

Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada
Orthodox Presbyterian Church
BYLAWS
Adopted March 1964 -- Amended through March 22, 2025

I. CHAPTER I -- GENERAL RULES

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern Presbytery in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, or the Bylaws.

II. CHAPTER II -- MEETINGS

A. -- STATED MEETINGS -- Stated meetings shall be scheduled to be held for two days twice each year. The meetings shall begin on the third Friday of March (unless that date coincides with Good Friday, in which case the meeting shall begin one week later), and the third Friday of September. During each stated meeting the Stated Clerk shall present his recommendations for the convening time and place of the next stated meeting. Any subsequent request to change the date, place, and/or time must be received by the Stated Clerk at least one month in advance of the stated meeting. In such case the Stated Clerk will seek the Moderator's agreement, and if the Moderator concurs, such change shall take place only if no session of the Presbytery registers an objection with the Stated Clerk within seven days of receiving a notice of the proposed change.

B. -- SPECIAL MEETINGS -- Special meetings are to be held in accordance with the Form of Government, Chapter XIV, Section 7. No motion to disburse funds may be adopted by presbytery at a special meeting, unless the amount and purpose of the disbursal is stated in the call for the meeting.

C. -- SEATING OF RULING ELDERS -- All those ruling elders of the congregations of this Presbytery who are present without having been appointed commissioners are hereby seated as corresponding members. In addition, the Presbytery may, on motion, seat others as corresponding members so long as they meet the requirements of the Form of Government, XIV, 9.

III. CHAPTER III -- DOCKET

The business of Presbytery stated meetings shall normally be conducted according to the following docket:

1. Call to order and constituting prayer.
2. Roll call of the delegates of the churches of Presbytery, their alternates, and the ministerial members of the Presbytery, and seating of corresponding members.
3. Reading (if not disseminated) and approval of minutes.
4. Installation (March) or Election (September) of officers
5. Reading (if not disseminated) and referral of communications to Presbytery
6. Report of the Stated Clerk
7. Presentation and adoption of the docket, including specific orders of business and times of recess and reconvening
8. At the call of the Moderator:
 - a. Reports and greetings of fraternal delegates.
 - b. Report of the Sierra Christian Conference Association
9. Reports of the standing committees:
 - a. Credentials
 - b. Finance and Report of the Treasurer
 - c. Home Missions
 - d. Christian Education
 - e. Foreign Missions
 - f. Diaconal
 - g. Visitation
 - h. Church Relations
10. Reports of special committees
11. Elections of standing committees (March) or selection of commissioners to the next General Assembly (September)
12. Miscellaneous business
13. Arrangements for next meeting
14. Adjournment and prayer

IV. CHAPTER IV -- OFFICERS

A. -- TITLES-- The officers of Presbytery shall be Moderator, Stated Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Treasurer.

B. -- ELECTIONS -- These officers shall be elected by ballot, at the September meeting of Presbytery, a majority vote being required for election

C. -- TERMS

1. The **Moderator** shall be elected to serve for one year.
2. The **Stated Clerk** and the **Assistant Clerk** shall be elected in alternate years to serve two-year terms. Officers shall take office immediately after the opening of the Spring meeting with a prayer of installation
3. The **Treasurer** shall be elected to serve for three years.

D. -- DUTIES

1. MODERATOR

- a. The Moderator is the presiding officer at the meetings of Presbytery. He shall also call special meetings in accordance with Bylaw II,B, and participate in licensing candidates in accordance with the Form of Government, XXI, 7 & 8. He shall appoint a nominating committee to make nominations to standing committees at the Spring meeting.
- b. In the absence of the Moderator, the last Moderator present shall preside. If there is none, an election shall be held.

