

**INTRODUCTION TO CONGREGATIONAL OPERATIONS MANUAL
PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARPC
400 EASTWOOD AVENUE
FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28301**

A congregation is defined as a company of Christians, together with their children, associated together according to Scripture, for worship and ministry in the name of Christ, subscribing to a form of church government, and choosing and ordaining some to perform selected ministries (ARPC Form of Government (FOG) section 3.1). This manual helps our congregation operate in a biblically faithful manner. It covers basic issues related to membership, meetings, responsibilities of members and congregational officers, and use of congregational property. It also covers matters of pastoral care, such as deaconate assistance, counselling, conflict resolution, and confidentiality. This manual is designed to accomplish the following goals:

- Prevent surprises and disappointment to potential members by explaining how the congregation intends to govern and accomplish itself.
- Reduce the likelihood of confusion and conflict within the congregation by establishing clear operational guidelines.
- Prevent the misuse of authority by congregational leaders by limiting their powers and by establishing procedures for discipline and due process.
- Give our minister protection from subpoena regarding information received through ministerial counseling, as well as guidelines for reporting actual or suspected harm to others by clearly spelling out the principles of confidentiality followed by the congregation.

Proverbs 22:3 warns, "A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it." Realizing that the absence of common norms and values can pose a threat to the unity and well-being of our congregation, we developed this manual as a means of establishing commonly accepted standards for treating one another and governing ourselves as a body. We have gone into detail because we believe it is no longer possible to assume that everyone holds to the same standard of common sense, fairness, and justice, even within the same congregation. Therefore, what seems appropriate to one member of the congregation (for example, restricting marriage ceremonies in the church to members of the church, or requiring only the men of the church to serve as officers) may seem unreasonable to another member.

The human need for guidance is fulfilled by principles reflected in Scripture. Instead of giving us only the two Great Commandments (love God and love your neighbor), God elaborated with ten more. Jesus knew that until the world is renewed, we will need the guidance of the moral principles set forth throughout Scripture (see Matthew 5:17-7:6). It is from these that we shape specific policies and rules sufficient for our time.

One of the places that we need this kind of detailed guidance is in the life of the church. Scripture does not tell us exactly how to give notice or establish quorums for congregational meetings, what information should remain confidential and what may be shared with others, how long deacons should serve without re-election, or how to dispose of property if the congregation dissolves. This operations manual is designed to answer these types of questions, and will hopefully spare us from unnecessary confusion and conflict, help us to act in consistent and respectful ways, and allow us to devote ourselves to the more important matters of God's kingdom.

Bible passages are cited next to particular provisions, and readers are encouraged to look up the references. If questions remain, readers should not hesitate to approach our minister or one of our elders, who will be happy to talk with you about this manual. The Form of Government (FOG) of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church serves as an operations manual for our denomination and it is often cited in the following pages as *FOG*, followed by section number. A copy of the FOG is available for your review in the congregation library or online at: <https://ARPCstandards.com/>

Note: The use of the pronoun he or she is meant to refer to the antecedent's sex. When the sex of the antecedent is immaterial, this manual will use "he or she" or, if in the plural, they.

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1. Congregational and Presbytery Names

1.1. Our church is Providence Presbyterian Church, ARPC. Our denomination is the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC). References to "the congregation," "we," and "our" henceforth refer to Providence Presbyterian Church, ARPC. References to "the denomination" henceforth refer to the ARPCC.

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2. Constitution of the Congregation

2.1. This operations manual is subordinate to the Standards of the ARPCC, whereas the ARPCC is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word of God. The Standards consist of the: Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the ARPCC Form of Government (FOG), ARPCC Book of Discipline, and the Directory of Public Worship (FOG 2.13). Should anything within this manual be found to contradict a provision of the Standards, the Standards shall control.

3. Mission, Purpose, and Limitations of the Church and its Congregation

3.1 The mission of Providence Presbyterian Church is to glorify God by building His kingdom through Lord's Day worship, evangelism, teaching, Biblical discipline, and charity.

3.2 The purpose of the congregation is to glorify God by conducting public corporate worship, bring the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, building them up in the Christian faith, and preparing them for Christian service.

3.3 Limitations of the congregation are two-fold:

3.3.1 We will operate in a manner consistent with public law (Romans 13:1), so long as public law is consistent with Scripture (Acts 5:29).

3.3.2 We will conduct all our business and our worship in accordance with the Regulative Principle of Worship (WCF 21.1).

4. Location of Office, Church Hours, and Means of Contact of Congregation Officers

4.1 The congregational office is located with the church at 400 Eastwood Ave Fayetteville, NC 28301.

4.2 Church office hours are by appointment.

4.3 To contact the minister: (Refer to the back of the worship folder for emails and phone numbers.)

4.4 To contact an elder: (Refer to the back of the worship folder for emails and phone numbers.)

4.5 To contact a deacon: (Refer to the back of the worship folder for emails and phone numbers.)

4.6 Congregation member's access to the congregation email and website: (Under construction.)

5. Membership

5.1 The membership shall consist of all communicant, non-communicant, and associate members, all of whom have the privilege of ministerial oversight, instruction, and government by the church.

