

**PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE  
MANUAL OF OPERATIONS**

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## THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

*What is a presbytery?* At root, this is the question before every presbytery, and especially before the Presbytery of St. Augustine as it engages in this process of strategic planning. As the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) of the presbytery began its work, we looked back over our history to gain a sense of where we have come from as a presbytery. And we sought to affirm the core theological values that guide our vision of what a presbytery is called to be and do.

### *Historical Prologue: the History of Presbyteries*

In John Calvin's Geneva, there were two key bodies that are the direct antecedents of our presbyteries. The pastors of the various Protestant congregations met weekly in a gathering called the Venerable Company of Pastors to study Scripture, examine new ministers, and consider how to meet the challenges of ministry in their contexts. The Geneva Consistory, composed of both pastors and elders, gathered to decide matters of church discipline and order.

In the earliest presbyteries in the United States, the primary tasks before the gathered ministers and elders were examining ministers who had come from Scotland to accept pastoral calls in the US, supervising the study of ministerial candidates, and addressing problems that had arisen at particular congregations, including providing supply preaching at congregations without pastors.

The work of presbyteries throughout most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries remained basically unchanged from that of their earliest predecessors. Much of the focus was on expanding into the western frontier of the country, so that the pressure to develop new congregations, locate and train new pastors, and provide temporary leadership was constant.

With the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the slowing of the westward expansion, the focus of presbytery work began to change. Urban centers were growing and with them, the congregations at their heart. There was a need for urban ministries to poor and disenfranchised communities, and presbyteries served to network congregations to accomplish that work. Many presbyteries for the first time employed "home missions secretaries," (usually) ministers who were employed by the presbytery to oversee the expanding work of the presbytery. Still, the great majority of the presbytery's attention remained focused on the examination of ministers and the training of candidates. Much of the work of developing curriculum, publishing books and other resources, sending missionaries, and administering social programs was done by the denominational structures developing in New York (UPCUSA) and Atlanta (PCUS).

In the early 1970s, both the UPCUSA and the PCUS underwent massive denominational reorganizations. One of the results of this reorganization was that governing bodies, and especially presbyteries, became agents for mission. Presbyteries were required to devise "strategies for mission" in their districts, develop extensive programs and committee structures to support that mission, and employ larger staffs of executive leadership to oversee the program and structure. Not coincidentally, the growth in presbytery mission and staff meant that presbyteries required larger budgets, which meant that more congregations and more members were needed to sustain those budgets.

In recent years, however, presbyteries are once again experiencing dramatic changes. Fewer Presbyterians understand – or value – the program or committee structure of the presbytery. Economic pressures such as staff salary and benefits costs, as well as utilities and insurance expenses, mean that congregations have fewer dollars to share with presbytery. And the sense that the presbytery should appropriately have a mission other than to support the work of the local congregation is rapidly fading. These changes are viewed by some as catastrophic, spelling the end of the presbytery as an agent of mission. At the same time, they are viewed by others as the occasion for being open once again to the leading of the Spirit of God toward a new future.

We choose the latter view. We believe the Presbytery of St. Augustine is presented with an historic opportunity to reevaluate our *identity* (who we are called to be), our *polity* (what we are called to do), and our *praxis* (how we are called to do it). We have an opportunity to redesign our sense of ministry in a way that values the best of our past while looking forward toward our future.

### ***Identity***

*What is the Church called to be?* The Apostle Paul answered this question in a powerful way by reminding us that, as the Church, “you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it” (1 Cor 12:27). At the heart of the matter, then, lies this truth: what we are as the Church is grounded in Christ, whose coming into the world calls the Church into being. The Church exists to serve the mission of Christ.

We discovered that the *Book of Order* expresses this idea well:

“The Church of Jesus Christ is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all humanity. The Church is called to be the sign in and for the world of the new reality God has made available to people in Jesus Christ” (*The Book of Order*, G-3.0200).

We believe that being a “demonstration of what God intends” means exhibiting in our common life as a presbytery some basic virtues that characterize the way God’s people will live in the world, because they characterized Christ lived. Among those virtues are:

*Humility* – Jesus “did not regard equality with God a thing to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant...” (Phil 2:6-7). In the same way also we are called to an awareness that we do not have all the answers, and therefore that we need to be constantly learning, from God, from each other, and from the best the world can teach us.

