

STANDING RULES GULF COAST PRESBYTERY

ARTICLE I -- GOVERNMENT

101 - The name of the presbytery shall be "Gulf Coast Presbytery."

102 - The rules of parliamentary order shall be the standing rules herein, and the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America. In matters not otherwise covered, Robert's Rules of Order (revised) shall prevail.

103 - To change the Standing Rules is to do so by amendment. To amend the Standing Rules the proposed amendment shall be read, moved, and carried at one meeting of presbytery, and docketed at the next stated meeting. At that time it shall be read again, debated and voted upon. To amend, a two-thirds affirmative vote of the presbyters present and voting is required. To suspend any provision of the Standing Rules, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the presbyters present and voting is required.

ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

201 - STATED MEETINGS. Presbytery shall hold three stated meetings a year. These ordinarily shall convene at 9 AM CT/10 AM ET and shall be held on the second Tuesday in February, May and October.

202 - CALLED MEETINGS. Called meetings of presbytery shall be held as specified in BCO 13-11. Ordinarily, a called meeting should not be considered within one month preceding a stated meeting of presbytery.

203 - QUORUM. The quorum of presbytery shall be no less than six teaching elders and four ruling elders representing four different congregations.

204 - DOCKET. The order of business at presbytery shall ordinarily be as follows:

- Call to order and convening prayer
- Roll call and declaration of a quorum
- Adoption of the docket
- Worship service and the Lord's Supper
- Small group sharing and prayer
- Communications
- Appointment standing committees
- Welcome from the host church
- Introduction of visitors
- Committee meetings and recess
- Reports of permanent committees
- Old Business
- New Business

Approval of minutes
Reports of standing committees
Roll call and adjournment

205 - ATTENDANCE. Every commissioner should attend every meeting unless providentially hindered. When providentially hindered from such attendance, a minister or Session representative will be expected to request presbytery to excuse him - stating his reason for non-attendance,

Due to the fact that stated meetings are known months (or even years) in advance, and since the term "providentially hindered" has reference to death, illness, and other extraordinary situations, and not to scheduling problems, all commissioners should seek to schedule other events and activities in light of stated meetings.

206 - PLACE OF MEETING. Presbytery shall set the time and place of meeting. Ordinarily, this will be done in advance, at the time of the prior stated meeting. If at any stated meeting no invitation is presented for the next stated meeting, the Moderator and/or Stated Clerk should undertake to secure an invitation. Presbytery shall be self-entertaining. The host church may charge each commissioner and guest a sum appropriate to cover expenses for meals and/or refreshments.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY

301 - THE MODERATOR. A moderator shall be elected at the October stated meeting to preside at each stated meeting, for the following year. Ordinarily, the moderator shall serve for no more than three stated meetings. The moderator serves as an advisory member of all standing committees. Ordinarily, he shall appoint members of all standing and special committees. The moderator shall be responsible for all worship service arrangements.

302 - THE STATED CLERK. The stated clerk shall be elected annually at the October stated meeting of presbytery to serve for the following year. He shall receive a salary fixed by presbytery and shall be allowed a fixed sum for necessary office expenses. The duties of the stated clerk shall include:

1. To keep a complete record of all meetings of presbytery and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. He shall be responsible for the custody of the files and equipment of presbytery.
2. To publish, as soon as possible, a full and accurate record of the minutes of the meetings of presbytery. The minutes shall be distributed to every teaching elder and clerk of Session.
3. To keep an accurate roll of the churches, ministers, clerks of session, licentiates and candidates of the presbytery. This record shall be published in the minutes of presbytery annually.

4. To perform all duties designated by the General Assembly.
5. To prepare a tentative docket for the stated meetings of presbytery and send the proposed docket to each minister, clerk of session and other members of presbytery committees at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
6. To notify in writing within fifteen days each member whom has been elected or appointed to a committee or commission of presbytery.
7. To serve, at its direction, as presbytery's trustee.
8. The stated clerk may tape the meetings of presbytery. These tapes are to be kept by the stated clerk and are only for his use in reviewing and preparing minutes. Unless presbytery makes exceptions--only the clerk may tape the proceedings of presbytery, nor are they for public use or review, nor may copies be made.

303 - THE RECORDING CLERK. The presbytery shall annually elect a recording clerk at its October stated meeting to serve for the following year. The recording clerk shall record the minutes of the meeting under the stated clerk's direction and submit them in proper form to the stated clerk within fourteen days for printing.

304 -THE TREASURER. The treasurer shall receive and disburse the funds of presbytery. He shall keep a detailed account of receipts and disbursement, and shall report the same at each stated meeting of presbytery. The treasurer shall be elected annually at the October meeting of presbytery to serve for the following year.