5.1.1 Communicant members are those who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and have submitted to the Christ's Lordship and the authority of

the church (FOG 4.1) Communicant member are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the congregation, including:

- voting in congregational meetings,
- holding office if qualified as defined by the Standards of the ARPC,
- participating in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,
- presenting their children for the Sacrament of Baptism.

5.1.2. Non-communicant members are baptized minors or dependent children of a communicant member of the church.

5.1.3. Associate members are those who holds church membership elsewhere, and expect to reside in our area for only a short while, choosing not to transfer their membership.

5.2. A person may be received into communicant membership in three ways: 1) by a letter of transfer or other certificate of good standing from another congregation of like faith and practice, 2) by reaffirmation of faith, or 3) by profession of faith.

5.2.1. If the new member is transferring membership from another ARPC congregation or like-minded congregation, such as any NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) congregation, the applicant shall be received following receipt of certificate of good standing from the losing congregation, and satisfactory interview by the session.

5.2.2. If the new member is not transferring from a congregation of the ARPC or other NAPARC denomination, he or she is expected to complete the new member's course, to become acquainted with the doctrines and practice of Providence Church and the ARPC.

5.2.3. All applicants (whether transferring from a congregation of like faith or not) must meet with the session to give a testimony of their Christian experience. (FOG 4.5) Upon satisfactory examination by the session, the applicant shall be received into communicant membership. Ordinarily, new members, both communicant and associate will also be invited to make a public profession of their faith in the presence of the congregation.

5.3. A new member who is making a profession of faith for the first time will be asked to assent to the following questions (FOG 4.5 A):

- 5.3.1. Do you confess that you are a sinner in the sight of God; that you deserve His punishment; that you are unable to save yourself; and that you are without hope of salvation except for God's love and mercy?
- 5.3.2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners; and do you receive and trust in Him alone for your salvation?
- 5.3.3. Do you accept the Bible, comprised of the Old and New Testaments, as the written Word of God; and that it is the only perfect rule of faith and how to live?
- 5.3.4. Do you promise to trust in the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit so that you can live all of life as a Christian, following the example set by Jesus Christ?
- 5.3.5. Do you promise to exercise faithful stewardship of God's resources entrusted to you for the furtherance of God's Kingdom and purposes?
- 5.3.6. Do you accept that the doctrines and principles of the Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church are founded upon Scriptures?
- 5.3.7. In loving obedience, do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, promising to seek the peace, purity, and prosperity of this congregation as long as you are a member of it?
- 5.4. An applicant received into membership by profession of faith, and who has not been baptized previously, will receive the Sacrament of Baptism upon becoming a communicant member.
- 5.5. An associate member is one who is temporarily in Fayetteville, and continues to maintain membership at another congregation out of town. An associate member shall have all rights and privileges of this congregation, except for voting or holding office. Given the transient nature of our military community, we often have members worshipping with us for a short while and this is an acceptable status should the member's stay in Fayetteville be brief. Associate members are encouraged to transfer membership to Providence if their stay in Fayetteville is expected to be greater than a year. (FOG 4.3 and 4.8)
- 5.6. A member of Providence who is relocating away from Fayetteville may request to transfer membership to a new congregation by informing the session of his or her intention. The session will provide a certificate of good standing upon request of the receiving church, and will send the certificate to the church, not the member.

- 5.7. A member who requests to transfer because of specific problems or disappointments with the congregation should first discuss the matter with the session. The session shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the congregation and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the session is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a congregation of like faith and practice. If it appears to the session that a member has requested transfer merely to avoid congregation discipline, that request shall not be acted upon until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.
- 5.8. A communicant member may be removed from membership by order of the session, as an act of ministerial discipline (Book of Discipline VIII.C), in any of the following situations:
 - 5.8.1. When he or she is absent from the services of the congregation for a period of one year without adequate reason;
 - 5.8.2. When he or she affiliates with another congregation body which fails to maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity;
 - 5.8.3. When he or she makes known to the session through words or action that they have no intention of fulfilling their congregation vows;
 - 5.8.4. When he or she is removed by expulsion for persistent impenitence (Book of Discipline VII.6).
- 5.9. A non-communicant member is removed from membership if their parents cease membership in the congregation for any of the reasons above. Additionally, a non-communicant member may be removed if he or she rejects the covenantal responsibility of submission to home and congregation, and neglect the ongoing exhortation of the session to profess faith in Christ. In all such cases, the session shall continue to communicate with the member and seek to restore him or her in a spirit of gentleness, as Galatians 6:1 tells us.

6. Relational Commitments and Confidentiality

- 6.1. What the church expects of its members:
 - 6.1.1. A public confession of faith, in accordance with the FOG.
 - 6.1.2. Cheerful giving of time and money. The congregation of Providence Presbyterian pays its bills solely on tithes and offerings of its members and friends, and does its

work through the volunteered time of its members and friends. There is no outside source of income. All tithes and offerings received by the congregation are applied to the budget which is approved annually by the congregation and is available for review at any time upon request.