*Reconciliation* – “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us...” so also God “has given us the ministry of reconciliation...” (2 Cor 5:18-19). This ministry requires of us a readiness to being brought to God and to one another in forgiveness and mercy, and a commitment to bringing others together in new experiences of faith and growth.

*Trust* – Jesus Christ “is our peace; in his flesh he has made [Jews and Gentiles] into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph.2:14). To trust in this way is to rely on God’s grace and wisdom to go with us into an uncertain future, and to be willing to be open and vulnerable to others in an effort to build community.

**Polity**

*What is the Church called to do?* This is the second question we sought to answer in thinking about the Church. Reformed Christians have sought to answer that question by posing three “marks” or “notes” of the true Church:

- ❖ Wherever the Word of God is truly preached and heard
- ❖ Wherever the Sacraments are rightly administered
- ❖ Wherever ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.

When these activities are “noted” in the life of a church, said the Reformers, it is a true Church.

Though these “notes” remain a part of our confessional tradition (see *The Book of Confessions*, 3.18), there are many today who question their usefulness. These activities all seem to be internally-oriented activities, not outwardly focused. They seem like tasks assigned to preachers, requirements designed to keep order. They do not immediately seem well suited to a Church committed to following Christ into the world in mission and service.

We believe, however, that these “notes” deserve a second look. We believe they were never intended to be the tasks of the preacher alone, but descriptions of the work of the whole Church. And we believe they are best understood when seen in the light of the mission of Christ the Church is called to serve.

*The proclamation of the Word* is not confined to what happens from the pulpit on Sunday. It is the witness of the whole Church, through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care practiced by the church in the community. That witness invites people to understand themselves and the story of their lives as part of the great story of God’s kingdom, and to shape and form their lives according to the values of that kingdom.

*The administration of the Sacraments* is not confined to saying the right liturgical phrases at the baptismal font and communion table. It is seeing what happens at font and table as the connection between the reality of the world and God’s new reality in Christ. In the world, people are disconnected, alienated, and marginalized; but at the font, God’s grace reaches out to claim, include, and reconcile, even before we do anything to deserve inclusion. In the world, people hunger and thirst, not just for food and drink, but for hope and vision; but at the table God’s grace reaches out to feed the world at the point of its deepest hunger, even though we have not earned the right to share in the meal.

*The ministry of ecclesiastical discipline* is not confined to enforcing the rules of our polity or making sure people in the Church don’t misbehave. It is making *disciples* – which is the root meaning of *discipline*. It is about creating a community that nurtures faith and teaches service, and opens the arms of its fellowship to all those whom Christ loves and calls to himself.

One of the terms most frequently used about the Church these days is the word, “missional.” It’s not a word you will find in a dictionary, but it carries an important meaning, nonetheless. The central idea of the “missional Church” is that the Church does not exist for the sake of its own agenda or to guarantee its own survival. The Church exists to participate with Christ

in his mission of transforming lives, societies, and ultimately creation. The Church does not accomplish that transformation on its own, but it bears witness to it and lives on the strength of God's promised future.

The work of bearing this witness takes place at the level of the congregation, in the proclamation of the Word to a world that desperately needs to hear it, in the administration of the sacraments that offers a connection between the harsh realities of our lives and the hoped-for new reality of God, and in the nurture of a covenant community that is inviting and open to discipling people in the way of Jesus Christ. To be a "missional" presbytery, then, means that the presbytery must find ways to support congregations in their ministries of proclamation, sacramental life, and disciple-making. We do that by supporting congregations individually, and also by connecting the people and resources of multiple congregations together to serve the mission of Christ collectively.

The SPT believes this is exactly what our mission statement calls us to do:

The mission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine is to serve Jesus Christ by

- \* Strengthening our congregations in their ministries and
- \* Enabling us to accomplish together what none could accomplish alone.

### ***Praxis***

*How are we called to go about doing this work?* This is the third question with which the SPT sought to struggle. The guiding vision we saw in answering this question was

- \* a presbytery that was a learning community, that valued its heritage but understood that its heritage does not provide all the answers (*humility*);
- \* a presbytery that was ready to develop new partnerships across old lines of disagreement (*reconciliation*); and
- \* a presbytery committed to following Jesus Christ in ministry more than to managing programs or maintaining a committee structure (*trust*).

