

# **Suncoast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church In America**

## ***STANDING RULES***

### **1 Section 1: Name**

- 1.1 The name of this body shall be the “Suncoast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America” hereafter called “Presbytery”

### **2 Section 1: Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Suncoast Presbytery is to be unified regional church that seeks to bring glory to Christ in South West Florida region through reformation, church planting, church renewal and revival.
- 2.2 The Presbytery wholeheartedly confesses our commitment to the following theological core values:
- 2.2.1 - the transforming power of the gospel;
- 2.2.2 - the strategic significance of local congregations;
- 2.2.3 - the primacy of church planting; and
- 2.2.4 - the regional unity of the church.
- 2.3 The governmental and doctrinal standards of this Presbytery shall be those stated in the Book of Church Order (BCO) of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF).
- 2.4 The standing rules are not to conflict with the BCO, and, in any case of conflict, the standards of the BCO shall take precedence.

### **3 Section 3: Members**

- 3.1 Members of this Presbytery shall be in two classes: (1) Ordained ministers of the Word and sacrament, or teaching elders (TE) and (2) Particular congregations of the Presbytery.
- 3.2 Standards for examination for membership of both teaching elders and congregations shall be as set forth in the BCO. [TE’s BCO 21-4 and 13-6; Congregations BCO 13-8 and 5-8 and 5-9].
- 3.3 Commissioners to meetings for the Presbytery shall be teaching elders of the Presbytery and ruling elders representing their particular churches. Representation by ruling elder commissions shall be in accordance with the provisions of the BCO.

### **4 Section 4: Leaders**

- 4.1 The officers of the Presbytery shall be a Moderator and a Stated Clerk. All officers shall

- be elected by a majority vote of commissioners.
- 4.2 Both teaching and ruling elders are eligible to serve as Moderator and stated clerk. In the case of churches following a “rotating system” for their sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their sessions remain eligible to serve in these offices, with the consent of the Sessions.
- 4.3 The Moderator shall function as the presiding officer of all meeting of Presbytery and otherwise serve as outlined by the BCO 10-3.
- 4.4 The Moderator shall serve for a term of one year. Elections for Moderator shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year and the moderator elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the year. No one may serve as Moderator for more than two consecutive terms.
- 4.5 The Stated Clerk shall perform his duties as outlined in the BCO 10-4, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk is a member, and works under the supervision of, the Coordinating Team of Presbytery. His duties shall include the following:
- 4.5.1 - keeping proper records of all meetings of Presbytery and its commissions;
- 4.5.2 - providing certified extracts when required;
- 4.5.3 - maintaining orderly records of all correspondence to and from Presbytery;
- 4.5.4 - preparing and transmitting all reports, overtures, and other information to and from the General Assembly;
- 4.5.5 - opening meetings of Presbytery when the Moderator is not available, and residing until an acting moderator may be elected.
- 4.6 When helpful in the performance of his duties, the Moderator or the Coordinating Team may appoint other commissioners to serve as assistant clerks.
- 4.7 The Treasurer may be either a teaching elder, a ruling elder, a deacon, or any communicant member of a church of mission of the Presbytery.
- 4.7.1 - The Treasure shall be appointed by the Coordinating Team and shall serve under the oversight of the Coordinating Team;
- 4.7.2 - The Treasurer’s duties shall be those incident to the office of Treasure as required by the Presbytery, which shall include the following:
- 4.7.2.1 maintaining custody of the funds and securities belonging to the Presbytery;
- 4.7.2.2 receiving, depositing, and disbursing such funds as directed by Presbytery; and
- 4.7.2.3. keeping accurate accounts of the finances of the Presbytery, including the issuing of reports to Presbytery not less than quarterly.

## **5 Section 5: Trustees**

- 5.1 Trustees shall be elected in accordance with the bylaws of the Presbytery.

