

Arizona Presbytery
Standing Rules
(revised 01/2024)

I. Introduction

A. Vision: The Arizona Presbytery is a regional church of the Presbyterian Church in America functioning under the constitution of the PCA.¹ By conviction, we are a connectional fellowship of elders and churches, covenanted together in the gospel. We worship God together, provide pastoral care, accountability, fellowship to our members and churches, and partner to fulfill the great commission. As a court of the church, we are entrusted with the protection of our distinctive confessional standards, the integrity of our ministers, and the health of our churches.

B. Implementation of Our Vision

1. Worship: We are a worshipping body that gathers to honor Christ. When we come together, we seek the Lord in prayer, commune with Christ, build each other up by his Word and sacrament, and strengthen one another to engage in the work of his kingdom with greater zeal.

2. Compartment: We believe that Jesus intends for his church to be a connectional body. That connectionalism means we are not alone. The gospel compels us to humility, respectful discussion, prayer, and earnest commitment to the faith. The gospel compels us not to hide our weaknesses, but to allow ourselves to be served by others. We desire our gathering to be a Spirit-filled meeting in which the gospel is central to all we do. The Arizona Presbytery should be known for its enthusiasm, collegiality, and joy. May God use our Presbytery for his glory!

3. Active Participation: Active participation, rather than passive or inactive participation, is vital for healthy engagement in the vision and mission of Presbytery and for the faithful confirmation of our vows as ministers within this Presbytery. Active participation involves, at the very least, Teaching Elders attending Presbytery meetings and serving their Presbytery with a passion for the gospel and mutual support for one another. The following principles are intended to affirm our common calling and to encourage us towards this end:

a. Teaching Elders who are physically within the bounds of presbytery are expected to attend Presbytery once per year, at a minimum.

b. When Teaching Elders are to be providentially hindered from attending (such as illness, family crisis, or other extraordinary situation), they shall present excuses to the Stated Clerk prior to the meeting of Presbytery or in the case of unanticipated need to depart a meeting prior to adjournment.

c. Teaching Elders are encouraged to avoid scheduling problems by attentive planning.

d. Pattern of absence may result in a written reminder of the expectation that Members of Presbytery are faithfully to attend and actively participate in the meetings and work of Presbytery.

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e. Continued pattern of absenteeism may result in the appointment of an ad hoc committee to evaluate the relationship of the Teaching Elder with Presbytery.

4. The Purpose of Our Standing Rules: These Standing Rules are meant to be an organizational supplement to The Book of Church Order. Our desire is to be flexible and simple in application. Our accent is to meet as brothers and fellow-workers. Parliamentary process is a servant to our work which is meant to assist our communication and decisions. The appendices, though not a part of the standing rules, are included as a resource.

C. Operational Details

1. Meetings: Three stated meetings shall be held each year. Ordinarily meetings will be held during the fourth week of January, April, and August. See Appendix A for a suggested meeting schedule.

a. While matters of Presbytery are generally understood to take place in person, Presbytery may authorize a meeting to be conducted by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, when necessary or preferred due to matters of health and safety, including pandemics or dangerous weather conditions.

b. If a meeting is done by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, the meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well).

c. The right to vote in meetings done by videoconferencing or teleconference is limited to the members who are actually present on the call (or video) at the time the vote is taken.

d. All voting members must be participating in the same method of attendance.

2. Docket for Meetings: The docket for each Presbytery will be distributed at least 14 days prior to Presbytery. Our teams should submit as much of their work as possible so that this material can be included in the docket. Personal motions moving new business that were not submitted prior to the fourteen (14) day deadline will be considered only upon a two-thirds approval of the assembled presbyters.

3. Presbytery Commissions & Committees

a. Presbytery Commissions: The Arizona Presbytery has one standing commission: the Administrative Commission.

b. Presbytery Committees: The Arizona Presbytery has four standing committees (which we call Teams): the Shepherding Team, the Ordination Team, the Mission Team, and the RUF Team.

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4. Ad Hoc Commissions & Committees: Presbytery is encouraged to form temporary commissions and committees as necessary. This may include committees or commissions that advise churches during a transition in leadership, seek to assist members or member churches to apply the peacemaking guidelines of BCO Appendix I, or serve a church in a time of conflict by judicially addressing evils that have arisen from within (BCO 13-9f.).

5. The Work of Committees and Commissions

- a. The Presbytery does most of its work through teams. The Presbytery delegates so as not to redo the work of the teams. The Presbytery calls teams to due diligence so that this delegation is not in vain.
- b. Team chairs are appointed to lead their teams in a way that is faithful to its responsibility and to the trust given to the team by the Presbytery.
- c. Team chairs shall be responsible to appoint members for respective teams.

6. Presbytery Officers

- a. The Moderator is elected to serve for one year. Besides fulfilling the duties of BCO 10-3, he oversees the preparation of the docket and appoints chairmen for teams. The Moderator shall also be responsible to ensure that the execution of the docket and the ethos of the meetings is according to the vision of Presbytery. If the Moderator is unable to fulfill his duties, the previous Moderator will serve in his place. For this work, the Moderator shall receive an honorarium of \$2,000 per year.
- b. The Stated Clerk is elected to serve for three years. In addition to the duties prescribed in BCO 10-4, he handles all matters of correspondence within the presbytery. The Stated Clerk may enlist others to help him in his work, such as a Recording Clerk. For their labors, the Stated Clerk and Recording Clerk shall receive a stipend of \$1,000 per year.
- c. The Treasurer is elected to serve for three years. He will keep an accurate record of the Presbytery's finances, work with the Administration Commission to develop annual budgets (which must be approved by the Presbytery at large), and disburse funds per the approved budget. For his work, the Treasurer shall receive an honorarium of \$500 per year.

