capita payments requested by the Presbytery;
- B. Maintain accountability and connection by shared, representative leadership and affirm the per capita apportionment as a just and fair system for supporting the necessary operations of those judicatories that support the mission and ministry of the particular church;
- C. Acknowledge that per capita covers administrative expenses of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and most of the General Assembly Council (GAC). The Synod portion of the per capita is used to support the administration costs of the Synod of the Trinity, and Synod programs including

- 47 mission, the Permanent Judicial Commission, Presbytery leadership support,  
48 coordinating teams and standing commissions.
- 49 D. Acknowledge that all congregations and judicatories are stewards of the resources  
50 God provides for the purpose of building up the Church;
- 51 E. Intend to be biblically as well as constitutionally faithful at the local and presbytery  
52 level;
- 53 F. Understand that the Session of a particular church may, for reasons of conscience,  
54 decline to remit all or part of its per capita apportionment;-
- 55 G. Take seriously our connectional role when congregations are disaffected for  
56 whatever reason, and will listen to and respond to those congregations as we are  
57 able;
- 58 H. Intend to remit all per capita payments to the Synod and General Assembly  
59 according to the letter and spirit of the Book of Order and constitutional  
60 interpretations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless and until we as a  
61 community of faith discern, together, that those payments put at risk the financial  
62 viability of the Presbytery.

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64 **III. Procedures for the Presbytery Regarding Per Capita**

- 65 A. The Presbytery's per capita amount for the next year will be presented by the  
66 Coordinating Team for vote at the September Presbytery meeting. Promptly  
67 thereafter, the Presbytery's Stated Clerk shall send a request to each session for  
68 voluntary payment of the per capita. The request shall include the full amounts  
69 established by the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. Full payment shall be  
70 requested by January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 71 B. All per capita receipts will be pooled into a single fund account rather than  
72 differentiated as Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. All payments of per  
73 capita shall be made pursuant to sections H. through J. below.
- 74 C. Sessions seeking an extension of time for payment of per capita are encouraged to  
75 correspond with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery by the November meeting of the  
76 Coordinating Team indicating the intended payment schedule for the requested per  
77 capita amount.
- 78 D. Sessions that cannot or choose not to remit the requested per capita in full are  
79 encouraged to correspond with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery by the November  
80 meeting of the Coordinating Team specifying the amounts to be remitted and the  
81 reason for their decisions.
- 82 E. Sessions that choose not to remit per capita apportionments can expect that the  
83 Presbytery will fulfill its obligations to the Synod and General Assembly when such  
84 funds are available as determined in section "H." below.
- 85 F. Sessions that attempt to allocate per capita apportionment with designations to the  
86 Presbytery, Synod and/or General Assembly that differ from those established as  
87 outlined in Section A. above will not be honored by the Presbytery in its  
88 responsibilities established in G-9.0404 (d) and as further described in this section  
89 of the Manual of Operations.
- 90 G. If a session does not correspond with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, and does  
91 not remit funds in the subsequent year, a member or delegation of the Presbytery

- 92 will seek to consult with that session to determine how the Presbytery may best  
93 respond.
- 94 H. The Finance Task Force shall report to the Coordinating Team as soon as feasible  
95 after January 1 regarding the following:
- 96 • A listing of all sessions' payments of per capita contributions for the previous  
97 year.
  - 98 • The total amount of per capita received for the previous year.
  - 99 • Anticipated total per capita receipts from the sessions for the upcoming year.
  - 100 • An identification of the Presbytery "unrestricted funds" and the amount of these  
101 funds.
  - 102 • The per capita amount assessed to the Presbytery by the Synod and General  
103 Assembly for the coming year.
  - 104 • A recommended amount the Presbytery can remit to the payment of Synod and  
105 General Assembly apportionments based upon anticipated per capita receipts  
106 and "unrestricted funds."
- 107 I. The Presbytery, at its second stated meeting, shall vote on the Coordinating Team's  
108 recommendation for that year's remission of funds to Synod and General Assembly,  
109 in keeping with the constitutional interpretations of the Book of Order and in order  
110 to maintain the financial viability of the Presbytery.
- 111 J. The Presbytery will provide resources to sessions that outline methods for  
112 expressing protest, seeking change, and understanding per capita. Questions  
113 regarding per capita shall be directed to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.  
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