

## HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Session Norms:

- The Session is not the board of directors of the church. Being an elder is a spiritual office of the church to which you were called and ordained. As we think through issues let us be mindful of the leading of the Spirit, which has been known to surprise and challenge us from time to time.
- We will be respectful and honor our fellow elders. Listen to one another and speak with respect when addressing issues. Once you have spoken to an issue, let others speak. Unless you wish to clarify your comments or ask questions, don't seek to be recognized to speak again until all who wish to speak have done so.
- We will follow the guidelines presented in *Seeking to be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement*, as a norm for our time together.
- Please wait to be recognized before speaking. The Moderator will be alert to those who wish to speak and keep track of the order they seek to be recognized. It is easy for those who function as extroverts to speak over those who function as introverts.
- The Session is not a committee of the whole. Allow committees to do the work of their area of responsibility. Let us not attempt to redo the work of a committee in the Session. We can ask questions of a report, but we will only discuss and debate the action items of the report.
- Please have written reports available before the Session meeting. Highlight the action items that need to be dealt with in the meeting. If your committee does not have its report in the hands of the Session prior to the meeting and it includes an action item that requires discussion, the Moderator reserves the right to refer the item to the next stated meeting of the Session to give all members the opportunity to prepare for the discussion.
- The Session will seek a consensus or a wide agreement on issues. If an issue appears to be dividing the Session in equal parts, the Moderator may suggest we refer the item to the next stated meeting to give us time to think, pray and talk with one another about the issues before returning for a vote.
- There are times when the work of the Session is to be confidential. Honor your fellow elders by keeping such issues and debate in confidence.
- If discussion of an issue becomes long and drawn out, the Moderator will act to end the debate and move on. If the Moderator has miscalculated the tenor of the debate, the Session can vote to overrule the ruling and continue to talk about issues.
- No meeting of the Session needs to be longer than two hours. There are times when the press of the agenda may lead to longer meetings but the Moderator will seek to move the meeting along.