- 6.1.3. Regular attendance at worship. While an absence in excess of a year will result in removal of membership, it is difficult to imagine the circumstances in which a believer would absent himself or herself for that length of time without explanation. Membership should be sought by those who seek to grow in their relationship with Christ and to regularly participate in His worship, so it is assumed that attendance at worship with believers will be a sign of that relationship. Members should also attend regular bible study and fellowship to grow in their faith.
 - 6.1.4. Submission to the oversight of the session in matters of the congregation government. Such oversight is exercised not as a result of the superiority of the session, but as a result of their calling.
 - 6.1.5. An openness to ministerial counselling, encouragement, and discipline. Members should expect diligent inquiry by the minister and the session as to the state of their faith and life, to include annual pastor visits.
 - 6.1.6. An attitude of prayer towards all things.
- 6.2 What the member should expect of the congregation, its Minister and officers:
- 6.2.1 Ministerial care and counselling - Each member of the church can expect the minister to pray for and with them. to visit them when they are sick or afflicted, to conduct public worship on the Lord's Day, to read the Scriptures, preach the Word, administer the sacraments, pronounce the blessings of God upon His people, as well as teaching, advising, counseling, reproving, exhorting and comforting members privately or publicly under the continuing oversight of the session. He will also be available to officiate at funerals and weddings that are in conformity with the standards of the church. Schedule permitting, the pastor will also conduct marriage and family counseling for members without cost, and if unable to do so will endeavor to help them find other biblical counselors. All counseling of female members of the congregation will be done with another adult member of session, diaconate or the congregation present.
 - 6.2.2 Pastoral Visitation – Members of the church can expect to receive one or two pastoral visits per year in keeping with the Apostolic practice (Acts 20:18-21). Pastoral visitations consist of a home visit from the Pastor and an elder and usually

take a little over an hour. Pastoral Visitations allow the elders to know members and their families better so that we might better know and minister to the congregation. Notice will be given roughly a month in advance of the start of visitations and sign-up sheets will be made available for members to select the date of their visitation. Members are expected to sign-up for a visit and regular attenders are encouraged to do so.

- 6.2.3 Prayer and fellowship - Each member of the church should make their prayer requests known to the officers and fellow members of the church and expect that they will cheerfully follow the biblical command to “pray for one another” (James 5:16). They should also seriously take their own duty to pray for their fellow church members as well as the officers of the church. Fellowship is a vital part of membership in the church and members should expect to be involved in bible studies, prayer groups, and other means of fellowship with the members of the church whenever possible. While sincere attempts will be made to involve members of the church in as much fellowship as possible, the degree to which they experience that fellowship will depend upon their own willingness to get involved. Members who are only willing to attend Sunday worship services will find that fellowship is extremely limited.
- 6.2.4 Confidentiality – Members can expect that all of the sensitive or personal information that they share with the pastors, elders, or deacons of the church in counseling or family visitation will remain confidential, the sole exception to this clause being the mandated duty of clergy in North Carolina to report instances of child abuse or neglect to the county department of social services per G.S. 7B-101.
- 6.2.5 Availability – Contact information for the Pastors, Elders, and Deacons of the church is available on the back of the worship folder and members should contact the pastor or elders via phone, text, email or social media whenever they have a spiritual need or the deacons when they are experiencing financial problems or need physical help. Whenever possible the officers of the church will make themselves available to the members of the congregation except when providentially hindered or when they are on vacation, taking time off or are on a sabbatical. At such times when officers are unavailable care will be taken to make sure the congregation is aware of their absence and informed who they should contact in event of an emergency.
- 6.2.6 Financial transparency and integrity - No member or officer of the congregation has any vested right, interest, or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or

activities of the congregation. All records of budget and expenditure of the congregation are open to review at any time (See chapter 14).

7. The Minister, Elder and Deacon (Officers of the Congregation)

- 7.1. A minister is a man who is called by God in the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, to a special ministry of the word (FOG 9.1). His responsibilities are both public and private:
 - 7.1.1. Public responsibilities include prayer for his people, reading the Scripture, preaching the word, teaching, reproving, exhorting and comforting; administering the sacraments, pronouncing the blessings of God upon the people, officiating at weddings and funerals, and serving with the elders in all matters of government, discipline, worship, and education of the congregation. He shall serve as an advisory member of all committees of the congregation, and he shall also serve, with elders, in higher courts of the Church.
 - 7.1.2. Private responsibilities include visitation, counsel, and instruction of the people of the church, praying with and for those in need, admonishing those who are guilty of conduct unbecoming their Christian profession or who are indifferent to their religious duties, and in general assume the spiritual oversight of his people.
- 7.2. Elders and deacons must be male voting members (FOG 5.4 and 6.2). To be eligible for election by the communicant membership of the congregation, a man shall satisfy the qualifications set forth in Scripture (see 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9;). He shall also have been a member in good standing in the congregation for at least one year, shall have received appropriate training under the direction or with the approval of the session, and shall have served the congregation in functions requiring responsible leadership.
- 7.3. Elders, both individually as well as jointly with the minister, are to lead the congregation in the service of Christ. They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the minister and help him in his labors (FOG 6).
- 7.4. Deacons shall demonstrate the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the congregation. As delegated and directed by the session, they shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends, manage the congregation finances, and see to the care and maintenance of congregation property (FOG 5).

7.5. Providence Church does not have a nominating committee for church office. Any communicant member may nominate a candidate for the offices of elder or deacon. The session shall examine nominees and certify those who possess the necessary qualifications for office. An elder or deacon who had been previously certified but who resigned from or was divested of the office must be re-certified.

