



**Highland Presbyterian Church  
Administrative Procedures  
Manual**

**Approved by the Session  
September 21, 2016**



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## Introduction

The General Assembly approved the new Form of Government (with the acronym nFOG), at the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010). The amendments to the *Book of Order* became effective in July 2011. Congregations were advised that their sessions should implement policy and procedure guides or manuals as a matter of good practice and to document how the session and congregation will operate when they meet and work for the church. In addition, the *Book of Order* provides:

Each council shall develop a manual of administrative operations that will specify the form and guide the work of mission in that council. (G-3.0106)

This Manual was prepared by the Session and approved in 2013 and is intended to be a living document, meaning that it can be amended as needed and at any time by a vote of the majority of the Session or the congregation, depending upon which section is revised.

## I. Composition of Session

The Session shall be composed of: (1) those members of the congregation who are elected by a vote of the congregation to active service as Ruling Elders<sup>1</sup>; and (2) all installed pastors and associate pastors, known as Teaching Elders (also known as ministers of Word and Sacrament) (Bylaws Section IV(a)).

1. The Session shall include **up to** twenty-seven (27) Ruling Elders divided into three (3) classes of nine (9) members each (Bylaws, Section V(b)). One or more members of the Session may be a youth.
2. The congregation shall elect a new class of nine (9) Ruling Elders annually.
3. Ruling Elders shall serve a term of three (3) consecutive years on the Session and are eligible for re-election for no more than one (1) additional consecutive three-year term. A Ruling Elder who has served six (6) consecutive years (two (2) consecutive terms) is ineligible for re-election to the Session for at least one (1) year after the end of the sixth consecutive year of his/her term of service (Bylaws, Section V(c)). A Ruling Elder who is elected to serve a partial term and then a full term (two (2) consecutive terms, the first partial, the second one full), is ineligible for re-election to the Session for at **least** one (1) year after the end of the second term of service (Bylaws, Section V(c)).

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<sup>1</sup> The *Book of Order* defines Ruling Elders in G-2.0301 as follows:

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders, and they are eligible for any office.

## II. Election of Ruling Elders, Elder Training, and Vacancies

A. Ruling Elders shall be elected by the congregation from among the members. The Ruling Elders of the incoming class of the Session shall be nominated by the Congregational Nominating Committee ("CNC") (see Section VII(C)), for consideration by the congregation during a congregational meeting.

B. Each year in the month of November (or as otherwise designated by the Session) the CNC shall nominate a slate of at least nine (9) proposed Ruling Elders during a congregational meeting (Bylaws Sections III(b), V(a)). Those nominees shall be drawn from and reflect the demographics, interests, and organizations within the membership of the church. Each active member of the congregation is eligible for nomination as a Ruling Elder whether nominated by the CNC or from the floor, provided prior consent has been obtained from the nominee.

C. After the CNC presents its slate of proposed Ruling Elders, church members may make nominations from the floor. After nominations are closed:

1. If there are no nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon the slate of nominees from the CNC; or
2. If there are nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon each person nominated and the nine (9) nominees who receive the most votes shall constitute the new class of the Session.
3. When nominations are made from the floor in addition to the slate of nominees from the CNC, paper ballots shall be issued to all active members attending the meeting and they shall make marks next to the names of the nine (9) candidates for whom each member is voting. The ballots shall be collected and counted by tellers appointed by the moderator of the congregational meeting. The tellers shall work outside the sanctuary or other meeting place and the results shall be announced as soon as possible.

D. The Session shall provide newly elected Ruling Elders with a period of study and preparation, after which the Session shall examine them as to their personal faith, their knowledge of the Constitution of the church, and the duties of the ministry. If the examination is approved, the Session shall vote on a date for the service of ordination and installation of the new Ruling Elders. The date shall be recorded in the minutes and announced to the congregation in the bulletin and newsletter.

E. The Moderator shall preside at the service of ordination and installation and at the appropriate time shall state briefly the nature of the ministry of Ruling Elders. The act of ordination and installation takes place in the context of worship. During the ordination, all Ruling Elders, active and past, whether ordained at Highland or elsewhere, shall be invited to the front of the sanctuary to lay hands on the Ruling Elders who are being ordained or reinstalled.

F. If a position on the Session becomes vacant for any reason (ex. death, resignation), the Congregational Nominating Committee shall nominate a member of the congregation to complete the unexpired term. The Session shall call a special meeting of the congregation to elect a member of the congregation to fill the unexpired term (Bylaws, Section V(d)). The congregation may make nominations from the floor. The steps in section C(1-3), above, shall be followed until someone is elected to fill the vacant position on the Session.