We sought to treasure the things that have been vital and life-giving for us, carry forward the things that are essential for our transition to what we shall become, and grow in our ability to address the new and unanticipated.

We were led in this work by the guidance of the Presbytery Council, which discerned five core visions for the kind of presbytery it wanted us to become. The Council wanted us to be a presbytery that is:

*Relational, communal, and connected* – valuing our relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ even in times of disagreement, providing supportive care to one another in times of crisis, and nurturing a covenant community of disciples.

*Theologically engaged* – bringing the best of our theological tradition and resources to bear on the issues and problems that we face together in ministry, and committed to teaching that tradition to ministers, candidates, elders, and members of congregations in our presbytery.

*Outwardly focused, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ* – reaching out into the communities where our congregations are located with the good news that God loves the world and invites all people into fellowship with him in Christ.

*Willing to risk itself and its resources in the service of the Gospel* – seeking to learn newer and more effective ways of being a presbytery, even when that learning means change.

*Ready to share resources and to develop energetic leadership* – Developing mechanisms and processes for sharing good ideas and best practices, and focusing on equipping elders, deacons, and ministers for the challenges of leading the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Ministry Areas***

Perhaps the most important task was to distill our thinking into a vision for the ministry of the presbytery. We believe we have done that.

We believe that there are three core ministries to which the presbytery must be committed if it is effectively to serve the mission of Jesus Christ in Northeast Florida. Each of these ministries is grounded in the three-fold work of the church: the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the nurture of a covenant community of disciples. Each is also reflective of the historic role played by presbyteries since the beginnings of the Reformed tradition.

#### *Strengthening Missional Congregations*

The presbytery encourages and works with congregations to become transformed, outwardly focused, and engaged in mission in their communities. It provides support and resources for congregations and ministers in crisis and transition.

Congregations are the Church engaged in mission in their context. They are called upon to proclaim the Word compellingly and invitingly, so that people both within and beyond the church walls are called to see themselves as part of the story of God's grace. They are sacramental communities that form a bridge between the alienation and hunger of the world and the gracious community and generous meal of grace offered at font and table. They are communities of faith whose central task is to "make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to observe" the way of Jesus Christ. Presbytery's role in this ministry is to strengthen and support the work of its congregations by offering regular counsel and guidance; opportunities for education, growth, and outreach; and support through periods of congregational crisis and pastoral transition. In so doing, the presbytery fulfills its mission of "strengthening the ministry of its congregations."

#### *Developing New Missional Communities*

The presbytery establishes new congregations, and encourages the development of Bible study fellowships, mission works, and other faith communities by instilling a vision for new witness, and by networking congregations and individuals who share a vision for such communities.

New communities of witness – new churches, new mission works, new fellowships for Bible study and service – are all expressions of the impetus to proclaim the Word and nurture disciples. Presbytery's role in this ministry is in networking individuals and congregations together in this work, and in locating resources from the synod and General Assembly to support it. In so doing, the presbytery fulfills its mission of "enabling us to do together what none could accomplish alone."

*Forming Missional Leaders*

The presbytery teaches officers and members the skills needed to lead missional congregations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. It nurtures the sense of call and guides the educational development of persons called to ministry.

Missional leaders are those ministers, elders, deacons, and other believers who are prepared to lead congregations into the future through challenging proclamation of the Word, faithful offering of sacramental community, and thoughtful nurture of the community of disciples. Presbytery's role in this ministry is to oversee the development and education of ministers, offer educational opportunities for elders and deacons, and provide occasions for spiritual formation and growth that bring together people from multiple congregations as well as from outside the church. In so doing, the presbytery fulfills its historic role in preparing new ministers, as well as its theological calling to nurture the covenant community of disciples.

## PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

### IDENTITY: WHO ARE WE?

“The Church of Jesus Christ is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all humanity. The Church is called to be the sign in and for the world of the new reality God has made available to people in Jesus Christ” (*The Book of Order*, G-3.0200).

As a part of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Presbytery of St. Augustine participates in this identity and demonstrates in its life and work God’s new reality to its members, its communities, and to the world.

### POLITY: WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO?

#### CORE TASKS OF THE CHURCH:

The Church, if it true to its calling to demonstrate God’s new reality to the world, engages in three core tasks:

- \*The true proclamation of the Word, in which God is revealed to us;
- \*The right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus; and
- \*The nurture of the covenant community through the upright ministry of ecclesiastical discipline.