7.6. Once approved by the session, candidates for office are subject to election by the communicant members of the congregation. Notice of a meeting to elect elders or deacons shall be given verbally, in the congregation bulletin, or by written letter at least one month in advance such meeting. At least one Lord's Day preceding the date appointed for the election, the session shall announce to the congregation the names of those it has certified. Election shall be from those certified. Voting on the election of elders and deacons shall be done by secret ballot, and each vote shall be cast either in favor of or against the election of each candidate, and those candidates receiving the vote of a majority in favor of their election shall be deemed elected.

7.7. An elder or deacon may be divested of his office by deposition for an offense in doctrine or life (see Book of Discipline). He may also be divested without censure by action of the session, if a majority of the congregation so requests or if he cannot or does not for a period of one year perform the duties of his office. An elder or deacon also may resign from his office, or he may be relieved of certain responsibilities when he becomes infirm or by reason of age desires to be released from his duties.

7.8. Elders and deacons are elected for life. Providence Church does not exercise a rotation of officers (FOG 8.4).

8. **The Minister.**

8.1. The office of minister includes the office and authority of elder. For this reason, the minister is also referred to as a presbyter.

8.2. The minister is not a member of the congregation, but a member of Grace Presbytery (the next higher court of the church). He will have been ordained by the presbytery having jurisdiction of the congregation, which in the case of Providence is Grace Presbytery (FOG 6).

8.3. If the congregation shall choose to elect an associate minister, his relationship to the congregation shall be as determined by the congregation (FOG 9.47 – 48).

- 8.4. The minister and any associate minister shall be called by the congregation as is required by the provisions of FOG 9.46-9.54.
- 8.5. The pastoral relationship between the congregation and the minister may be dissolved only by action of the Presbytery and in accordance with FOG 9.55-9.61.
- 8.6. The call of the minister to serve at Providence Presbyterian must specify all elements of the minister's remuneration and benefits. It shall be in accordance with denominational standards (FOG 9.54). The initial call must be approved by Grace Presbytery. Thereafter it must be reviewed annually by the session and subjected to approval by the congregation in its annual meeting.

9. The Session

- 9.1. The session is the governing body of the congregation and consists of its minister, associate minister (if one), and elders. The session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation and shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship and the promoting of spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of the congregation. It supervises the activities of the board of deacons and all other organizations of the congregation, and has final authority over the use of the congregation property.
- 9.2. The minister shall be the moderator of the session. The session may also choose a vice-moderator from among its members. The moderator shall be subject to the control of the session, and shall in general supervise and control, in good faith, all business and affairs of the congregation. The moderator shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the members and of the session, and shall conduct such meetings to facilitate free and respectful debate and decision-making.
- 9.3. The session shall have final authority for affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by civil law for nonprofit corporations. Neither the session, the nonprofit board of trustees, nor any other officers or delegates shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, pledge or in any manner encumber any congregation property worth more than \$5000, nor to incur any indebtedness exceeding the sum of \$5000, unless first authorized to do so at a congregational meeting, either through the adoption of the annual budget or by special action of the congregation. The session may delegate to the board of deacons, the board of trustees, or to other communicant members such of these responsibilities as it deems appropriate. In the event of a genuine emergency, as determined by the board of deacons, the deacons may spend what is required to fix the

immediate problem. Such action must be reviewed and approved retroactively by the session at the next called meeting.

- 9.4. The session shall meet at least nine times per year, and shall convene at the call of the moderator, the Presbytery, any two members of the session, or upon its own adjournment. Adequate notice of called meetings shall be given.
- 9.5. When the congregation has a minister, a quorum is the moderator and two elders if there are three or more elders. If there are fewer than three elders, the quorum is the moderator and one elder. When the congregation has no minister, a quorum is three ruling elders if there are five or more in the session or two ruling elders if there are less than five ruling elders in the session. In no case may the session conduct its business with fewer than two present of those who are entitled to vote (FOG 6.17).
- 9.6. The act of a majority present at a session meeting at which a quorum is present (when the vote is taken) shall be the act of the session.
- 9.7. The session may meet by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment, provided all persons entitled to participate in the meeting received proper notice of the telephone meeting, and provided all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. A member participating in a conference telephone meeting is deemed present in person at the meeting. The moderator of the meeting may establish reasonable rules as to conducting business at any meeting by phone.
- 9.8. The session may appoint a vice-moderator (vice-chairman), who may perform, in good faith, the moderator's duties if the moderator is absent or is unable or refuses to act, and if any emergency should arise requiring immediate action. In addition, associate ministers may substitute for the minister as moderator of the session at the discretion of the minister and session. A vice-moderator or substitute moderator shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the moderator. When the congregation is without a minister, the moderator of the session may be either a minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, with consent of the session, or one invited by the session to preside on a particular occasion, or one of its own members elected to preside. In judicial cases, the moderator shall be a minister of the Presbytery to which the congregation belongs.
- 9.9. The clerk of the session shall be the secretary of the congregation and shall in good faith:

- 9.9.1. Create and maintain the book of minutes of the congregation and hold it ready for annual inspection by the Presbytery,
- 9.9.2. Provide that all notices are served in accordance with this operating manual or as required by law;
- 9.9.3. Be custodian of the congregation records and corporate records;
- 9.9.4. Subscribe the minutes of all meetings of the session;
- 9.9.5. When requested or required, authenticate any records of the congregation;
- 9.9.6. Keep a current register of the post office address of each member; and
- 9.9.7. Perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and any other duties that the moderator or the session may assign to the secretary. The session shall elect its clerk (secretary) annually from among its members.
- 9.10. The session may establish such committees as it deems necessary for the work of the congregation (See section 12 for more detail).
- 9.11. The records of the session meetings will be approved by the session at the next stated meeting. Approved minutes are available for review by members upon request to the Moderator, except for minutes labeled confidential (see Chapter 15, Church Records).
- 9.12. The session may, for the sole purpose of protecting member confidentiality, declare a meeting, or a portion of a meeting, to be confidential, and deny access to the meeting to anyone not called by the session.

10. Board of Deacons and Congregational Treasurer

- 10.1. The board of deacons shall oversee the ministry of the deacons and the work of the treasurer. Deacons shall demonstrate the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the congregation. The Diaconal ministry consists of several ministries of service:
 - 10.1.1. Minister to the temporal needs of the members and friends of the congregation.
 - 10.1.2. Manage the congregation's finances to include the collection, accountability, and security of tithes and offerings.

- 10.1.3. Care, secure, and insure the congregation's grounds, buildings, and property.
While the care and security of congregation property is the work of the entire congregation, both members and non-members, the Deacons are responsible for organizing and overseeing such efforts as they see necessary to accomplish proper care and security.
- 10.2. The board of deacons shall elect a chairman and a secretary from their number. The board shall meet separately at least nine times per year or whenever requested by the session. Minutes of the board of deacon meetings shall be maintained by the clerk of session. The board of deacons shall determine the number necessary for a quorum. One elder and the treasurer shall be advisory members of the board of deacons.
- 10.3. The board of deacons shall supervise the congregation treasurer, who shall be selected by the board of deacons and approved by the session. The congregation treasurer shall:
 - 10.3.1. Be any member of the congregation who has the desire and aptitude to serve the congregation in this capacity,
 - 10.3.2. Have been a member in good standing for at least one year, and
 - 10.3.3. Not be in financial need, with a reputation for integrity, prudence, and diligence.
 - 10.3.4. Serve on the board of deacons as an advisor
- 10.4. The duties of the treasurer shall be to:
 - 10.4.1. Have charge and custody of and be responsible for recording and reporting of all funds and securities of the congregation,
 - 10.4.2. Receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the congregation from any source, and deposit all moneys in the congregation's name in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the session shall select,
 - 10.4.3. Annually submit the books and records to an objective and financially literate party for an annual financial review, the results of which are to be reported to the clerk of session (FOG 5.11).
 - 10.4.4. Assist the Board of Trustees (see paragraph 11) in financial reporting and record keeping as required,

- 10.4.5. Perform all of the duties incident to the office of treasurer and any other duties that the session or deacons may assign.
- 10.5. A separate deacons' fund shall be maintained by the deacons, subject to oversight by the session, for the good of the members of the congregation and others for whom the deacons have responsibility. Funds for this are collected separately from congregation offerings by means of a deacon's fund collection box, and separate designation button on the congregations' website. The disposition of the funds shall only be made known to members in a general sense; all private information shall be limited to the deacons. (See paragraph on confidentiality 6.2.4).
- 10.6. Collection of tithes and offerings (T&O). The deacons are responsible for the collection, accounting, and security of the offerings, whether it be in cash, check, or by electronic transfer by:
- 10.6.1. Following the collection of T&O, taking the offering plates to the deacon's office and securing the funds,
- 10.6.2. After the service, the deacons will count the funds and prepare them for deposit (if no deacons are present, the funds will be secured in the office until the deacons are available to account for them),
- 10.6.3. Notifying the owner of any check or electronic transfer of insufficient funds,
- 10.6.4. Ensuring the deposit of the T&O to the bank, and return the deposit slip to the treasurer within the week, and
- 10.6.5. Maintaining the donation page (and any links) of the congregation's website.
- 10.7. The book fund box will be checked every Sunday night and any funds deposited will be secured in the deacons' office.
- 10.8. The deacons are responsible for all expenditures of congregation funds. Unbudgeted expenditures exceeding \$500, but less than \$5000, must be approved by the deacons. Unbudgeted expenditures of \$5000 or more must be approved by the congregation (see 12.e).
- 10.9. The deacons are responsible for congregation credit and loans. They will ensure that the Congregation does not carry credit card debt, and that installment debt (such as the

mortgage) is paid as due. If a credit card balance is not paid in full, the card will be frozen (see chapter 14).

10.10. The deacons will provide a report for each session meeting. At least quarterly the deacons will ensure that either a deacon or an elder has provided the members with a report of the Congregation's financial status.

10.11. The deacons shall ensure that all donors to the congregation, of cash or in-kind donation, are rendered a receipt for tax purposes at the end of the calendar year.