2. STATED CLERK

- a. He shall refer to the appropriate standing committees all business that has been presented between meetings.
- b. He shall keep in order a roll of the ministers, licentiates, candidates for the ministry, churches, and clerks of session, together with the address of each.
- c. He shall inform ministers who have incurred continuous unexcused absence from Presbytery for a period of one year, that the Presbytery regards absences as a possible violation of the Form of Government XXIII, 8, paragraphs 3, 4, 6 and 7.
- d. He shall produce at the stated meetings of Presbytery the Constitution of the Church, the last published minutes of the General Assembly, and Robert's Rules of Order.
- e. He shall on approval of the minutes transcribe them into the records of Presbytery.
- f. He shall file and preserve all records and reports presented to Presbytery.
- g. In the absence or inability of the Treasurer to function, he shall be authorized to act in the place of the Treasurer and for this purpose his signature shall be listed at the bank.
- h. He shall prepare and transmit all reports required by General Assembly.
- i. He shall call attention to all acts of the General Assembly of which he has received official notice, which have not already been disseminated to the churches by General Assembly.
- j. He shall make all necessary communications from Presbytery.
- k. He shall maintain a permanent record of the Bylaws of Presbytery together with all amendments and changes.
- l. He shall furnish the Moderator with a docket prepared in accordance with the order of business fixed by the rules of Presbytery.
- m. He shall prepare a statistical report of Presbytery for the General Assembly.
- n. He shall communicate officially any acts of Presbytery to the parties whom they may concern.
- o. He shall certify, upon request, to the standing of all ministers on the roll of Presbytery.
- p. He shall deliver to his successor all the records of Presbytery.
- q. He shall prepare the docket for the stated meetings of Presbytery.
- r. He shall advise all ministers not serving Orthodox Presbyterian pastorates or mission appointments to report their work in the Gospel at least once each year, normally at the September meeting.

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IV. CHAPTER IV -- OFFICERS (CONTINUED)

D. -- DUTIES (Continued)

2. STATED CLERK

- s. He shall perform such duties as may rightfully devolve upon a Stated Clerk in addition to those enumerated above.
- t. He shall send to each minister and active elder, at least two weeks prior to the date of each stated meeting, a copy of the proposed docket, and copies of all available materials to be considered by the Presbytery which he deems relevant.
- u. The Stated Clerk shall receive for his services to Presbytery a sum to be determined by resolution of the Presbytery annually, and in addition he shall be reimbursed for reproduction and mailing expenses in connection with Presbytery matters.
- v. He shall give notice in writing to sessions to present their sessional minutes for approval according to the following schedule: Valley churches - March meeting; Coastal churches - September meeting.
- w. He shall send to the Committee on Christian Education of the denomination the minutes of each meeting of Presbytery and any study papers presented, plus any Presbytery newsletters.
- x. He shall inform the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as soon as reasonably possible of the reception, ordination, installation, retirement, dismissal, or death of any minister, as well as the organization or dissolution of any congregations or mission works.
- y. He shall distribute annually to ministers and clerks of session, a list of officers, and the chairmen and members of each standing committee.

3. ASSISTANT CLERK

- a. He shall take minutes of all meetings of Presbytery.
- b. He shall serve in the absence of the Stated Clerk.
- c. The Assistant Clerk shall receive for his services to Presbytery an amount to be budgeted each year.

4. TREASURER

- a. He shall receive all money due or collected by the Presbytery, and he shall make distribution thereof on its order.
 - b. He shall present his annual report at the March meeting of Presbytery, the fiscal year ending December 31.
 - 1) He shall keep records in the method standard for good bookkeeping and accounting.
 - 2) He shall reconcile the check register to the bank statement on a monthly basis.
 - 3) He shall prepare a written report on an annual basis. This report shall contain a Funds Balance Statement, a Cash Receipts Statement, and a Cash Disbursement Statement that presents the beginning and ending balances for all ledger accounts and a summary of activity for all Revolving Funds and Budgeted Funds accounts. This report is to be presented to the Finance Committee and must be provided to the Stated Clerk for dissemination to the churches at least two weeks prior to the Spring stated meeting of Presbytery.
 - c. He shall pay travel expenses to the stated meetings of Presbytery according to the following schedule:
 - 1) Commissioners traveling by public transportation shall be reimbursed for the full amount of the fare.
 - 2) Commissioners who drive their own cars or provide transportation for other commissioners shall receive whatever is allowable by the Internal Revenue Service (standard mileage rate) per mile.
 - 3) Commissioners shall be reimbursed for basic lodging if it is conducive to their particular needs or if no other lodging is available.
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IV. CHAPTER IV -- OFFICERS (CONTINUED)