### III. Officers

#### A. Moderator:

1. The Head of Staff, whether the senior installed pastor/Teaching Elder or other status, shall be the Moderator of the Session and the Session shall not meet without the Head of Staff, or another moderator invited by the Head of Staff to moderate, as the leader of a Session meeting (Bylaws, Section IV(c)). The Pastor/Head of Staff shall also be the Moderator for congregational meetings (Bylaws, Sections III(g)).

2. If it is impractical for the Pastor/Head of Staff to moderate a meeting of the Session or the congregation, he/she shall designate another Teaching Elder who is a member of the Presbytery to serve as moderator.

#### B. Clerk of Session:

1. Each year after a new class of Ruling Elders has been installed and ordained, the Session shall elect a Clerk of Session for a term of one (1) year who shall be a Ruling Elder (Bylaws, Section IV(d)). The Clerk shall be an active Elder/member of Session or an Elder not actively serving on the Session. The Clerk may be re-elected for up to four (4) consecutive terms for a total of five (5) consecutive years of service, after which the Session must elect a new Clerk of Session. If the Clerk is not an active Session member, the clerk is a member *ex officio* of the Session, with voice (when permitted by the Session), but without a vote.

2. The Clerk of Session shall record the transactions and business of the Session in the minutes, shall preserve the Session's records, and shall furnish extracts from the minutes when required by another council of the church. As required by notice of the Presbytery, the Clerk will present the minutes and rolls each year for review by the Presbytery and shall work with the church staff to prepare the annual statistical report.

**C. Treasurer:** Each year the Session shall elect a Treasurer who shall serve a term of one (1) year and who shall work with the Finance Committee to keep the financial records of the church. The Treasurer shall be an active Session member or a past Session member (Ruling Elder). The Treasurer may be re-elected for up to four (4) consecutive terms for a total of five (5) consecutive years of service, after which the Session must elect a new Treasurer.

**D. Corporate Officers:** The principal corporate officers of the Church shall be the Pastor/Head of Staff, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Church corporation, the Clerk of Session, who is the corporate Secretary, and the Treasurer, who is the corporate Treasurer (Bylaws, Section VII(a)). Other officers may be designated by the Session, but like the Clerk and Treasurer, those officers serve at the pleasure of the Session (Bylaws, Section VII(b)).

## **IV. Session Meetings, Quorum, and Voting**

### **A. Regular, Monthly Session Meetings**

1. Regular Session meetings shall be held every month on the third Wednesday of each month, unless the date and time is changed by a vote of the Session (Bylaws, Section IV(b)).
2. At regular monthly Session meetings, a quorum of the Session shall be a majority of Ruling Elders who are serving on the Session, which shall be fourteen (14) Session members plus the Moderator (Bylaws, Section IV(e)). For any matters that require a vote of the Session, no vote may be taken except when a quorum is present. If a quorum is not present an action that requires a vote must be tabled and the vote postponed until the next meeting of the Session at which a quorum is present.
3. All members of the Session are entitled to vote on any matters brought before the Session for a vote, unless the member recuses himself/herself due to a conflict of interest.
4. In order for an action to be approved by the Session, a quorum must be present and the action item must receive a positive or favorable vote from a majority of the Session members present (Bylaws, Section IV(e)).

### **B. Special-Called Session Meetings**

1. The Moderator shall call a special Session meeting when the Moderator deems it necessary or when the Moderator is requested to do so in writing by any two (2) members of the Session (Bylaws, Section IV(b)). There shall be reasonable notice given to Session members of all special Session meetings, which shall include a notice sent by email as soon as the need for the special meeting is known. The reasonable notice shall not be given less than three (3) days prior to the date of the meeting.
2. The business to be transacted at a special Session meeting shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.
3. For special Session meetings a quorum shall be the same and the voting rule shall be the same as described in Section IV(A), except for special meetings to receive new members.

**C. Agenda** – the Moderator, in consultation with the Clerk, shall create the agenda of each meeting. The committee chairs and the Clerk may contribute items to the agenda.

**D. Posting of Reports and Information** – prior to each Session meeting all reports and information shall be posted on the private web page of the Session. Committee chairs are expected to post any report they wish the Session to review on the private page no later than noon on the Monday before each Session meeting so that Session members have time to review it. The pastoral staff and the Clerk should also post any minutes, reports, and other items for the information and/or action of the Session by the Monday noon deadline.

