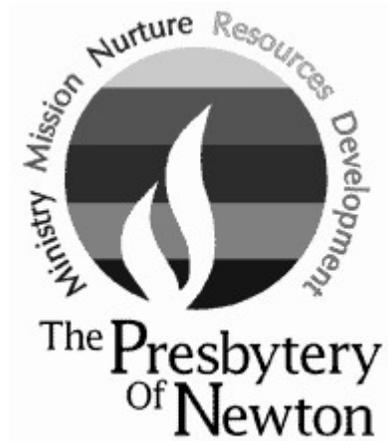


STATED MEETING OF



Things You
need to
know

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**NEWTON PRESBYTERY
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Mission Statement

"Newton Presbytery's Mission is to Serve Our Congregations in Our Calling to Further God's Kingdom as Disciples of Christ."

Vision Statement:

A vibrant faith community committed to caring and learning.

*Priorities: Caring:
 Learning:
 Partnership:*

Missional Values of the Presbytery:

Dwelling in the Word – Immersing ourselves in the Word so that it shapes our imagination, intentions and actions.

Dwelling in the World – Becoming alert and observant of the people in the world where God has sent us.

Hospitality – Creating the safe space and forming bi-cultural Christian Community within God's mission in and for the world

Spiritual Discernment – Recognizing where we are and how the Holy Spirit is leading us in the formation of the Christian Community within God's mission.

Announcing the Kingdom – Bearing witness the work and presence of Jesus Christ in our communities and the world.

Focusing on Missional Action – Focusing our energy and attention on actions that move us further In God's mission in the world is central to fulfilling a missional life.

Participating in the Business of the Presbytery

*As A Decision Making Body Newton Presbytery Uses Parliamentary
Procedure
(Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th ed.)*

STEPS OF A MOTION

- *Commissioner* rises and addresses the Moderator.
- *Moderator* recognizes commissioner and grants the floor.
- *Commissioner* makes the motion (commissioner may not speak to the motion until it is seconded and then upon permission of the Moderator).
- *Another commissioner* seconds the motion without recognition by the Moderator.
- *Moderator* states the motion.
- *Moderator* calls for debate. Maker of the motion has the privilege of first and last debate. All speakers must address the Moderator and be recognized by the Moderator.
- *Moderator* states the motion to be voted upon.
- *Moderator* takes the vote and announces the results of the vote. Any commissioner may ask for a Division of the House (voting by standing or raising hands) if a voice vote is not clear.

USEFUL MOTIONS

- 1. Amend.** There are *only* three forms of simple amendment.
 - a.** to delete or strike out
 - b.** to add or insert
 - c.** to strike out and insert

The words proposed for deletion or addition *must be consecutive words*. When the amendment does not involve consecutive words or is longer than a paragraph, the motions "to substitute" (a form of amendment) is used. This is a difficult motion and should *never* be used when the simple form of amendment can be used.

- 2. Commit or Refer.** To commit or refer back to committee for further study and amendment allows the consultative process to be used in greater depth. When this motion is made, it needs to state clearly what committee; appointment of the committee, if necessary; the task of the committee; and report time.

- 3. Postpone to a Particular Time.** This motion takes precedence over the preceding two and has the power to grant additional time to a particular member or committee or do further study or consultation. It should always be used in preference to "table" because it permits debate on the propriety of postponement.
- 4. Limits on Debate.** The assembly always has the power, and the moderator the right of suggestion, to limit debate to a particular hour, or extend or shorten speeches according to the necessity of the moment. Limits on the length of speeches are advisable in instances where the issue before the assembly is highly divisive and many members wish to speak.
- 5. Previous Question.** The maker of the motion "to move the previous question" (close debate and immediately take the vote) must be recognized by the moderator and the motion must receive a second. *It is never in order when called from the floor.* This motion should never be considered when it is used to prevent legitimate debate.
- 6. Lay on the Table.** This motion is seldom necessary. The motion "to postpone" is always preferable because of its lower rank and its debatability. Misuse of this subsidiary motion can be a strategy that seriously abridges the rights of the assembly because of its high rank and its adoption by a majority vote without debate. The moderator is obliged to explain carefully to the assembly the implications of this motion should it be made.
- 7. Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim.** Consideration by paragraph or seriatim is an incidental motion that may be suggested by the moderator or any two members of the assembly, allowing for orderly consideration of a complex proposal with several different parts, clarifying for the assembly the controversial aspects of the proposal. Each paragraph of the proposal can be amended without finally adopting the new wording until the final action on the main motion as amended.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Privileged Motions do not relate to the pending motion but are of such immediate importance that they take precedence over any Main Motion. *A commissioner does not need to be recognized, or seconded.* No one can amend or debate these motions. No vote is necessary.