#### THE MISSION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE:

The mission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine is to serve Jesus Christ by

- \* Strengthening our congregations in their ministries and
- \* Enabling us to accomplish together what none could accomplish alone.

### PRAXIS: HOW SHALL WE DO WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO?

#### PRACTICAL VALUES:

The Presbytery of St. Augustine understands its ministry at this time and in this place to be guided by five practical values that describe the presbytery’s work. The presbytery is:

- \* Relational, communal, and connected,
- \* Theologically engaged,
- \* Outwardly focused, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ,
- \* Willing to risk itself and its resources in the service of the Gospel, and
- \* Ready to share resources and to develop energetic leadership

### A MISSIONAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH

The strategic plan makes a significant commitment to a *missional* view of the church. This view is carefully discussed in many books and studies, but it can be summarized briefly:

A missional church understands that it exists to serve the mission of God in the world. God’s mission in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit is to transform human lives, societies, and all creation according to God’s intent. The church is called to bear witness to and to participate in God’s transforming work through proclaiming God’s Word, sharing God’s presence in the Sacraments, and forming communities of disciples who follow the way of Jesus Christ. The church’s purpose is not to serve its own agenda or to guarantee its own survival, but to give itself fully and completely to God’s mission in the world.



# 1. THE MINISTRY OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

## 1.01 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine is to serve Jesus Christ by strengthening our congregations in their ministries and enabling us to accomplish together what none could accomplish alone.

(Adopted by the presbytery on 24 October 2000)

## 1.02 VALUES STATEMENT

The Presbytery of St. Augustine understands its ministry at this time and in this place to be guided by five practical values that describe the presbytery's work. The presbytery is:

- \* Relational, communal, and connected,
- \* Theologically engaged,
- \* Outwardly focused, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ,
- \* Willing to risk itself and its resources in the service of the Gospel, and
- \* Ready to share resources and to develop energetic leadership

(Adopted by Presbytery's Council, 16 April 2007)

## 1.03 MINISTRY AREAS

The Presbytery of St. Augustine has discerned that its service to Jesus Christ and his Church calls on it to engage in three particular areas of ministry:

### STRENGTHENING MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS

- Encouraging congregations toward transformation, becoming outwardly focused and engaged in mission in their communities, and
- Providing support and resources for congregations and ministers in crisis and transition.

### DEVELOPING NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

- Establishing new congregations, Bible study fellowships, mission works, and other communities of faith by instilling a vision for new witness and networking congregations and individuals,

### FORMING MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Teaching officers and members the skills needed to lead missional congregations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century church, and
- Nurturing the sense of call and guiding the educational development of persons responding to a call to ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

## **1.04 MINISTRY AREA STRATEGIC GOALS**

Each ministry area has specific goals toward which the presbytery will work and against which it will measure its progress.

### STRENGTHENING MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS

1. Develop and maintain relationships with congregations and ministers to assist in mission and transformation
2. Implement the Acts 16:5 initiative in at least 15 congregations
3. Enable congregations and pastors to share experience and insight related to mission and transformation
4. Provide speakers and events for congregational leadership development and transformation
5. Provide support, guidance and resources for congregations and ministers in pastoral transition
6. Provide support, guidance, and resources for congregations in crisis

### DEVELOPING NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

1. Develop new missional congregations
2. Develop new mission projects within the bounds of the presbytery
3. Develop and/or expand mission projects beyond the bounds of the presbytery
4. Develop new fellowships or congregations among non-dominant cultural communities

### FORMING MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. Identify candidates for theological education from congregations in the presbytery
2. Supervise the education and development of candidates and inquirers for ministry, especially in missional leadership skills
3. Implement a high-quality program for training Commissioned Lay Pastors
4. Implement a high-quality program for officer education
5. Develop pastoral accountability groups
6. Develop programs and events for spiritual formation
7. Continue and develop the presbytery's Enrichment program
8. Develop a scholarship in missional leadership formation

## 2. THE PRESBYTERY

2.01 The presbytery shall be known as the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

2.02 The Presbytery of St. Augustine is a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) related to the Synod of South Atlantic. The presbytery operates under the provisions of the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The rules of order, unless otherwise stated in the Manual of Operations, shall be *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

2.03 The geographical jurisdiction of the presbytery includes the counties of: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy less the community of Yankeetown, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, Taylor and Union.