305 - PARLIAMENTARIAN. The presbytery shall elect a parliamentarian at its October stated meeting to serve for the following year. His responsibilities shall include:

1. To advise the moderator and the presbytery concerning the alternatives of parliamentary order available to the court so as to be in good order and expeditious in the dispatch of all business before the court,
2. To advise the recording clerk and the stated clerk on appropriate language so that the minutes of presbytery accurately reflect the actions taken by the court.
3. To advise the Executive Committee of appropriate procedure to expedite the handling of any business coming to the floor of presbytery.

ARTICLE IV - PERMANENT COMMITTEES OF PRESBYTERY

401 - MEMBERSHIP. Each permanent committee shall consist of not less than three each nor more than six each ruling and teaching elders to be divided into three classes of not less that one ruling elder and one teaching elder in each class. Election of committee chairman and/or members shall be held at the October stated meeting of

presbytery. Terms of membership on all committees shall be for three years and shall begin at the end of the October Stated Meeting. A member may serve for two terms in succession and, after the lapse of one year, may be re-elected.

402 - ANNUAL REPORTS, All permanent committees shall make annual reports to presbytery according to the following schedule:

Committee	Time of Reporting
Administration	February
Christian Education	February
Executive	October
Examinations	June
Ministers and Candidates	June
Mission to North America	October
Mission to the World	October

403 - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. Membership. Presbytery shall have an Executive Committee composed of the active moderator, the stated clerk and the chairman of all permanent committees.

2. Duties:

a. The committee shall meet at least two weeks before each stated meeting of presbytery.

b. It shall coordinate the activities of all permanent committees and shall assist the stated clerk in the preparation of the proposed docket for each stated meeting of presbyters.

c. This committee shall serve as the presbytery's nominating committee by:

(1) Making its annual report of nominations to committees and officers for the subsequent year at the October stated meeting of presbytery.

(2) Making all nominations for vacancies that occur during the course of the year at the next stated meeting of presbytery, after the vacancy occurs.

(3) Making all nominations to General Assembly committees at the October stated meeting.

(4) Nominating for presbytery's approval members to the General Assembly's Nominating Committee.

(5) Nominating only those presbyters who have agreed to serve if elected.

404 - COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION

1. The Committee on Administration shall coordinate all matters of the General Assembly's Committee on Administration as they relate to presbytery.
2. This committee shall assist the presbytery in its responsibility to "review the records of the church sessions, redress whatever they may have done contrary to order and take effectual care that they observe the Constitution of the Church."
 - a. Session minutes shall be examined according to a schedule established by the committee. (Schedule for Review)
 - b. The committee chairman shall notify clerks of session one month prior to date of review.
 - c. The committee shall instruct clerks of session concerning the proper preparation of minutes. (See SR 605 SESSIONAL RECORDS REVIEW)
3. This committee shall prepare and present an asking budget for all the causes of presbytery at the October stated meeting. Each permanent committee shall prepare and present to the Committee on Administration its budget at least one month prior to the October stated meeting of presbytery.
4. This committee shall serve as the auditing committee to review annually the records of the presbytery treasurer.
5. This committee shall annually review the minutes of the Permanent Committees of presbytery and report its findings at the Winter Stated Meeting.

405 - COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. The Christian Education Committee shall coordinate all matters of the General Assembly's Committee on Christian Education and Publications as they relate to presbytery.
2. The Christian Education Committee shall supervise and assist the work of the Women in the Church, Men of the Covenant, and the youth programs of presbytery.
3. This committee shall aid local congregations in the development of the program of Christian Education through the sponsorship of teacher training workshops.

406 - COMMITTEE ON EXAMINATIONS

1. The Committee on Examinations shall serve presbytery in the enrollment of candidates. The Committee on Examinations shall serve presbytery by presenting each candidate, having previously been approved by the committee on ministers and candidates, to the presbytery and conducting his examination in experimental religion and motives for seeking the gospel ministry.
 - a. By processing applications for candidacy in accord with the procedure set forth in the Book of Church Order.
 - b. By presenting each candidate to the presbytery and conducting his examination in experimental religion and motives for seeking the gospel ministry.
2. The Committee on Examinations shall serve the presbytery in conducting examinations of candidates for licensure and ordination:
 - a. By conducting written and oral examinations in accord with the requirements set forth in the BCO prior to the candidates' examinations before presbytery.
 - b. By conducting oral examinations for licensure and ordination before presbytery in accordance with the BCO.
 - c. By insuring that no one (candidate or licentiate) be permitted to move on the field without first being carefully examined by this committee.
3. The Committee on Examinations shall serve the presbytery in the reception of ministers:
 - a. By processing applications of ministers seeking membership in this presbytery. Special care should be taken in examination of all non-PCA ministers to insure that their views are in accord with the Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
4. The committee will conduct the examination of candidates for ordination, the reception of teaching elders and men seeking to become candidates for the Gospel Ministry in the following manner:
 - a. Men seeking to come under care of presbytery must notify the stated clerk at least four weeks before the meeting of presbytery at which they wish to appear.
 - b. Men seeking licensure or ordination must notify the stated clerk at least eight weeks before the meeting of presbytery at which they wish to be examined for licensure or ordination. Written examinations, theological