Question of Privilege - as a commissioner you believe you cannot hear or see the proceedings, but you have a feasible solution. You have the right to stop the meeting and have the problem corrected.

Call for the Orders of the Day - you see that the agenda notes a specific time for a particular item. You notice that the specific time has passed. You "Call for the Orders of the Day." This automatically forces everyone to move to the item scheduled for that specific time.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Incidental Motions do not relate directly to the substance of the pending motion, but rather to the method of transacting the business of the motion. **Incidental motions must be dealt with immediately.** *A commissioner does not need to be recognized, or seconded.* No one can amend or debate these motions. No vote is necessary.

Point of Order - during the meeting you notice that someone (even the Moderator) is disobeying Robert's Rules of Order. You state "Point of Order" and explain your point. The Moderator rules on your point and you help to keep everyone in line.

Point of Information - One right no one can take from you is the right to understand the process and the potential consequences of voting on the next item of business. You have the right to stop business and ask the Moderator to have someone explain the process and consequences of the debate or the vote. Your request for information cannot be ignored by the Moderator.

Division of the House - whenever you doubt the Moderator's determination of the outcome during a vote by loud ayes/nays, you can have the vote taken by having voters stand or raise hands instead of yelling. You call for a "Division of the House" and the vote has to be retaken in a more accurate manner.

RULES OF DECORUM

- All remarks should be addressed to the Moderator.
- The Moderator determines the commissioner who first seeks recognition. If the Moderator is in doubt, the Presbytery decides who it will hear by vote.
- Remarks should be confined to the pending motion.
- Speeches are limited to three minutes unless the Presbytery grants additional time.
- Each person may speak twice on a subject and may not speak a second time until everyone who wishes has spoken. The maker of the motion has the privilege of first debate.
- Debate should be alternated between those speaking in favor of the pending motion and those speaking against.

- Remarks will not challenge or question another commissioner or that commissioner's motives.
- Do not use other commissioner's names. Always address the moderator.
- Commissioners may not refer unfavorably to prior actions not pending.
- A commissioner may not speak against one's own motion.
- Reading of reports or documents requires the permission of the Presbytery.
- Commissioners seeking recognition shall be seated when another has the floor or the Moderator is speaking.
- Commissioners shall not disturb the assembly.

VOTING AT A PRESBYTERY MEETING

How do I know if I am a voting commissioner?

- You were elected by your session (or you volunteered), or
- You are a ruling elder chair of a Presbytery committee (as defined in the new design), or
- You are a ruling elder member of the Presbytery Coordinating Team, or
- You are a Commissioned Lay Pastor or Commissioned Ruling Elder, or
- You are a teaching elder (pastor) member of the Presbytery

If you are a voting commissioner, you must register and receive a green name tag specifying your status (Elder Commissioner, Voting Member, Minister).

If you are not a voting commissioner you will sign in as a visitor and receive the appropriate name tag. You are welcome to sit in the meeting and participate in all small group discussions, but you are not allowed to speak, make motions, or vote in the main meeting.

Only commissioners with a **green name tag** may speak or vote during the meeting. (Note: a non-voting visitor may request to have the privilege to speak).

Voting during the meeting

During a Presbytery meeting, voting on motions can be done in three ways:

- By voice
- By a show of hands (formally called "division of the house")
- By ballot

Any voting commissioner can request that a vote be taken by a show of hands or by ballot instead of by voice. Reasons you might ask for one of these two methods of voting be used:

- The result of a voice vote is not clear
- You want the vote to be taken in a confidential manner (by ballot)

Some votes are planned to be taken by ballot. These include votes on:

- Amendments to the Book of Order or Book of Confessions
- Election of commissioners to General Assembly
- When there are multiple nominees for an officer of the Presbytery or member of a committee
- Issues that may be controversial

All voting commissioners are expected to stay until the end of the meeting so that all decisions made by Presbytery represent input from everyone entitled to vote.