**E. Minutes** - The Clerk of Session or his/her designee shall record the minutes of all Session meetings that shall, when a draft is prepared, be reviewed by the Moderator. The minutes shall be provided to all Session members for review and the Session shall approve the draft minutes, after they are revised with any appropriate corrections, additions or deletions, before they are placed in the minute book. The minute books shall be kept in the church office. As required by notice of the Presbytery, the minutes shall be presented to the Presbytery each year for approval.

**F. Robert's Rules of Order** – the parliamentary authority for meetings of the Session shall be *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (Scott/Foresman edition), except as otherwise provided for in the bylaws or the *Book of Order* (Bylaws Section IV(b)).

## **V. Responsibilities of the Session**

A. The Session is responsible to guide and govern the life of the congregation. The Session leads the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities for the service of all people, for the up-building of the whole church, and for the glory of God.

B. The Session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the Session shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

C. The Session shall provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.

D. The Session shall provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.

1. The congregation will celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of every month.
2. Each quarter Elders shall assist the pastoral staff in celebrating the Lord's Supper with members who are not able to attend worship.
3. Requests for baptism shall be brought to the Session for approval and recorded in the minutes and administered as appropriate.

E. The Session shall nurture the covenant community of the disciples of Christ. This responsibility includes:

1. Receiving and dismissing members, as described in G-1.0303.
2. With the Clerk, maintaining the official rolls of the church (see Bylaws Section II(b)).
3. Reviewing the roll of active members at least annually and counseling with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership.
4. Providing programs of nurture, education, and fellowship.
5. Training, examining, ordaining, and installing those elected by the congregation as Ruling Elders.
6. Encouraging the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources.
7. Managing the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission.

8. Directing the ministry of all organizations of the congregation.
9. Employing the administrative staff of the congregation.
10. Leading the congregation in councils of the Church.
11. Participating in the mission of the whole church.
12. Warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within the congregation and community.
13. Serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order*.

## **VI. Finances**

A. The Session shall elect a Treasurer annually for a term of one (1) year and the Finance Committee shall supervise the work of the Treasurer.

B. The Finance Committee shall work with the Treasurer to prepare internal financial control policies and procedures for approval by the Session. These policies and procedures may be amended by the Session at any time upon proposal of the Finance Committee to the Session.

C. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall provide a report at each regular meeting of the Session concerning the finances of the church. At least annually the Chair of the Finance Committee shall provide to the Session a special report concerning the various funds of the congregation.

D. All monetary collections received during a worship service shall be counted and recorded by at least two (2) duly appointed persons, or by one (1) fidelity bonded person. The Finance Committee shall propose to the Session those persons it believes should count collections and those persons shall be approved by vote of the Session.

E. The Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget to propose to the Session, which the Session shall vote upon and approve and shall determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences. The budget shall include funds for property and liability insurance coverage to protect the church's facilities, programs, staff, and elected and appointed officers.

F. The Session shall authorize offerings for Christian purposes and shall account for the proceeds of such offerings and their disbursement. In its minutes the Session shall provide full information to the congregation concerning its decisions in such matters.

G. Financial books and records adequate to reflect all financial transactions of the church shall be kept and shall be open to inspection by the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, and others approved by the Finance Committee or the Session at reasonable times.

H. Annual reports of all financial activities shall be made by the Finance Committee to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

I. A full financial review of all financial books and records shall be conducted every year by a public accountant or a committee of members versed in accounting procedures. Reviewers should not be related to the Treasurer or members of the church staff. Following that review, a report of the results of the review shall be made to the Session by the Finance Committee.

## VII. The Committees of the Session

**A. The Committees** – Each March the Session shall create and approve its own committees (Bylaws, Section IV(d)). Committees may consist of members of the Session and other members of the congregation.

1. The Head of Staff will identify potential committee chairs and ask the Session to approve that slate of chairs (Bylaws, Section IV(d)). Chairs should not ordinarily serve for more than two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms as chair.

2. At any time that the Session believes a committee should be created or dissolved, the Session shall give notice of the matter on the agenda of one of its meetings and the Session shall discuss the proposal and vote on it.