and exegetical papers must be submitted four weeks in advance of the meeting at which they will be examined.

- c. Ministers seeking transfer from another presbytery within the Presbyterian Church in America must notify the stated clerk at least six weeks in advance of the meeting at which they will be received.
- d. Ministers seeking transfer from another denomination other than the Presbyterian Church in America, must notify the stated clerk six weeks in advance of the meeting at which they wish to be received.

407 - COMMITTEE ON MINISTERS AND CANDIDATES

1. The Committee on Ministers and Candidates shall serve presbytery by:

- a. Counseling with ministers and/or churches, at the invitation of the minister and/or session or at the direction of presbytery, that are experiencing congregational or personal problems. This committee shall inquire into such difficulties and offer counsel and advice. If it deems necessary, the committee shall report on the matter to presbytery with recommendations for further action.

- b. Processing application for candidacy in accordance with the procedure set forth in The Book of Church Order. Overseeing of all candidates for the Gospel Ministry under the care of presbytery and still pursuing courses of preparation, monitoring their progress and spiritual growth, giving encouragement and giving counsel as needed. The committee will report annually at the May stated meeting of presbytery, the progress of each candidate in accordance with the BCO.

- c. Assisting the vacant churches in securing qualified pulpit supply. The committee shall maintain a list of ministers and ruling elders that are qualified to serve as pulpit supply. The committee may, at the request of the pulpit committee and session, assist churches in locating a qualified minister.

- d. This committee has the authority to act as a commission of presbytery in dissolving pastoral relationships in cases where the pastor and congregation formally concur or where no congregation is concerned, to dismiss other ministers, licentiates or candidates. The committee shall inform the stated clerk of this action so that the clerk may dismiss the ministers.

2. Responsibility for the supervision of the presbytery's interns will rest with the Ministers and Candidates Committee. The committee will exercise oversight within the guidelines set forth in BCO 19--Licensure and Internship. Written

notification of presbytery's requirements shall be given to each intern at the start of his period of internship.

a. Reports on the progress of every intern in the presbytery will be made at each stated meeting of presbytery. Each intern shall be required to report at least once a year describing his ministerial experiences. These reports will become part of the minutes of presbytery. If the intern is still in school, the presbytery shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence and progress in study.

b. A Ruling or Teaching Elder living in close proximity to where the intern is laboring shall be appointed by the Ministers and Candidates Committee to serve as his supervisor. It will be the duty of the supervisor to give pastoral oversight and counsel, and monitoring the interns progress in completing written and ministry assignments required by the committee. The supervisor should meet monthly with the intern and submit written reports to the committee concerning his progress.

c. The period of internship shall last for twelve months. At the end of this period the intern shall have his internship approved or disapproved by the committee. If the internship is disapproved, the presbytery may either extend it or presbytery may completely rescind his intern status.

3. Oversight of the candidates enrolled in the presbytery's Theological Training Program shall rest with the Minister's and Candidates Committee. The candidates enrolled in this program shall complete requirements as defined in the Uniform Curriculum for Theological Education (see minutes of 6th GA, pages 214-217 and 7th GA, pages 190-191). Reports of each candidate's progress shall be made at each stated meeting of presbytery. The committee shall notify presbytery of the candidate's completion of the program.

408 - COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA

1. The Committee on Mission to North America shall be responsible for the planting of new churches within the bounds of presbytery by:

a. Surveying the presbytery to determine opportunities for planting new churches.

b. Encouraging particular churches to establish churches within bounds of presbytery.

2. This committee shall coordinate all matters of the General Assembly's Committee on Mission to North America as they relate to presbytery.

3. This committee shall encourage the particular churches to develop and implement plans for church growth and evangelism by sponsoring presbytery-wide training conferences.

4. The MNA Committee shall administer the GCP Loan Fund. A report on fund activity shall be presented at each stated meeting of presbytery.