CONSENT AGENDA Presbytery of Newton

What is a “Consent Agenda” and how will it make our meetings go faster?

At every Presbytery Meeting, many items come to the Agenda that do not need any discussion or debate because they are routine procedures. A Consent Agenda (Robert’s Rules of Order calls it a “consent calendar”) allows the Presbytery to approve all these items together without discussion or individual motions. This can free up anywhere from a few minutes to a half hour or more for more substantial discussion.

What belongs on the consent agenda?

Typical consent agenda items are routine, procedural decisions, and decisions that are likely to be noncontroversial.

How are consent items handled?

A Consent Agenda can only work if the reports and other matters for the meeting agenda are known in advance and distributed with the agenda package in sufficient time to be read by all members prior to the meeting. A typical procedure is as follows:

1. When preparing the meeting agenda, the Executive Team determines whether an item belongs on the Consent Agenda, as recommended by its committee.
2. The Executive Team prepares a numbered list of the consent items as an attachment to the meeting agenda.
3. The list and supporting documents are included in the agenda documents in sufficient time to be read by all members prior to the meeting.
4. Near the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator asks commissioners what items they wish to be removed from the consent agenda and discussed individually.
5. If any commissioner requests that an item be removed from the consent agenda, it must be removed. A commissioner may request that an item be removed for any reason. They may wish, for example, to discuss the item, to query the item, or to register a vote against the item.
6. Once an item has been removed, the item will move to New Business.

7. When there are no more items to be removed, the Moderator reads out the numbers of the remaining consent items. Then the Moderator states, "If there is no objection, these items will be adopted." After pausing for objections, the Chair states, "As there are no objections, these items are adopted." It is not necessary to ask for a voice vote or show of hands.
8. When preparing the minutes, the Stated Clerk includes the full text of the resolutions, reports or recommendations that were adopted as part of the consent agenda.

Guidelines for the Examination of Inquirers recommended for Candidacy

Guiding Principles

The first phase of preparation for ministry is one of mutual discernment between the local church, the Presbytery (largely through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry), and the inquirer. After a minimum of one year, the successful completion of the Bible Content Exam, and the completion of a psychological evaluation an inquirer may pursue moving to the candidacy phase. At this time all three parties again covenant to continue the process of discernment and preparation for ordination. By the time a Candidate comes to Presbytery they have been endorsed for candidacy by both the session of their church and the CPM (Committee on Preparation for Ministry).

It is in this same spirit of discernment and care that the Presbytery is encouraged to approach the examination for Candidacy. According to the Advisory Handbook:

The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of its committee and shall examine the Inquirer in person with respect to *his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry*. (From Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Advisory Handbook, page 9 emphasis added)

The bounds of our examination for candidacy on the floor of Presbytery are informed by the above guidelines. This is not a theological examination (this comes after theological training is complete and prior to ordination), but rather an opportunity to explore an individual's faith and call to the role of Teaching Elder.

Helpful guidelines for formulating questions

Although we face some time constraints we will be best served and best serve future candidates by giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their personal faith, commitment to Christian service and a sense of call to the role of teaching, preaching and administering the sacraments. Therefore, we need to carefully consider the quality of the questions we ask.

Suggestions for formulating good questions:

- Come to the examination having prepared. This is best accomplished by taking time to carefully read and study a inquirers statement of call and biographical information prior to the examination period and then formulate questions based on this material.

- Clear and concise questions that allow a inquirer to demonstrate their call to ministry and personal faith.
- All questions should be limited to a singular subject so they can be understood and are not overly burdensome to answer.

Pitfalls to avoid:

- It is best to avoid overly complicated and detailed questions that serve only to confuse the inquirer.
- Our goal is not to formulate questions to entrap the inquirer in a tricky or divisive conundrum.
- Speculative questions with little or no practical relevance to ministry.
- This is never an opportunity for members of Presbytery to debate or discuss 'hot topics' or theological differences among themselves.