### B. The Functions of the Session Committees

1. Christian Education - The Christian Education Committee supports the mission of the Session by planning, coordinating, and executing, in partnership with church staff, the programs of Highland Presbyterian Church aimed at educating the children, youth, and adult participants. The CE committee's primary focus is administering our church school program for all ages, as well as other general educational programming for children, youth and adults, so that we may all live out our discipleship in a manner pleasing to God. **The Committee includes the following subcommittees: Children's Subcommittee; Youth Subcommittee; and Adult Subcommittee.**

2. Church in the World: The Church in the World Committee exists to challenge the church both to show and receive God's love and justice through nurture and service to all God's children. The Committee proposes to Session a budget for the church's benevolence spending and organizes and approves, with Session concurrence, all church-related service to the community and the world, from food drives to offerings to service teams.

3. Fellowship - The Congregational Life Committee serves to foster a sense of community within the congregation through fellowship opportunities. The Committee also helps develop relationships among members and support small groups as needed.

4. Finance: In consultation with other Session committees and the Head of Staff, prepare the annual Church budget and submit it to the Session for approval, review income and expenses on a monthly basis to identify and address any deviations from the approved budget, report monthly to the Session regarding the status of income and expenses relative to the approved budget, provide summary financial reports for dissemination to the membership on a regular basis, ensure that the Church adopts and follows adequate financial controls, consult with the Investment Committee with respect to the Church's endowment and investment funds and report on the same to the Session, and arrange for and review any audits or financial reviews required by the Book of Order or Presbytery or otherwise deemed appropriate by the Committee or the Session.

5. Personnel: The Personnel Committee assists the Session to fulfill its responsibilities in its relationships with the ordained and non-ordained staff of the church. The Committee assists the

Session in the oversight of the compensation programs and benefits plans, along with performance evaluations of church staff.

6. Property: The Property Committee maintains, protects, and improves all real and personal property of the congregation; ensures adequate facilities exist to effectively carry out the Church's ministry objectives and goals, and make sure such facilities are properly protected against loss or misuse; ensures stewardship of the facilities is being exercised through energy conservation, cost reductions, and safety measures; and extends the life of the facilities through a proper maintenance program.

7. Stewardship: The primary function of the Stewardship Committee is to work with the Session, other committees throughout the church, the congregation and staff to set goals, in terms of both number of pledging units and total amount pledged, for the church's annual stewardship campaign and to work to achieve those goals. The Committee reports to the Session monthly at Session meetings and to the congregation at large in the church newsletter monthly. Pledge goals for the upcoming year are established with help from the Finance Committee each August, and the stewardship campaign usually begins in September. The Committee seeks to inform the staff and other committee members as pastoral needs and other concerns are discovered as stewardship contacts are made. The Committee also seeks ways to engage the congregation in longer-term giving, including estate bequests and capital gifts.

8. Worship and Spiritual Life: The Worship and Spiritual Life Committee exists to support and enhance worship at Highland and to provide spiritual support to the congregation. The Committee oversees the recruitment and training of scripture readers, ushers, communion servers and Advent candle lighters; prepares the elements for communion; coordinates the visual art and flowers for each Sunday's worship; provides Healing & Wholeness services and guided Labyrinth walks; and coordinates the Prayer Partnership ministry. The Committee also provides oversight to the music ministry.

### **C. The Congregational Nominating Committee**

1. The Congregational Nominating Committee ("CNC") will have seven (7) active members: one (1) member of each of the three (3) classes represented on the Session; and four (4) at-large members elected by the congregation (Bylaws, Section VIII(a), and (c)). The Pastor/Head of Staff (whether installed or interim or other) shall serve on the Committee *ex officio* and without vote.

2. Each November the CNC shall ask the Session to call a congregational meeting for two (2) purposes (Bylaws, Section VIII(e)):

a. So that the CNC can nominate a new class of Ruling Elders and Deacons for a vote by the congregation (see Section II, A-C); and

b. After the vote on the classes of Ruling Elders and Deacons is completed, the CNC can nominate four (4) members of the congregation to serve as at-large members of the CNC for the following calendar year (Bylaws, Section VIII(b)). Once the date is set for the congregational meeting, the biographies of the nominees shall be published in the church bulletin on the Sunday before the meeting and on the Sunday of the meeting, for the

information of the congregation. The congregation shall receive the slate of the proposed CNC members and may also nominate candidates for the CNC from the floor. After nominations are closed:

- i. If there are no nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon the slate of nominees from the CNC; or
  - ii. If there are nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote on each person nominated and the four (4) nominees who receive the most votes shall constitute the at-large members of the CNC for the following calendar year.
- III. When nominations are made from the floor in addition to the slate of nominees from the CNC, paper ballots shall be issued to all active members attending the meeting and they shall make marks next to the names of the four (4) candidates for whom each member is voting. The ballots shall be collected and counted by tellers appointed by the moderator of the congregational meeting. The tellers shall work outside the sanctuary or other meeting place and the results shall be announced as soon as possible.