11. Board of Trustees

11.1. The congregation has established a nonprofit organization to manage the acquisition and disposition of congregation property and mortgage (FOG 3.10-11). This nonprofit, known as Providence Presbyterian of Fayetteville, Inc., is organized as a (501(c)3 under the IRS code and North Carolina law. It is governed by a board of trustees who shall be elected by the congregation at a duly called congregational meeting. The board of trustees is subordinate to the session and governed by bylaws which are available for review. The trustees, while important members of the congregational government, are not ordained officers of the congregation. They must however, be communicant members of the church in good standing.

11.2. The board of trustees will hold title to the property of the church and supervise the mortgage.

11.3. All communicant members of the church are also members of the nonprofit corporation.

12. Congregational Meetings

12.1. An annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held each year at a date, time, and place to be determined by the session. At the annual meeting, the voting members shall conduct congregation business such as, but not limited to

12.1.1. Election of ruling elders and deacons,

12.1.2. Adoption of an annual budget,

12.1.3. Approval of minister salary and benefits, and

- 12.1.4. Transaction any other business that may come before the meeting.
- 12.2. All communicant members in good standing in the congregation shall be voting members. ("Good standing" means that a member is not presently under the censure of suspension or deposition.) Any voting member in attendance at a duly called meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregational meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. The minister shall also be entitled to vote.
- 12.3. Called meetings of the congregation shall be called at a date and location to be determined by the session or the Presbytery. (FOG 3.24)
- 12.4. The date, time, and location of all congregational meetings must be announced orally or in the congregation bulletin at least two weeks prior to the time set for the meeting, or by letter mailed at least eight days prior to the meeting. No other business than that for which the meeting was called may be transacted, other than during the annual business meeting.
- 12.5. The purpose of a congregational meeting shall be announced in advance if it involves any of the following:
 - 12.5.1. The election or removal of officers,
 - 12.5.2. The calling or removal of the minister,
 - 12.5.3. Acquisition or disposition of property worth more than \$5000 not previously budgeted,
 - 12.5.4. The dissolution of the congregation,
 - 12.5.5. Questions regarding the congregation's denominational affiliation.
- 12.6. A member's attendance at a meeting waives the member's right to object to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting. Such attendance waives the member's right to object to consideration of a particular matter at the meeting that is not within the purpose or purposes described in the meeting notice, unless the member objects to considering the matter when it is presented.

- 12.7. One-fourth (1/4) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at congregational meetings (FOG 3.24E). Unless provided otherwise, a majority vote of those in attendance, a quorum being present, is sufficient to decide any matter.
- 12.8. The minister shall be the moderator of congregational meetings by virtue of his office. If it should be impracticable or inexpedient for him to preside, or if there is no minister, the session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be a minister of the ARPC, or any male member of that particular congregation.
- 12.9. A clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve at that meeting or for a definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they have been attested by the moderator and the clerk of the meeting. He shall send a copy of these minutes to the session of the congregation.
- 12.10. Non-members do not have the privilege of the floor or of the vote, although the moderator may extend the privilege of the floor to non-members on a case-by-case basis.
- 12.11. All meetings of the congregation, the session, and its various boards and committees shall be conducted pursuant to the latest edition of *Roberts Rules of Order*.

13. Congregational Committees

- 13.1. A congregational committee may be formed to execute policy and decisions of the session. Congregational committees shall be comprised of elders, deacons, communing congregation members and/or regular visitors under the care of the session. Congregational committees may be standing or temporary committees. Men and women alike are encouraged to serve on committees.
- 13.2. Committees will not be formed or begin work without prior approval by the session. Temporary committees for projects may obtain quotes or complete minor scope review to prior to authorization to provide supporting documentation for project initiation and voting.
- 13.3. All committees will have regular meetings and be able to give updates if required by the session. The date, time, and location of all congregational committee meetings may be set by the committee members. If the committee adjourns any committee meeting to a different date, time, or place notice of a new date, time, and place all members of the committee must be notified.

- 13.4. When a committee is formed for the completion of specific matters of business, no business shall be conducted except that which is stated by the committee.
- 13.5. A committee member who is under congregation discipline will be required to step down from the committee during sanctions. A member may be reinstated after pending a review with the session.
- 13.6. A standing committee is formed to address routine needs of the congregation. These committees shall consist of one Elder/Deacon and at least two members of the congregation. A record of standing committee members shall be maintained by the session.
- 13.7. The congregation standing committees are:
 - 13.7.1. Music Committee: Responsible for the selection of hymns and psalms, as well as oversight of the accompanist and any special music.
 - 13.7.2. Grounds Committee: Responsible for maintenance and improvement of our grounds as well as oversight of the work of congregation members work on the grounds.
 - 13.7.3. Missions Committee: Responsible for review of the congregation's commitment to local, national, and foreign missions on an annual basis, and for bringing recommendations for change to the session on an annual basis. Responsible for maintaining contact with mission organizations and for ensuring that the congregations know their prayer needs and any other special needs.
 - 13.7.4. Nursery Committee: Responsible for care and improvement of our nursery facilities. Also responsible for maintaining a roster of qualified individuals to work in the nursery and the development of rules and procedures for safely caring for infants in the nursery.
 - 13.7.5. Visitors and Greetings Committee: Responsible for ensuring that every visitor to Providence is greeted and made welcome. Also responsible for keeping track of visitors and following up with a visit or a phone call, and with keeping the minister informed.