409 - COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD

1. The Committee on Mission to the World shall promote the task of world evangelization throughout Gulf Coast Presbytery.

2. In cooperation with the General Assembly's Committee on Mission to the World, this committee shall recruit, approve and recommend missionaries to be commissioned by presbytery.

3. This committee shall assist local congregations in the promotion of world evangelization through mission conferences.

410 - COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES

1. Presbytery shall accomplish the task of taking the gospel to the college campuses within its bounds by working in concert with the other presbyteries of Florida and Alabama through the Florida Joint Committee on Campus Ministry. (The Florida and Alabama Joint Committees oversee campus ministry staffing, encouragement, support, financing, and promotion among the churches within the presbyteries of their states.)

2. Due to the statewide ministry of this committee, membership shall be as follows rather than in accordance with ¶ 401:

- a. Presbytery shall maintain four members on the Florida Joint Committee and four members on the Alabama Joint Committee.
- b. membership is open to teaching and ruling elders.
- c. members serve a four year term, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve.
- d. nominations for service on the committee shall be by the Executive Committee in accordance with ¶ 403 - 2c.

3. Presbytery shall receive a report on the progress of campus ministry within its bounds and the State of Florida at each stated meeting.

ARTICLE V - STANDING COMMITTEES

501 - MEMBERSHIP. Standing Committees shall be composed of four members each, two ruling elders and two teaching elders. They shall be appointed by the moderator at

the stated meeting of presbytery and continue to serve until the next stated meeting of presbytery.

502 - BILLS AND OVERTURES. All proper bills and overtures coming to presbytery for action shall be referred to this committee for consideration and report.

503 - RESOLUTION AND THANKS. The committee shall formulate and present written resolutions that are referred to it by presbytery, including the appreciation of presbytery for its entertainment.

ARTICLE VI - GENERAL POLICIES OF PRESBYTERY

601 - In keeping with the Book of Church Order, no minister being called to a field within the bounds of Gulf Coast Presbytery shall move on the field until he has been properly examined, approved, and received into the membership of Gulf Coast Presbytery.

602 - THE NATURE OF THE CALL OF TEACHING ELDERS AND THE HANDLING OF OUT-OF-BOUNDS CALLS

The issuing of calls to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery is relevant to the work of two permanent committees of Presbytery: 1) the Examinations Committee, which must review the terms of all calls; and 2) the Ministers and Candidates Committee, which must maintain contact and report on men on the roll of Presbytery without call, who may become the object of a request for out-of-bounds service, as well as report regularly to Presbytery on those with out-of-bounds calls.

To ensure that our united practice is in conformity with the Book of Church Order [BCO 8-7; 20-1; and 2 1-1], the Ministers and Candidates Committee and the Examinations Committee of the Gulf Coast Presbytery have settled on a common approach to out-of-bounds calls.

When making recommendations to Presbytery concerning the ordination of men with calls to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery [BCO 20-1] or the approval of calls to teaching elders to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery [BCO 21-1] --that is, invitations to the Gospel ministry which do not originate from a local church in Presbytery and/or which are designed for service outside of the pastoral and geographical bounds of Presbytery—the Examinations Committee and the Ministers and Candidates Committee will evaluate such calls in light of BCO 8-5, 8-7 and 20-1, which states:

8-5. *When a man is called to labor as a teaching elder, it belongs to his order, in addition to those functions he shares with all other elders, to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he bears glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed preacher. As he*

dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

8-7. *A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery be assured he will have full freedom, to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and that he report at least annually on his work. As far as possible, such a teaching elder shall be a member of the Presbytery within whose bounds he labors.*

20-1. *Before a candidate, or licentiate, can be ordained to the office of the ministry, he must receive a call to a definite work. Ordinarily the call must come from a church, Presbytery, or the General Assembly of this denomination. If the call comes from another source, the Presbytery shall always make a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.*

Therefore, in light of BCO 8-5, 8-7 and 20-1, the Examinations Committee and the Ministers and Candidates Committee will evaluate requests for a man to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery and report to Presbytery concerning such labor, in terms of the following criteria:

1. Will the organization issuing the request to Presbytery engage the man in a valid Christian ministry which would be approved by the Presbytery (BCO 20-1)?
2. Will the organization issuing the request to Presbytery allow the man to preach and teach the Word of God and, if appropriate to the ministry context, to administrate the Sacraments in ways appropriate to the order of a teaching elder and his call to the Gospel ministry (BCO 8-5)?
3. Will this Christian ministry itself validate the nature of the call of a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America (BCO 8-5)?
4. Will the organization issuing the request to Presbytery allow him full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church (BCO 8-7)?
5. Will the organization issuing the request to Presbytery allow him to conduct his ministry under the spiritual oversight of this Presbytery, including his reporting on the work every six months, his faithful attendance and service within Presbytery, and his genuine commitment to the local church (BCO 8-7)?
6. Will the teaching elder submit a semi-annual report to the Presbytery through the Ministers and Candidates Committee as to the Gospel ministry to which he is called? Any change in status or responsibilities to the original call approved by the Presbytery must be reported to the Presbytery through the Ministers and Candidates Committee as soon as those changes take place (BCO 8-7).

If these criteria are met, then in response to the organization's request an official ecclesial call will be drafted by the Examinations Committee for Presbytery to issue to the man, so that standards of the *Book of Church Order* and the regulations of U.S. tax law for ministerial status may be clearly met. Pertinent tax codes include:

"Most services you perform as a minister, priest, rabbi, etc., are qualified services. These services include: performing sacerdotal functions, conducting religious worship, and controlling, conducting, and maintaining religious organizations, boards, societies, and other integral agencies that are under the authority of a religious body that is a church or denomination, You are considered to control, conduct, and maintain a religious organization if you direct, manage, or promote the organization's activities. A religious organization is under the authority of a religious body that is a church or denomination if it is organized for and dedicated to carrying out the principles of a faith according to the requirements governing the creation of institutions of the faith. Your services for a nonreligious organization are qualified services if the services are assigned or designated by your church. Assigned or designated services qualify even if they do not involve performing sacerdotal functions or conducting religious worship. If your services are not assigned or designated by your church, they are qualified services only if they involve performing sacerdotal functions or conducting religious worship" (Internal Revenue Service assessed 2/13/03)

*"To qualify for minister's tax treatment and tax-free parsonage allowance your employer must be a church or an integral agency of a church. An exception to the requirement that your employer must be a church or an integral agency is provided if you are assigned or appointed to perform services that at an organization that is not a church or integral agency, have your church or denomination assign you to the position during the hiring process before you accept the position (See "Qualifying Service Includes" from Regulation 1.1402©-5(b), item #7)" [B.J. Worth, *Worth's Income Tax Guide for Ministers: 2003 edition*, Evangel Publishing House, 2003, pp.31-32].*

602 - All motions made on the floor of presbytery must be submitted in written form to the recording clerk on the forms provided by the stated clerk.

603 - All committee reports shall be presented by the committee to presbytery in written form with sufficient copies for all presbyters in attendance.

604 - Each minister received into presbytery, and each candidate examined for ordination shall, upon presbytery's vote to receive or ordain, subscribe his name upon the book of ministerial obligation.

605 - SESSIONAL RECORDS REVIEW: Each church Session is to deliver a copy of its unexamined court records to the Administration Committee on, or before, the date of the Presbytery meeting at which it is scheduled to report.

1. The Administration Committee shall examine the records in accordance with BCO Chapter 40 and shall classify exceptions as notations, exceptions of form, or exceptions of substance. The findings of the committee with respect to the Minutes of each Session shall be noted under the following categories as appropriate:
 - a. Exceptions of substance: Apparent violations of the Scripture or serious irregularities from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, and matters of impropriety and important delinquencies.
 - b. Exceptions of form: Violations of the Presbytery's Guidelines for keeping presbytery minutes, rules of order, etc. should normally be reported under this category. If subsequent minutes continue to reflect the same particular exception of form, it may become an exception of substance.
 - c. Notations: Any typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation and other minor variations in form and clarity.
2. Notations and exceptions of form shall normally be sent to the Clerk of Session by the Committee without being read before Presbytery or recorded in its minutes. Exceptions of substance shall be reported to Presbytery as recommendations to be voted upon. The Sessional Records in question shall be approved without exception; or with exception of form and/or substance.
3. Sessions shall advise the Presbytery by the following Stated Meeting through the Administration Committee that they have disposed of the exception of substance in one of the following manners: the Session agrees with the exception of substance, corrects its record or action if possible, and promises to try to be more careful in the future; or, the Session respectfully disagrees with the exception of substance, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery for action. The Administration Committee will bring a recommendation regarding accepting the disposition as satisfactory.
4. The Administration Committee shall report to Presbytery regarding any Sessional Records that have not been submitted for review in a timely manner.
5. The Administration Committee shall provide help for any Clerk of Session seeking guidance in preparing Sessional Records for the yearly Presbytery review.

Amended 2/11/13