7. Finances

- a. Because we long to see Christ exalted and unbelievers reconciled to God, the focus of Presbytery's financial giving will be used to support the work of the Mission Team.

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b. God has been extravagantly generous to us in the gospel, not sparing his own Son but giving him up for us all. Through his poverty, we have become rich (2 Cor 8:9). God has also been generous to us financially, abundantly blessing us in a fruitful land. Because of the riches of God's grace toward us, we urge each church to give generously according to its means (2 Cor 8:2-3) toward the work of Presbytery. We are a connectional body, with each part contributing to the work of the whole. We suggest that every church contribute 2.25% of its previous calendar year's general operating receipts (not including special funds for building construction).

c. In addition, to further support church planting in our region, we encourage each church to join the Southwest Church Planting Network and financially contribute 2.75% of its previous calendar year's general operating receipts (not including special funds for building construction) to their work.

8. The Standing Rules may be suspended or amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

II. Standing Teams

A. Administrative Commission: This commission shall be composed of: The current moderator of Presbytery, previous moderator, stated clerk, current team chairs (Mission Team, Ordination Team, Shepherding Team, and RUF Team), Overseer of Sessional minutes, and ruling elder at large. This commission is responsible for all administrative matters, as well as matters that do not ordinarily come under the oversight of the other teams. These matters include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Planning for Presbytery: Work with the moderator to prepare the docket in keeping with our vision. Coordinate locations, times, and schedule for Presbytery.

2. Matters of Record

a. Record and maintain the minutes of Presbytery. The minutes of each Presbytery meeting will be approved by the Presbytery at the next stated meeting.

b. Process calls.

c. Oversee assignments for Presbytery's standing teams.

d. Appoint commissioners to General Assembly.

e. Oversee annual review of the Session minutes of Presbytery's churches.

3. PCA/GA Correspondence: Review and recommend responses to correspondence from higher courts, such as resolutions for BCO amendments, communication from the Review of Presbytery Records, etc.

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4. Creating Ad Hoc Judicial Commissions: When necessary, the Administrative Commission shall form ad hoc judicial commissions to render verdicts in cases of original jurisdiction (according to BCO chapters 31-32 and 34-36) or to hear appeals from lower courts

5. (BCO 42).

B. Ordination Team: This committee is delegated with the responsibility of dealing with all issues relevant to the training and examining of candidates, licentiates, and ministers as explained in BCO chapters 18-20.

1. The committee will develop clear processes for assessment of candidates and will report these processes to the Presbytery for approval.
2. The committee will make every effort to ensure that candidates are thoroughly examined in matters of faith and life as well as in doctrine (1 Tim 4:16). This includes things such as speaking to Sessions, candidates' wives, references, background checks, etc. When interviewing a candidate and his wife, effort should be made to include seasoned, godly women in the interview as advisors to the committee.
3. The committee will make every effort to complete as much of this examination as possible prior to Presbytery. The committee will present a written summary of their work in an electronically distributed form at least fourteen (14) days prior to Presbytery. All supporting materials such as a candidate's graded written exams, theological papers, stated differences from our standards, etc., are to be distributed as well at least fourteen (14) days prior to Presbytery.
4. The Ordination Team is allowed up to ten minutes on the floor for each area of its examinations. This time limit may be extended by a simple majority vote.

C. Shepherding Team: This committee is delegated with the responsibility of pastoral care for the local churches and ministers of the Presbytery. This includes proactive awareness of the spiritual health of local churches and ministers (except judicial matters, which must be addressed by a specially formed commission).

1. The Shepherding Team serves ministers by establishing and encouraging local/regional cohorts for relationship and care and by providing resources for external counseling to members in crisis.
2. The Shepherding Team will provide care for ministers without a call, those laboring out of bounds, church planters and RUF ministers, as well as ministers in churches.

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3. The Shepherding Team serves churches by meeting with sessions and pastor systematically, preparing them for reports to the Presbytery, and leading the shepherding component on the docket. The Shepherding Team will prepare each church in the Presbytery to have one hour approximately every 2 years to present their church, their goals, and their needs before the brothers for an extended season of prayer and encouragement.

4. Churches that are struggling with internal difficulties are encouraged to contact the shepherding team for assistance. Likewise, members of churches with grievances against their sessions or officers are encouraged to contact the shepherding team for counsel. When a struggling church would benefit from the ministry of Presbytery they may also be given time at the next meeting to report to Presbytery and receive counsel and prayer.

D. Mission Team: This committee is delegated with the responsibility of preparing for, implementing, and overseeing the Presbytery's work to make Christ known both within and outside our bounds. The Mission Team should set priorities and allocate its resources accordingly to maximize effectiveness. The Team's activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Church Planting: The Mission Team will plan, pray, train, and fund church plants as well as partner with the Southwest Church Planting Network, which is a joint subcommittee of the participating MNA or Missions Committees of PCA Presbyteries in the Southwest.

2. Overseeing Mission Works: In addition to the work of the Shepherding Team, the Mission Team will provide encouragement and accountability to planters and RUF ministers.

3. Other Missions Activities

4. Assisting the Presbytery's churches and ministers so that they are effective in mission.

E. Reformed University Fellowship Team: This committee is delegated with the responsibility of starting new RUF chapters and overseeing the ministry of current RUF chapters.

F. Treasurer's Team: This committee is delegated with the responsibility of the management, oversight, and transparent reporting of the finances and assets of the Presbytery, of proposing a yearly budget, and of ensuring compliance with the Arizona Corporation Commission's yearly filing obligations.