13.8. Temporary committees are formed to complete a specific project. Projects may be presented by the session, the board of deacons, communicant members, or regular visitors in good standing. Projects under \$5000 may be approved by the session. For projects exceeding \$5000, a committee may be given permission to form by the session to present project initiatives for congregational vote.

14. Congregation Budget and Financial Management

- 14.1. No part of the income or assets of the congregation shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration.
- 14.2. The congregation is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation of a member or officer of the congregation.
- 14.3. The church financial year is the calendar year. The session will provide budgeting guidance to the deacons by 15 October. The deacons will present the proposed budget to the session at the November meeting. Once the budget is approved by the session, the session will present the budget to the congregation for approval prior to the end of the year.
- 14.4. The budget and the financial position of the congregation in the execution of that budget are available for review by members at any time.
- 14.5. The congregation treasurer is supervised by the board of deacons (see chapter 10). The treasurer shall report on the financial state of the congregation to the session at every session meeting, in a manner that the session may direct. Quarterly, the session shall receive a report on budget execution from the treasurer.
- 14.6. Congregation credit cards will be held by the minister and the treasurer, and any other person whom the board of deacons may direct to hold a card. The board of deacons is responsible for accountability of the cards and the payment of card balance. Credit card receipts will be turned in to the treasurer within 2 weeks. The treasurer shall pay off the credit card in full each month. Should funds not be available to do that, the session will be notified and no further charges shall be made until the balance due is paid.
- 14.7. Reimbursement of purchases made for the congregation by an individual shall be issued within one week of submission of a receipt. Should an individual make a purchase for the congregation and not request a reimbursement, that individual may request, from the board of deacons, a receipt indicating that the donation was an “in-kind” donation that may be claimed as a tax deduction under IRS rules. The board of deacons is responsible

for ensuring that any in-kind donation meets the needs of the congregation and qualifies as an in-kind donation for tax purposes.

- 14.8. Unless action is otherwise taken by the congregation (such as in the case of a mortgage) the congregation will not carry forward debt from one month to the next.
- 14.9. The officers of the church shall strive to maintain a ready cash reserve equal to 90 days of operating expenses.
- 14.10. Separate restricted funds may be established by the congregation from time to time, but they must be approved by the session.
- 14.11. At the conclusion of the calendar year, the board of deacons is responsible for ensuring that all givers of tithes and offerings, as well as in-kind donations, are rendered a receipt for charitable donations per IRS rules.

15. Congregational Records

- 15.1. The session shall keep the following records: (1) minutes of its meetings, including a record of the administration of the sacraments and changes in the membership of the congregation; (2) minutes of the meetings of the congregation; (3) minutes of the board of deacons, (4) minutes of the board of trustees; (5) rolls of the members in the congregation (communing, non-communing, and associate), with the dates of their reception; (5) resolutions adopted by the session; (6) appropriate accounting records; (7) the current budget; (8) the current call of the minister; and (9) this operations manual. All of this is subject to inspection by the presbytery.
- 15.2. Congregational records, session minutes, and congregation financial records are open to review by congregation members, except for matters that would violate the congregation's relational commitment of confidentiality (see Section 6.2.4). The session reserves the right to label specific minutes, or parts of minutes, as confidential, for express purpose of protecting confidentiality. Such reservations and withholding of information may be appealed to the Moderator of the Session, whose decision will be final.
- 15.3. (See Section 13 and 7(b) 6).
- 15.3 Per FOG 5.11, an objective review of financial records must be completed annually and reported to the session.

16. Congregational Safety

- 16.1. The deacons will maintain a roster of men and women of the congregation who provide for the safety of the congregation during services, ensuring that access to the congregation, as well as the parking lot are watched at all times.
- 16.2. The deacons will maintain an alarm system and video recording system for the congregation property, and oversee key control.
- 16.3. The deacons will maintain a medical trauma kit on site, as well as a roster of men and women who have medical training, ensuring immediate access to medical care.
- 16.4. The congregation respects the right to bear arms, and members may carry concealed weapons, provided that all legal permits are in order. Church members and visitors who are carrying should inform a church officer. Open carry is not permitted.
- 16.5. The deacons will maintain a sign at the church entrance stating no open carry.
- 16.6. The session encourages members of the congregation who carry concealed to voluntarily obtain a membership with United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) or similar organization.

17. Marriage

- 17.1. Marriage may only be performed in accordance with the Standards of the ARPC, found in section 5 of the Directory of Public Worship (C.5) Wherein it states that marriage has been “instituted by God as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman.”
- 17.2. Before any man and woman are joined in Christian marriage at Providence, they must comply with all the lawful requirements of the State of North Carolina and have completed counselling with the Pastor to his satisfaction.
- 17.3. Marriage ceremonies may be held at Providence Presbyterian only when at least one of the couple is a member of the congregation.

18. Building Use

- 18.1. There will be no rental or use of the congregation facility for non-member weddings, receptions, or other marriage or civil union related events.