D. -- DUTIES (Continued)

4. TREASURER

- d. He shall pay travel expenses of committees of Presbytery and delegates sent by this Presbytery in the amount that is allowable by the Internal Revenue Service (standard mileage rate) per mile. Presbyters sent by committees to meetings/conferences in support of the denomination's standing committees shall be reimbursed for coach airfare and ground transportation from the Presbytery's travel budget when not covered by the standing committees.
- e. When, for unavoidable reasons, the expenses of a commissioner exceed the expected amount, a committee consisting of the treasurer and the Finance Committee shall have the power to pay more than the usual allotment if it judges the reasons proper.

V. CHAPTER V -- COMMITTEES

A.-- NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS -- The Moderator shall appoint a committee of three to present nominations for each of the standing committees at the Spring stated meeting of Presbytery; nominations from the floor are also in order; Presbytery shall elect from those nominated; terms of committee members shall be three years, one class to be elected each year; vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the Moderator until the next stated meeting when a new election shall be held. Committees shall elect their own chairmen, but where necessary the Moderator may name a convener to act as chairman until the committee can select its own chairman.

B. -- STANDING COMMITTEES

1. CREDENTIALS

- a. This committee shall consist of six members.
- b. This committee shall supervise the taking under care of candidates for the Gospel ministry, to include:
 - 1) Maintaining a roll of students who are under care of Presbytery.
 - 2) Counseling such students as to their preparation for the Gospel ministry, paying particular attention to the institution which they desire to attend.
 - 3) Regularly communicate with all theological students, paying particular attention to the academic progress they are making, as well as their spiritual growth as determined by the Word of God.
 - 4) Gathering funds for the purpose of aiding needy students so that no unnecessary delays be experienced in their orderly preparation as ministerial students.
 - 5) Reporting to the Presbytery on allocations made to students in relation to the need in each instance.
 - 6) Enlisting of prayer support within the Presbytery for those felt called to the ministry so that young men, within the Presbytery, may be encouraged to pursue such a calling with a holy and prudent zeal.
- c. The committee shall assign parts of trial for licensure and ordination and conduct examinations for the same in accord with the Form of Government, Chapters XXI, XXII, and XXIII.
- d. This committee shall examine and report on the credentials and testimonials of ministers applying for admission to Presbytery and shall conduct an interview on the floor of Presbytery for every minister transferring from another Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in order to judge of his fitness in the circumstances.
- e. This committee shall confer with churches seeking admission to the Presbytery as particular congregations.
- f. This committee shall process all calls and resignations.
- g. To this committee all matters pertaining to civil and ecclesiastical law shall be referred.
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V. CHAPTER V -- COMMITTEES (CONTINUED)

B. -- STANDING COMMITTEES (Continued)

1. CREDENTIALS

- h. This committee shall require anyone being considered to serve as a stated supply who is not of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, to answer the following questions in the affirmative on the floor of the Presbytery:
 - 1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
 - 2) Do you believe the confession of faith and Catechisms of this Church contain the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
 - 3) Do you approve of the government, discipline and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?
 - 4) Do you promise that you will respect, and not subvert, the authority of the session you are to serve, and of this presbytery?

2. HOME MISSIONS

- a. This committee shall consist of six members.
- b. This committee shall be responsible for promoting and engaging in missionary and evangelistic work in the Presbytery.
- c. This committee is authorized to act on presbytery's behalf to take the necessary steps to enable a mission work to petition the presbytery to be organized as a new and separate congregation as outlined in the Form of Government Chapter XXIX. A.4.b.c.d.
- d. This committee shall examine reports from all missionaries laboring within the bounds of Presbytery.
- e. This committee shall cooperate with and seek the cooperation of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of the General Assembly.
- f. This committee shall establish and keep a roll or rolls of non-ministerial members of the regional church. This committee is authorized to both receive and remove members on behalf of presbytery.
- g. This committee is responsible to appoint Oversight Committees to oversee the mission works under its care.
- h. This committee shall confer with groups seeking admission to Presbytery as mission works.
- i. This committee shall oversee the presbytery's Regional Home Missionary by meeting with him quarterly and ordinarily receiving monthly reports on his ministry.