## **6 Section 6: Meetings**

- 6.1 The time and place of each stated meeting shall be determined by the Presbytery at the preceding stated meeting, or should Presbytery fail to make this decision, by the Moderator, with the approval of the Coordinating Team.
- 6.2 The regular times for stated meetings shall be as follows:
- 6.2.1 - Winter.....The third Saturday of January
  - 6.2.2 - Spring.....The third Saturday of April
  - 6.2.3 - Summer.....The third Saturday of July
  - 6.2.4 - Fall.....The third Saturday of October
- 6.3 Called meetings shall be held only when absolutely necessary. Such meetings will be called in strict accordance with the provisions of the BCO 13-12.
- 6.5 Meetings shall be conducted according to the provisions of the BCO. Stated meetings of this Presbytery shall ordinarily include the following elements:
- 6.5.1 - a worship service;
  - 6.5.2 - at least one time of corporate prayer; and
  - 6.5.3 - a regular meeting for Presbytery business.
- 6.6 The ordinary docket for business portion of stated meetings shall be as follows:
- 6.6.1 - formation of the roll, including receiving requests for excused absences.
  - 6.6.2 - introduction of visitors and granting them the privilege of the floor;
  - 6.6.3 - the approval of minutes of previous meetings;
  - 6.6.4 - the adoption of the agenda for business meeting;
  - 6.6.5 - reports of the Presbytery Ministry Teams
  - 6.6.6 - time and place of the next stated meeting; and
  - 6.6.7 - adjournment with prayer.
- 6.7 All business shall ordinarily be brought before the Presbytery through one of its Ministry Teams.
- 6.7.1 In order to be considered, all business, including recommendations from the ministry teams, shall be in the hand of the Coordinating team no later than twenty one (21) days prior to a stated meeting.
- 6.7.2 The Presbytery will not receive new business from the floor without suspension of the rules of Presbytery.

## **7 Ministry Teams**

- 7.1 Most business of the Presbytery shall be delegated to permanent and advisory committees known as Ministry Teams. The regular teams are as follows:
- 7.1.1 Administration Team
  - 7.1.2 Leadership Development Team

- 7.1.3 Church Planting/Missions Team
- 7.1.4 Shepherding Team
- 7.1.5 Christian Education/Spiritual Growth Team
  
- 7.2 The quorum of the permanent committees, or Ministry Teams, shall be one half of their stated membership.
  
- 7.3 These teams are entrusted with the responsibility of providing visionary leadership to the Presbytery in their given areas of ministry. It is the responsibility of the teams to ensure that their ministries are being conducted in conformity to the Presbytery's theological vision.
  
- 7.4 Members of teams are elected by the Presbytery. Members of the Ministry teams which are permanent committees of Presbytery may be comprised of both teaching and ruling elders. (In the case of churches following a "rotating system" for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve on Ministry teams, with the consent of their Sessions). Other members of Presbytery, as well as other communicant members of churches of Presbytery, may be asked to serve in an advisory capacity to the permanent committees.
  
- 7.5 Each team is led by a chairman, who shall also be elected by the Presbytery. No one may serve as chairman of more than one team at a time. Nominations and elections shall, as far as possible, be based on spiritual giftedness, community spirit, and willingness to serve.
  
- 7.6 Permanent committees, or Ministry Teams, may, by act of Presbytery, be clothed with powers of a commission for carrying out specific ministries within their field. Any such action of Presbytery shall always be done in strict accordance with the provisions of the BCO.

## **7.7 The Administration Team**

- 7.7.1 The purpose of the Administration Team, a permanent committee, is to provide organization, planning process, meeting space, agenda preparation services, and maintain the Presbytery's commitment of being a connectional church committed to planting new churches and reaching the nations for Christ.
  
- 7.7.2 Specifically, the team shall be responsible for the following:
  - 7.7.2.1 - developing and maintain appropriate organization structures;
  - 7.7.2.2 - presenting nominations to the Presbytery for officers, for Ministry Teams and chairmen, and for various General Assembly committees and boards;
  - 7.7.2.3 - coordinating and ensuring the work of the Ministry Teams;
  - 7.7.2.4 - making arrangement for Presbytery meetings, including planning the worship services and providing for ministerial and theological training seminars;
  - 7.7.2.5 - producing and distributing the agenda prior to each meeting of Presbytery;
  - 7.7.2.6 - coordinating all correspondence with the Stated Clerk;
  - 7.7.2.7 - reviewing session records for the Presbytery;
  - 7.7.2.8 - maintaining Presbytery financial records with the Treasurer; and
  - 7.7.2.9 - oversee the formulation of the Presbytery budget.

## **7.8 The Leadership Development Team**

- 7.8.1 The purpose of the Leadership Development Team, a permanent committee, is to facilitate the process by which men are identified and prepared for the ministry of the gospel, and to help them

assess their calling, gifts, skills, and knowledge for effective service for our Lord Jesus Christ in His church.

7.8.2 Specifically, the team responsibilities including the following:

7.8.2.1 - conducting examinations of applicants for ministerial credentials and ensuring that such examinations are conducted in a timely and equitable way, in conformity with the BCO;

7.8.2.2 - identifying, recruiting, and nurturing potential new leaders and pastors within the bounds of the Presbytery;

7.8.2.3 - encouraging the formation of study centers and tutorial programs for the benefit of the Presbytery; and

7.8.2.4 - develop position papers acceptable to the Presbytery on issues which are important to the ongoing work of the Presbytery.

## **7.9 The Churching Planting/Missions Team**

7.9.1 The purpose of the Church Planting/Missions Team, a permanent committee, is to establish self-propagating church planting movements among multiple people groups and sub-regions so that the Presbytery is assertively and effectively planting churches in our region and across North America and around the World. It also is to assist Presbytery and individual congregations in the efforts to obey Christ's command to go into all the earth.