3. The term of a CNC member shall be for one (1) year and no member can serve more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms (Bylaws, Section VIII(d)).

4. When directed to do so by the Session, the Congregational Nominating Committee shall nominate persons to be elected to a Pastor Nominating Committee (see Section VII, E; Bylaws, Section VIII(e)).

#### **D. Ad Hoc Committees**

1. From time-to-time the Session may vote to create ad hoc committees for purposes determined by the Session.

2. The Session will contact potential ad hoc committee members to explain the purposes of the ad hoc committee and to determine if the church member is willing to serve on that committee.

3. Once the ad hoc committee is formed, at its first meeting it shall elect its Chair. The ad hoc committee will also designate someone to keep records of meetings as the committee secretary. If the Chair or the secretary cannot attend a particular meeting, the committee may meet and someone should be designated as the secretary.

4. Any ad hoc committee should determine its processes and procedures, such as who can call a meeting and a quorum for voting.

5. As the committee conducts its work it shall provide regular updates, as needed, to the Session.

6. When an ad hoc committee completes its work it shall prepare a report to the Session and the committee shall meet with the Session to discuss its report. The Session shall vote to accept the report and enter it into the Session's minutes.

## **E. The Pastor Nominating Committee**

1. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Session will request that the Congregational Nominating Committee prepare a slate of nominees for a Pastor Nominating Committee (“PNC”). At the request of the Chair of the CNC, the Session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a PNC that is drawn from the congregation and will include members with the skills, qualities, and insights needed for the work of a PNC. The PNC’s duty shall be to nominate a Teaching Elder for election by the congregation.

2. The CNC, as one of its functions, will undertake to identify a slate of church members to nominate to the congregation for the PNC (Bylaws, Section VIII(e)).

a. The CNC will consult with the Head of Staff and the Personnel Committee to determine the appropriate number of members for the PNC.

b. Once the CNC fixes the number for the PNC, it will search for and assemble a slate of members to propose to the congregation for its review and vote. Those nominated must have indicated to the CNC a willingness to serve if elected.

c. When the CNC is prepared to present the slate of members to be considered for election to the PNC, the Chair of the CNC will ask the Session to call a congregational meeting. Once the date is set for the congregational meeting, the biographies of the PNC nominees shall be published in the church bulletin on the Sunday before the meeting and on the Sunday of the meeting, for the information of the congregation.

d. At the congregational meeting the Moderator will invite the Chair of the CNC to present the slate of the PNC nominees for consideration by the congregation.

e. The congregation may also nominate members from the floor during the congregational meeting.

f. After nominations are closed:

i. If there are no nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon the slate of nominees from the CNC.

ii. If there are nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon each person nominated by the CNC and from the floor.

iii. When nominations are made from the floor in addition to the slate of nominees from the CNC, paper ballots shall be issued to all active members attending the meeting. Each member shall make a mark next to the names of the nominees for whom that member is voting (ex. if there are to be ten (10) members on the PNC, a member can vote for no more than ten (10) of the nominees. The ballots shall be collected and counted outside the sanctuary or other meeting place and the results

announced as soon as possible. The nominees who receive the most votes shall become the PNC (ex. if there are to be ten (10) members on the PNC, those ten (10) nominees who receive the most votes will become the PNC).

3. Within thirty (30) days after election, the PNC shall meet with the Pastor/Head of Staff or with the Presbytery's liaison to begin its work and shall nominate a Chair or Co-Chairs. The Pastor/Head of Staff or Presbytery liaison will instruct the PNC on its duties and can make recommendations on processes to follow to conduct its search. The PNC will also work with and consult with its advisor from the Presbytery throughout its work.

4. When the PNC has a candidate(s) to be nominated to the congregation, the Chair of the PNC shall notify the Moderator of the Session. The Session shall then meet and vote on a date for which to call a congregational meeting so that the PNC can nominate its candidate.