3. FOREIGN MISSIONS

- a. This committee shall consist of four members.
- b. This committee shall work to increase all aspects of missionary support in the local churches. This will include collecting information, arranging mission conferences, and encouraging prayer.
- c. This committee shall serve in a liaison capacity between missionary members of Presbytery and Presbytery, including a pastoral role should problems arise between a missionary and Presbytery.
- d. This committee shall seek to bring before men under care and licentiates the possibility of God's call for foreign mission service.

4. FINANCE

- a. This committee shall consist of four members.
- b. This committee shall handle all matters involving other than routine expenditures by Presbytery.
- c. This committee shall serve as an auditing board.
- d. This committee shall propose a budget to the fall meeting of Presbytery after consultation with the Treasurer and the chairmen of the standing committees of Presbytery. This proposed budget shall include only those items which have been forwarded to the Finance Committee by the other committee chairmen at least three weeks prior to the fall meeting of Presbytery.

V. CHAPTER V -- COMMITTEES (CONTINUED)

B. -- STANDING COMMITTEES (Continued)

5. CHURCH RELATIONS

- a. This committee shall consist of three members.
- b. This committee shall be informed as to sources of supply and/or qualified ministers who may be available for supply of pulpits and distribute the list to the churches.
- c. This committee shall receive annual reports from men not serving pastorates or mission appointments other than those men retired or emeritus. Retired or emeritus ministers are understood to be free to continue their service to the Presbytery, be appointed to committees, be commissioners to the General Assembly, and all other opportunities and care afforded members of the Presbytery. However, retired or emeritus ministers are not required to attend Presbytery meetings, submit requests to be excused, or file annual reports.
- e. This committee shall receive all requests to be excused from sessions of Presbytery, and, after consideration of the reasons given for the requests, shall make recommendations to Presbytery to grant or to refuse each request.
- f. This committee shall be responsible to invite fraternal delegates from and send fraternal delegates to Northern California presbytery/classis meetings of NAPARC denominations.

6. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- a. This committee shall consist of five members.
- b. This committee shall promote the work of Christian education within the bounds of the Presbytery and cooperate with the Committee on Christian Education of the General Assembly.
- c. This committee shall sponsor and oversee camps, conferences and various training institutes for men, women and families that promote and encourage spiritual growth and discipleship.
- d. This committee shall promote youth ministry in the Presbytery by sponsoring youth activities such as youth camps and rallies.
- e. This committee shall select a host church for the Presbytery picnic.
- f. This committee shall maintain and oversee the implementation of a Presbytery-approved Child Protection Policy, to govern all of the Presbytery's ministries to children.
- g. This committee shall have oversight of the management and maintenance of the Presbytery's website and social media accounts.

7. VISITATION

- a. The committee shall operate as a servant of the regional church for the purpose of working with the sessions of the Presbytery to mutually encourage, edify, and where appropriate assist each other in furthering Christ's purposes for His Church.
- b. The committee shall be composed of six members.
- c. Each church ordinarily shall be visited once in every three years. A church visit may be requested by either the church session or the Visitation Committee and shall serve as pastoral consultation. The time, place, and logistics of the meeting shall be worked out between the committee and the session.
- d. The visit shall fulfill the committee's purpose by:
 - 1) assisting the session in addressing its faithfulness in upholding the biblical marks of a true church in its congregational activities.
 - 2) praying specifically for the session and congregation.
 - 3) addressing sessional relationships, goals, ministries, and overall congregational life.
 - 4) offering its pastoral counsel regarding any congregational matters of concern to the committee.
 - 5) whenever possible, participating in, Bible studies, worship services, and/or other congregational activities.