7.9.2 Specifically, the team responsibilities including the following:

7.9.2.1 - establish and maintain a foundation of prayer for the growth of new churches and the ministry of Presbytery;

7.9.2.2 - serve as liaison with our denominations' Mission to North America and shall oversee ministries which support its purpose (such as campus ministries, church planter recruiting and development, etc.);

7.9.2.3 - communicate regarding church planting opportunities, new models being tried;

7.9.2.4 - research and support new models for planting churches;

7.9.2.5 - develop a strategy and plan for sustained growth in the Presbytery through new church planting;

7.9.2.6 - establish entry, training, and mentoring processes for new church planters;

7.9.2.7 - providing pastoral care for teaching elders serving outside the bounds of Presbytery;

7.9.2.8 - coordinating short-term missions within the Presbytery;

7.9.2.9 - raising awareness of needs;

7.9.2.10 - acting as a liaison with the PCA's Mission to the World; and

7.9.2.11 - assisting the raising up of missionaries from our Presbytery.

## **7.10 The Shepherding Team**

7.10.1 The purpose of the Shepherding Team, a permanent committee, is to aid the individual churches and the Presbytery as a whole in becoming gospel-shaped communities in which people receive support, encouragement, and accountability from one another.

7.10.2 Specifically, the team responsibilities include the following:

7.10.2.1- serving as a standing judicial committee which advises the Presbytery on pro-actively handling

formal judicial business in a timely manner, following the instructions of Matthew 18 and of the BCO;

- 7.10.2.2 - reviewing the reasons for absences from meetings of Presbytery and providing pastoral care as needed;
- 7.10.2.3- promote corporate and individual renewal within congregations;
- 7.10.2.4- reviewing changes in pastoral calls, encouraging congregations in their responsibilities for the care of their ministers and providing information to the Presbytery as needed;
- 7.10.2.5- serving as a pro-active agent of pastoral care to the pastors and congregations of the Presbytery; and
- 7.10.2.6- serving as a resource for reconciliation and mediation, and encouraging mutual shepherding and mentoring throughout the Presbytery, and encouraging the development of counseling ministries.

## **7.11 The Christian Education & Spiritual Growth Team**

7.11.1 The purpose of the Christian Education & Spiritual Growth Team, a permanent committee, is to promote the work of Christian Education and spiritual growth throughout the Presbytery.

7.11.2 Specifically, the team responsibilities including the following:

- 7.11.2.1- Schools and Christian Day Schools;
- 7.11.2.2- Lay leadership training and Christian family education;
- 7.11.2.3- Men's work, women's work, youth work, and camps; and
- 7.11.2.4- Serving as a liaison with the General Assembly Committee of Christian education

7.12 Other committees and commissions may be created for specific purposes according to provisions of the BCO.

## **8 Section 8: Budget and Finance**

8.1 The purpose of the budget of the Florida Suncoast Presbytery is to enable the Presbytery to fulfill its theological vision, chiefly through the support of church planting projects approved by the Presbytery.

8.2 Each church and mission shall be asked to contribute a set amount per communicant member to the general budget of the Presbytery. The amount of the askings shall be determined by the Coordinating Team each year prior to budget finalization.

8.3 Upon approval of a budget by Presbytery, the Treasurer shall be authorized to disburse funds according to that budget without further authorization of Presbytery.

8.4 Amendments to any adopted budget shall first be approved by the Coordinating Team and then shall be approved by the Presbytery.

## **9 Section 9: Parliamentary Procedure**

9.1 It is responsibility of the moderator to preside over meeting equitably and efficiently, protecting the privileges of parliamentary minorities while refusing to allow the meeting to become mired in the minutiae of procedural rules. Likewise, it is responsibility of all commissioners to exercise proper humility and deference to one another, remember their ordination vows to submit to one another in the Lord.

9.2 All parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with the provisions of the BCO and these

standing rules. The Moderator may appoint a commissioner of Presbytery to assist him in these matters, who shall serve as parliamentarian only for the term of the actual meeting in which he is appointed. It is the intention of Presbytery that meetings be conducted according to generally accepted procedure of parliamentary bodies.

- 9.3 Discussion and debate of any main motion shall be limited to fifteen minutes. This time may be extended by majority vote of a period of no more than fifteen additional minutes. Further extensions are not allowable except by suspending these standing rules.

**10 Section 10: Suspension and Amendment of Standing Rules**

- 10.1 These standing rules may be temporarily suspended at any stated meeting of Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners.
- 10.2 These standing rules may be permanently amended or revoked only by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners at two consecutive stated meetings of Presbytery.