## **VIII. Dissolution of the Relationship of a Ruling Elder**

A. A Ruling Elder may resign from the Session with the Session's consent.

B. On ceasing to be an active member of the Church, an active Ruling Elder ceases to be a member of the Session.

C. When a Ruling Elder, because of change of residence or disability, is unable for a period of one (1) year to perform the duties of the ministry to which he/she was installed, the active relationship shall be dissolved by vote of the Session unless there is good reason not to do so, which shall be recorded in the minutes.

## **IX. The College of Elders**

A. Once ordained and while they are active members of the congregation Ruling Elders not in active service on the Session continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained.

B. Ruling Elders not in active service are welcome to participate in the College of Elders, which shall be called to meet at least twice a year by the Moderator of the Session.

C. The College of Elders shall be consulted about the mission, programs, and activities of the church and shall be invited to assist the Session and the church in all of the work of the church.

## **X. Congregational Meetings**

**A. Notice** - The Session shall give adequate public notice of all congregational meetings. Adequate public notice shall be notice at least two (2) weeks and two (2) Sunday mornings in advance of the meeting by notice in the church bulletin, announcement from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays, the church newsletter (if feasible and timely) on the church website, and by email to those members who have provided their email addresses to the church office (Bylaws Section III(d)). The meeting may be convened immediately following the notice given on the second Sunday.

**B. Special Called Meetings** - Special meetings of the congregation shall be called by the Session either on a vote of the Session or when requested in writing by one fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. All active members of the congregation present at special meetings are entitled to vote (Bylaws, Section II(a), Section III(c)).

**C. Moderator** - The installed Pastor/Head of Staff shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation or he/she shall invite another Teaching Elder who is a member of the Presbytery or a person authorized by the Presbytery to serve as moderator (Bylaws Section III(g)).

**D. Clerk/Minutes** - The Clerk of Session shall serve as secretary for all congregational meetings; provided, if the Clerk of Session is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting. The secretary shall record the actions of the congregation in minutes of the meeting. The minutes of congregational meetings shall be stored in the minute books in the church office (Bylaws, Section III(g)).

**E. Business** - Business to be transacted at congregational meetings shall be limited to the business included in the public notice of the meeting. Such business can include, but is not limited to:

1. Electing Ruling Elders and creating appropriate church committees, including the Congregational Nominating Committee.
2. Calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.
3. Changing existing pastoral relationships, including changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution of a relationship.
4. Buying, mortgaging, or selling real property.
5. Requesting the Presbytery to grant an exemption as permitted in the *Book of Order*. G-2.0404.

Whenever permitted by civil law, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

**F. Quorum** - In order to conduct business at a congregational meeting, there must be a quorum. A quorum for a congregational meeting shall be ten percent (10%) of the active members of the Church (Bylaws, Section III(e)).

**G. Voting** –

1. The voting members of the Church shall consist of all active members of the congregation as determined by the official rolls of the Church (Bylaws Section II(a)).
2. When an action is presented for the vote of the congregation, the action must receive a majority vote of the active members in attendance at the meeting. (Bylaws, Section III(e)).
3. Voting by proxy or absentee voting is not permitted except when either type of vote is required by law (Bylaws, Section II(c)).

**H. Robert's Rules of Order** – the parliamentary authority for meetings of the congregation shall be *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (Scott/Foresman edition), except as otherwise provided for in the bylaws or the *Book of Order* (Bylaws Section III(f)).

**I. Annual Meeting** – Each year the Session shall vote to call and conduct an annual meeting of the congregation to be held in the first quarter of each year, or at another time designated by the Session (Bylaws, Section III(a)).

1. The pastoral staff and the committees of the Session shall present written reports collected into the Annual Report for distribution to the congregation.
2. Members shall be permitted to address the meeting and to ask questions. All active members of the congregation present at annual meetings are entitled to vote.
3. The terms of call of each Teaching Elder employed by the church shall be addressed at the annual meeting and the Personnel Committee shall propose for congregational action such changes as the Session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the Presbytery's minimum requirements.

## **XI. Deacons**

A. The Book of Order, Section G-2.0202, provides that Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons (Bylaws, Section VI(a)).

B. The ministry of Deacons is under the supervision and authority of the Session. Deacons may also be given special assignments, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, and collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes.