Possible questions:

1. Has your understanding of your call changed or strengthened during the Inquirer phase, and if so, how has it changed or strengthened? What occurred to change or strengthen your sense of call? How has your understanding of your sense of call changed during the Inquirer phase?
2. What is an area of the Reformed tradition that particularly connects with your desire to serve the Presbyterian Church USA?
3. What does being "Presbyterian" mean to you?
4. What has made you sense a calling specifically to the Presbyterian Church USA?
5. How have you maintained a balance between health, study and personal faith during the Inquirer phase?
6. Which area of Ministry do you think others would say you need to work on the most?
7. How do you see your call as a Teaching Elder different from a call to the mission field, or as a Ruling Elder or working in a secular field as a Christian?
8. Tell us about your educational experience so far.
9. What are you most excited about regarding your sense of call and future service in the Church?
10. How has Jesus been a part of your faith journey?

Guidelines for the Examination of Candidates for Teaching Elder

Guiding Principles

The preparation for ministry is one of mutual discernment between the local church, the Presbytery (largely through the CPM), and the candidate. The final step of Examination before the Presbytery is then the final step in a process of mutual discernment. When a candidate for Teaching Elder reaches this part of the process they have experienced a call to minister which has been previously validated at several steps: when they were moved to candidacy, when they were certified ready in all respects by a CPM, and when a local church extended a call to join them in ministry.

It is in this same spirit of discernment with which we undertake the final examination of candidates for Teaching Elder. G-14.0482 requires candidates to appear before Presbytery and to present a brief personal statement of faith. "The presbytery may conduct further examination of the candidate's Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of the church as it deems necessary." (G-14.0482)

This is the final step and an important step in the process of ordination, but it is just one step in a lengthy process of discernment. It is the job of the Presbytery to assess the readiness of a Candidate on the basis of the entire process, their written statements, and their answers to questions from the floor.

Helpful guidelines for formulating questions

In order to be prepared for questioning candidates there are at least two practical considerations to make: we face time constraints and most importantly we are wise to remember that this is the last step in the candidate's preparation process (candidates have ordinarily passed all the ordinations exams, completed theological study, received the endorsement of both their congregation of care and calling congregation, and been certified by a CPM.) Although the Book of Order allows for almost any question to be asked it seems wise to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate both a sense of call and the ability to apply theological training and the understanding of Presbyterian faith to their role as minister.

We, therefore, need to carefully consider the quality of the questions we ask. Below are a few suggestions for formulating good questions:

1. Come to the examination having prepared. This is best accomplished by taking time to carefully read and study a candidate's statement of faith and biographical information prior to the examination period and then formulate questions based on this material.
2. Clear and concise questions that allow a candidate to demonstrate their grasp of theology and their call to ministry.
3. All questions should be limited to a singular subject so they can be understood and are not overly burdensome to answer.
4. Questions pertaining to the particular call and how it relates to specific biographical details.

Pitfalls to avoid:

It is best to avoid overly complicated and detailed questions that serve only to confuse the candidate.

Our goal is not to formulate questions to entrap the candidate in a tricky or divisive theological conundrum.

Speculative questions with little or no theological or practical relevance ministry.

This is not an opportunity for members of Presbytery to debate or discuss 'hot topics' or theological differences among themselves.

Possible Questions

1. What is your understanding of mission?
2. What is your understanding of the authority of scripture?
3. What is your understanding of grace?
4. What is your understanding of judgment?
5. What is your understanding of what it means to be "Reformed always reforming"?
6. Share three ways reformed tradition views atonement and share which one you prefer.
7. What theological question have you found particularly difficult to answer in your studies and why?
8. What do you value most in the reformed tradition?
9. What does your understanding of _____ have to do with your day to day care for the people of God?
10. What does baptism signify and share your understanding of the sacrament?
11. What would you include in a Eucharistic Prayer?

- 12.If God is sovereign, why does evil take place in the world?
- 13.What do Presbyterians mean when we say God is sovereign?
- 14.What do you believe about predestination/election?
- 15.Are human beings inherently good or inherently bad? Explain.
- 16.Why do Presbyterians engage in social ministry?
- 17.What does it mean that human beings are stewards of God's creation?
- 18.What is your definition of the Church?
- 19.How does reformed theology deal with non-Christian religions?
- 20.If the chief end of God's people is to glorify and enjoy God forever, how do we do that?
- 21.What's the difference between the ordinations of elders, deacons, and ministers of Word and Sacrament?
- 22.How is Christ present in the Lord's Supper and share your understanding of the sacrament?
- 23.Why is the Trinity monotheistic?
- 24.Why do Presbyterians value the Old Testament even though Jesus is not mentioned in it?
- 25.What is your understanding of the virgin birth?