- 18.2. Uses of the building for activities other than regularly scheduled worship, Bible studies, prayer meetings, member marriages, funerals, fellowship meals, congregational meetings and classes shall be at the sole determination of the session.
- 18.3. Under no circumstances will the congregation's property be rented out, or offered on a "for hire" basis. The congregation may, with session approval, permit nonmembers to utilize the church building, provided such use is consistent with the law, the congregation's purpose (para 3.2 above), and is not done for hire.
- 18.4. To protect the church property and regulate access, the deacons will maintain a roster of all issued keys and ensure keys are returned when duties or access is no longer required by the key holder. The keyholder roster must be available to all church officers, and all officers will be provided a key. The deacons are responsible for explaining the rules and responsibility of keyholders upon issue.
- 18.5. Church officers may, for good reason, extend access to the church to non-key holders, but they must inform all other officers before the fact.
 - 18.5.1. Non-key holders who have access may include but are not limited to cleaning personnel, lawn maintenance, those assisting with service and maintenance calls, pianist, nursery and other legitimate purposes. The ability of key holders to give access to the church of non-key holders is not transferable. Non key holders, with temporary access may not grant access to others.
 - 18.5.2. All keyholders are responsible for cleaning of any areas used, restoring the thermostat to its proper setting, and arming the security system when they leave.

19. Nursery

- 19.1. Providence provides a nursery, manned by volunteers from within the women of the congregation, as well as a cry room for nursing mothers and fussy children. The nursery is open for Wednesday and Sunday activities.
- 19.2. The congregation's nursery committee maintains the roster for volunteers.
- 19.3. Men and boys are not permitted to work in the nursery.
- 19.4. Children who are ill should not be left in the nursery. If a child appears ill, or has been crying for more than 10 minutes, the nursery worker will seek the child's parents to care for the child.

19.5. The nursery is reserved for nursery aged children aged 3 years and below.

20. Christian Education

20.1. The congregation offers Bible studies for its members through mid-week studies at the congregation or neighborhood studies at members' homes.

20.2. Separate men and women's studies are offered on a weekly basis at times and locations that are regularly announced.

21. Congregational Calendar

21.1 The congregation meets for worship twice on every Lord's Day – once in the morning and once in the evening. These are two distinct services.

21.2 The congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper monthly, on the last Sunday of each month. The Lord's Supper will be administered at both morning and evening services. Generally, a fellowship meal will follow the morning service, to which all are invited.

21.3 The congregation will also assemble twice each year – once in the spring and once in the fall - for a thorough cleaning and fixing up of the church property

21.4 The congregation will meet annually in December of each year to approve the budget for the following year and approve a renewed call for the Minister.

21.5 The congregation does not recognize church holidays or adhere to a liturgical calendar

22. Ownership and Distribution of Property

22.1. The congregation shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in this manual. Should the congregation decide to withdraw from the ARPC (see FOG 3.13) the congregation shall retain ownership of its property. Such withdrawal shall not be considered a corporate "dissolution" under the ARPC standards or the laws of North Carolina (in as much as the property is held in the name of Providence Presbyterian of Fayetteville, Inc.)

22.2. "Dissolution" means the complete disbanding of the congregation and its nonprofit corporation so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity, and this eventuality is covered under FOG 3.21 – 3.23. In such a case, the congregational

property will become the responsibility of Grace Presbytery and will be dealt with in accordance with their manual of procedure.

22.3. Distribution of property upon dissolution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the session, provided no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the session.

21.4 If the congregation is dissolved by the Presbytery at the request of the congregation and no disposition has been made of its property by those who hold the title to the property within six months after such dissolution, then those who held the title to the property at the time of such dissolution shall transfer to the Presbytery all property of the congregation; and the receipt and acceptance by the Presbytery, or its proper representatives, shall be a full and complete discharge of all liabilities of such persons holding the property of the congregation.

23. Indemnification of Officers

23.1. The session may choose to indemnify and advance congregation-related expenses of any elder, deacon, employee, or agent of the congregation, to include the Board of Trustees of Providence Presbyterian of Fayetteville, Inc.

23.2. The congregation shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the congregation, or trustee against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him (or her in the case of trustee) in connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which he or she is made a party by reason of being or having been such an elder, deacon, or trustee, except in relation to matters as to which he shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duty.

24. Management of Change (MOC)

24.1. The congregation management of change policy is based on the principle that all changes should be evaluated, approved, and necessary to maintain the congregation or reach out to the community. Any person attending the congregation may propose a change, but all changes must comply with the guidelines in the congregation manual, the Standards of the ARPC and Scripture.

24.2. MOC- Subtle Projects are project that cost under \$5000 and may be approved by the session. MOC-Projects are projects that exceed \$5000 and must be approved by the session and a congregational vote. All projects must be completed by a committee.

24.3. Projects may be funded from the budget, a special donation, or by a fundraiser. Funding means must be approved by the session, and if raised in the name of the congregation, must also be consistent with the Standards.

24.4. Management of change initiation forms must be completed and submitted to an elder for review by the session. If scouting of a project is approved, a temporary committee may be formed and subsequent documentation must be completed for formal review with the session and/or congregation.

25. Amendment of Operations manual

25.1. This operations manual may be amended or repealed only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the session.

25.2. Management of Change Documents: (still in progress)



GP 2.0 - COD
Initiation Form.doc