C. Election of Deacons

- i. Deacons shall be elected by the congregation from among the members. The Ruling Elders of the incoming class of the Session shall be nominated by the Congregational Nominating Committee ("CNC") (see Section VII(C)), for consideration by the congregation during a congregational meeting.
- ii. Each year in the month of November (or as otherwise designated by the Session the CNC shall nominate a slate of at least four (4) proposed Deacons during a congregational meeting (Bylaws Sections III(b), V(a)). Those nominees shall be drawn from and reflect the demographics, interests, and organizations within the membership of the church. Each active member of the congregation is eligible for nomination as a Deacon whether nominated by the CNC or from the floor, provided prior consent has been obtained from the nominee.
- iii. After the CNC presents its slate of proposed Deacons, church members may make nominations from the floor. After nominations are closed:
  - a. If there are no nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon the slate of nominees from the CNC; or
  - b. If there are nominations from the floor, the congregation shall vote upon each person nominated and the four(4) nominees who receive the most votes shall constitute the new class of the Diaconate.
  - c. When nominations are made from the floor in addition to the slate of nominees from the CNC, paper ballots shall be issued to all active members attending the meeting and

they shall make marks next to the names of the four (4) candidates for whom each member is voting. The ballots shall be collected and counted by tellers appointed by the moderator of the congregational meeting. The tellers shall work outside the sanctuary or other meeting place and the results shall be announced as soon as possible.

iv. The Session shall provide newly-elected Deacons with a period of study and preparation, after which the Session shall examine them as to their personal faith and their preparedness to assume the office of Deacon. If the examination is approved, the Session shall vote on a date for the service of ordination and installation of the new Deacons. The date shall be recorded in the minutes and announced to the congregation in the bulletin and newsletter.

D. Deacons shall assume duties as may be delegated to them by the Session, including, but not limited to: (a) meeting regularly with a member of Pastoral Staff; (b) reaching out to Church members and friends who would benefit from additional pastoral care; (c) examining the rolls of the Church to determine who has not been in attendance recently and reaching out to those individuals or families; and (d) assisting with the Lord's Supper.

E. Deacons shall make regular reports to the Session in-person and/or by written report.

F. The Session shall ordinarily conduct an annual review of the service of a Deacon in order to decide whether to continue the commission, alter it or terminate it (Bylaws, Section VI(b)).

## **XII. New Members**

A. The Session and the pastoral staff shall endeavor at all times to be aware of and welcome guests of the church. The Session and the pastoral staff shall work to invite guests and anyone who is interested in membership to meet with the Head of Staff to discuss membership in the life of the church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

B. When anyone is prepared to become a member of Highland, the Moderator shall inform the Session and if the prospective member is able to attend a Session meeting, the Moderator shall invite her/him to the next regularly-scheduled Session meeting. If the prospective member cannot attend a regularly-scheduled Session meeting, the Moderator or Session shall call a special Session meeting for the purpose of voting on the prospective member.

C. At a special Session meeting to welcome and receive new members, a quorum shall be five (5) Session members, including the Moderator (or designee). In order for a new member to be approved at least three (3) of the five (5) Session members present and voting must vote in favor of the proposed member. If more than five (5) Session members are present for the meeting, a majority of Session members must vote in favor of the proposed member.

D. The Session shall review the membership roll of the church on a regular basis and seek to restore to active membership any members who have ceased regular participation in the life of the congregation.

## **XIII. Relations with Other Councils**

- A. At every Session meeting prior to a Presbytery meeting, the Session shall elect commissioners from among the Ruling Elders (active or inactive) members of the congregation. Those members elected shall attend the Presbytery meeting and provide a report in writing or in person at the next Session meeting following the Presbytery meeting.
- B. The Session may nominate to Presbytery Ruling Elders from the congregation who may be considered for election as commissioners to Synod and General Assembly, and to serve on committees or commissions of the same.
- C. The Session shall see that the guidance and communication of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly are considered and that any binding actions taken by any of them are observed and carried out.
- D. The Session may propose to the Presbytery, or through it to the Synod and/or General Assembly, such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the Church.
- E. The Session shall, through the church staff, send to Presbytery and General Assembly requested statistics and other information according to the requirements of those bodies.
- F. The Session shall send voluntary financial contributions to the Presbytery and the General Assembly.

#### **XIV. Amendments to the Administrative Procedures Manual**

The Administrative Procedures Manual may be amended at any time by a majority vote of the members of the Session at any regular Session meeting or at a special Session meeting called for that purpose, subject to modification by a majority vote of the congregation at any regular congregational meeting or at a special congregational meeting called for that purpose.

**Reserved**