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V. CHAPTER V -- COMMITTEES (CONTINUED)

B. -- STANDING COMMITTEES (Continued)

7. VISITATION

- e. The committee shall present a written report to the Presbytery of all visitations. Each session shall be presented with a copy of the committee's report ordinarily no later than two weeks prior to the subsequent meeting of Presbytery, providing the session adequate time for review, comment, and discussion with the committee. The committee shall carefully note all sessional exceptions and concerns.
- f. If the committee encounters a conflict during its visit it shall avoid entering into judicial interaction, but limit itself to pastoral counsel, exhorting those involved to be faithful to Matt 18:15-18. The committee shall be jealous to guard the prerogative of the session as the court of original jurisdiction of the congregation.
- g. The Visitation Committee shall make an annual examination of sessional records of the churches assigned to them for visitation according to the following schedule:
 - Northern California Valley and Nevada churches –March meeting;
 - Northern California Coastal churches –September meeting
- h. The committee shall provide for the pastoral care of ministerial members of presbytery, particularly retired and emeritus ministers, in accordance with the Form of Government, Chapter VI, Section 4.

8. DIACONAL

- a. This committee shall consist of three elders and three deacons.
- b. This committee shall promote and encourage diaconal work in the Presbytery.
- c. This committee shall oversee the disbursement of the Presbytery's diaconal funds.
- d. This committee shall promote and encourage the work of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries of the General Assembly.

C. -- SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- 1. **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**, other than a judicial committee, shall be established as needed, the chairman and members being nominated by the Moderator and elected by the Presbytery (with further nominations from the floor if desired) or simply appointed by the Moderator, as the Presbytery may direct.

2. JUDICIAL

- a. This temporary committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Moderator. One shall be appointed as Convener
- b. The appointment of this committee shall take place as soon as practical after an appeal, complaint or charge is formally received by the Stated Clerk.
- c. The Stated Clerk shall provide all relevant documents to the committee members within one week of their appointment.
- d. For charges this committee shall conduct a preliminary investigation in accordance with Book of Discipline III. 7 and report back to Presbytery, at a called special or stated meeting, with its findings and recommendations.
- e. For complaints and appeals this committee shall consider the facts in accordance with Book of Discipline VII and IX and report back to Presbytery, at a called special or stated meeting, with its findings and recommendations for procedures to be followed.

- D.-- REPORTS** - All committees and agencies created by Presbytery must report in writing to the stated meetings of Presbytery. These reports shall be submitted to the stated clerk at least three weeks prior to the stated meetings.