2.04 The Presbytery of St. Augustine shall meet for at least three stated meetings each year: Winter, Spring, and Fall. Ordinarily, these meetings shall be scheduled on the first Saturday of February, and the First Tuesdays of May, and October. A quorum for a meeting of the presbytery shall be at least three teaching elders and three ruling elders, representing three different congregations (G-3.0304).

2.05 The Presbytery of St. Augustine and the presbytery corporations shall meet at the same time and place, and in the announcement of the meeting, "The Presbytery of St. Augustine" shall designate both its functions.

2.06 Presbytery shall elect the membership of all committees and commissions. Nominations to membership of all presbytery committees shall be made through the Nominations and Representation Committees. The Presbytery Council shall nominate the membership of the Nominations and Representation Committees, for election by the presbytery.

### **Membership of the Presbytery**

2.07 Membership of presbytery shall consist of all enrolled, ordained teaching elders, together with ruling elder commissioners elected by the session of each church of the presbytery. Sessions shall elect ruling elder commissioners according to congregational membership, according to the following table:

1-500 members	1 commissioner
501-1000 members	2 commissioners
1001-1500 members	3 commissioners
1501-2000 members	4 commissioners
2001-3000 members	5 commissioners

3001 or more – one additional commissioner for each 1000 members (or major fraction thereof) above 3000 (G-3.0301).

Any ruling elder not commissioned by his/her church to serve as a commissioner to presbytery, while serving as the chairperson of a committee/standing commission of presbytery or as the moderator of Presbyterian Women, shall be enrolled as a member of presbytery during his/her tenure as chairperson. Any ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service shall be enrolled as a member during the tenure of his/her commission. Further, any ruling elder elected to an office in presbytery or serving as executive presbyter (including an interim or transitional executive presbyter) shall also be enrolled as a member of presbytery during the term of his/her office.

Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders are entitled to the privileges of voice and vote at meetings of presbytery. (G-2.1103b).

At the winter stated meeting of each year, the stated clerk shall report to the presbytery the number of resident active teaching elder members of the presbytery, and the number of ruling elders in the following categories: ruling elder commissioners eligible to be elected from each session, ruling elders who are Certified Christian Educators or commissioned to pastoral service, and ruling elders who are moderators of committees or commissions of the presbytery. If the number of resident active teaching elders exceeds the sum of the ruling elders eligible, the stated clerk shall put forward a motion asking particular congregations to elect an additional elder commissioner in such numbers as will equalize the eligible ruling elder commissioners with resident active teaching elder members. The clerk shall create the list of congregations by rotating through the alphabetical list of congregations in the presbytery (G-3.0301).

2.08 Each teaching elder member, unless Honorably Retired, shall be required to attend every stated meeting of presbytery, or shall present acceptable reasons to the presbytery through the Stated Clerk for absence, late arrival, or departure before adjournment.

2.09 Any of the following, if not a member of or commissioner to presbytery, shall be corresponding members, but without vote: the spokesperson of any presbytery committee (if other than the chair), the spokesperson of any commission or task force; any executive, officer, or spokesperson from synod or General Assembly; certified educators of presbytery's churches who are not ruling elders; guests of the presbytery who are members of other presbyteries, and members of the program staff of the presbytery.

### **Presbytery Corporations**

2.10 The Presbytery of St. Augustine shall create and maintain two Florida not-for-profit corporations, called "The Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc," and "Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc." The membership of both corporations shall be the members of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, and meetings of the presbytery shall simultaneously and co-terminously be meetings of the corporations. Trustees of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc, shall also be Trustees of Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc.

## Officers of the Presbytery

2.11 At the Winter Stated Meeting, presbytery's nominating committee shall present nominations for Moderator, Moderator-elect, and Moderator in Nomination, Treasurer, and when appropriate, Stated Clerk. Those elected shall be installed at the meeting at which they are elected to begin their term at once.

2.12 The Moderator shall serve for one year, shall preside at all meetings of presbytery and shall perform all the duties as prescribed in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0104. In the event that the Moderator cannot preside, the Moderator of the Presbytery Council shall preside *pro tempore*.