VI. CHAPTER VI -- ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- A. MINISTERS** shall be elected to serve as commissioners to the General Assembly on a basis of seniority and alphabetical order as follows:
1. A list shall be maintained of the roll of the presbytery with an indication of the last General Assembly (by year) in which each person served as a commissioner; newly ordained men and those entering presbytery will each have the year of his ministerial enrollment as his initial listing.
 2. All ministers in each year grouping shall be listed together in alphabetical order.
 3. Selection shall begin with the group with the greatest seniority (i.e., the group which has not served for the longest period of time), proceeding alphabetically within the group, and moving to the next senior group as the names in each group are exhausted. The names shall be read and those indicating that they are able to serve shall be chosen.
 4. Alternates shall be selected in the same way to serve in case of the later inability of any of the regular commissioners to serve.
- B. RULING ELDERS** shall be elected to serve by their sessional membership on a basis of seniority and alphabetical order as follows:
1. A list shall be maintained of the sessions of the Presbytery by city and church name, with an indication of the last General Assembly (by year) in which that session had a representative enrolled as a commissioner. Newly organized and received congregations shall have the year of organization or reception as their initial listings.
 2. All sessions in each year grouping shall be listed together in alphabetical order by city and church name.
 3. Selection shall begin with the group with the greatest seniority and proceed (as in A.3, above); sessions indicating the desire to send one of their members shall be chosen until the number of sessions chosen equals the allotted number of ruling elder commissioners plus two additional. In the event that several of its elders are available, a session may be chosen even if it has not decided whom it will choose, provided that, six weeks before the required deadline set by the previous assembly, it notifies the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery as to which of its ruling elders it has chosen; similarly, if a ruling elder later is unable to attend, his session may name a replacement from its midst within one week of notifying the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of his inability. If a session has indicated its desire to provide a commissioner and declines to name a commissioner or cannot provide an alternate from among their number, they shall be moved to the bottom of the selection list as provided in B.1 and 2 above in alphabetical order for the year grouping as though they had attended the current General Assembly. Sessions which have declined to provide a commissioner shall retain their position on the list for 3 years counting the year they first declined, and then shall be moved to the bottom of the list in alphabetical order as though they had attended the current General Assembly for the purposes of year grouping. The Clerk need not seek alternates from those sessions that have declined in a particular year until the procedures in B.4 and B.5 have been completed.
 4. Alternates shall be selected from two additional sessions previously selected in 3.B above. Such sessions in succession shall have two weeks from the notification by the Clerk calling for an alternate commissioner to provide a commissioner, then the next senior alternate session will be notified. Sessions which were named as alternates in B.3 above shall remain in their place on the seniority list even if they provide a commissioner.
 5. a. The Clerk shall maintain a list, apart from the list of sessions, of individual ruling elders who desire to serve if the process described in B.3 and B.4 above fails to secure the requisite number of ruling elder commissioners as allotted by the previous General Assembly. This list shall also be maintained by seniority as described above for the sessions, with initial position at the inception of the list determined by sessional order, so elders new to the presbytery desiring to be on that list shall start with the year group of their addition to their respective sessions, not of their session. Elders on that list shall be notified by the Clerk as a group as soon as the first alternate session in B.4 above is requested to provide a commissioner.

Bylaws -- Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada -- Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Amended through March 22, 2025

V. CHAPTER VI -- ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY (CONTINUED)

B. RULING ELDERS (Continued)

5. b. Should the alternate sessions fail to produce a commissioner, the elders on this list will then be polled in order of seniority on the list. Should a man on this list be called on to serve, he will have one week to determine his ability to do so; if he declines, he will be moved to the bottom of the individual list as described above. If he is asked and declines two years consecutively, he shall be removed from that list for one year. If a man on this list acts as commissioner for his session, according to the B.3 procedure, he shall move to the bottom of the individual list. If he acts as an alternate through this B.5. b. procedure, the position of his session on the sessional seniority list shall not be affected, but he will move to the bottom of the individual list. Multiple elders from the same session shall be allowed to serve as commissioners if alternates are selected through this section.

VII. CHAPTER VII -- OVERTURES -- Overtures prepared for presentation to a higher judicatory shall ordinarily be proposed only to a stated meeting of Presbytery and shall not be finally acted upon until the next stated meeting. The usual majority of the votes cast shall be sufficient for adoption. Should this normal method of presenting an overture not be followed, the proposed overture may be sent to the members of Presbytery three weeks prior to the next stated meeting and voted upon at the regular meeting, provided that two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Presbytery present approve taking action at that time.

VIII. CHAPTER VIII -- AMENDMENTS

- A. Section A - The Bylaws may be amended or revised at any stated meeting of Presbytery by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present. Any such changes must be proposed in writing at the stated meeting prior to the one at which the change shall be considered.
- B. Section B - Any bylaw may be suspended at any stated meeting by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present.

These Bylaws were in effect June 1, 1968, when the Presbytery of the West Coast was divided into the Presbytery of Northern California and the Presbytery of the Northwest, the Presbytery of Northern California being the continuing presbytery. The name changed to the Presbytery of Northern California and was certified by the Secretary of State of California, April 17, 1970. (See MINUTES, Vol. I, p. 226.) As of January 1, 2008 the name of the Presbytery was changed to the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada.

This edition of the Bylaws is current as of March 22, 2025.

Joseph A. Horvath, Stated Clerk