2.13 The Moderator shall be a member of the Presbytery Council with vote and an advisory member with voice and no vote of every commission, committee, and task force.

2.14 Ordinarily, the office of Moderator shall alternate between ruling elders and teaching elders, and between male and female.

2.15 The Stated Clerk shall be elected for a three-year term and shall be eligible for reelection. The Stated Clerk shall perform those duties and functions prescribed in the *Book of Order* G-3.0104 and G-3.0305 and as indicated in the presbytery's policy regarding the approval of investigating committees (Approval of Investigating Committees in the policy manual). The Executive Presbyter may be elected as Stated Clerk of the presbytery. The Stated Clerk may recommend assistant clerks as needed to the Nominating Committee for election by the presbytery.

2.16 The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the presbytery and shall be eligible for reelection. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the funds of the presbytery as authorized; keep detailed account of all receipts and disbursements and report them to the Presbytery Council and to the Board of Trustees regularly and to the presbytery annually; be bonded, along with others who handle presbytery finances; and see that the books are properly audited as prescribed by the *Book of Order*, G-3.0113. The Treasurer shall also act as the treasurer of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc., and Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc. The Treasurer may serve as a member of the Presbytery Council, the Board of Trustees of the presbytery corporations, and shall be an advisory member of the Administration and Finance Committee.

## 3 THE PRESBYTERY COUNCIL

3.01 The purpose of the Presbytery Council is to coordinate the work of the presbytery, its entities and staff, and to discharge any other responsibilities assigned to it by the presbytery. Additionally, it shall be constituted as a standing commission to address on behalf of the presbytery such matters as may arise between meetings of the presbytery and require immediate attention. It is accountable to the presbytery in the discharge of all its responsibilities and actions.

3.02 The membership of the Presbytery Council shall consist of the moderator of each presbytery committee or commission, the Moderator, Moderator-elect, and Moderator-in-Nomination of the presbytery; the moderator of Presbyterian Women; the commissioners to the Synod of South Atlantic elected by the presbytery; the President of the presbytery corporations; the moderator of the Executive Operating Board of Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc.; and eight persons elected at-large from the presbytery, including two persons from non-dominant racial/ethnic communities within the presbytery, each elected for three year terms. The Nominating Committee shall nominate persons for election by the presbytery, keeping in mind the skills needed for completion of the work of the council as outlined below. The Stated Clerk, Executive Presbyter, and Mission Coordinators shall be advisory members with privilege of voice but not vote.

3.03 The Presbytery Council will be moderated by the immediate past Moderator of presbytery. The council may also elect a vice-moderator. The Stated Clerk of the presbytery shall serve as clerk for the council.

3.04 The Presbytery Council shall maintain four committees, the members of which shall be drawn from the membership of the council, with responsibilities as assigned below. All subcommittees shall report to the council, which shall report their work to the presbytery as a whole.

3.05 *Presbytery Worship and Meeting Planning:* This committee shall be responsible:

- a. To recommend to presbytery times and places for all meetings of the presbytery;
- b. To prepare the docket for meetings of presbytery, including the omnibus motion, with the assistance of the Stated Clerk;
- c. To plan the meetings of presbytery, including its worship and programs for education, and to invite preachers and speakers for meetings of presbytery as may be of particular interest to the presbytery;
- d. To administer the following policies in the presbytery's policy manual:
  - Communion at Presbytery Gatherings
  - Inclusive Language Guidelines for Worship Leaders
  - Worship at Presbytery Meetings

3.06 *Personnel:* This committee shall be responsible:

- a. To supervise and review the performance of the Executive Presbyter;
- b. To review, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter, the performance of the presbytery staff, including annual and five-year reviews; and
- c. To recommend staff salaries and benefits to the presbytery for approval.
- d. To administer the following policies in the presbytery's policy manual:
  - Executive Annual and Five-Year Comprehensive Reviews
  - Parental Leave Policy
  - Policy regarding Sabbatical Leave
  - Personnel Policy Manual for the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

3.07 *Bills and Overtures:* This committee shall be responsible:

- a. To receive overtures from sessions, according to the policy, “Overtures Presented to the Presbytery,” in the presbytery’s policy manual, and to make recommendations to the presbytery regarding their disposition;
- b. To make recommendations to the presbytery regarding the disposition of requests for concurrence with overtures received from other presbyteries or other councils;
- c. To recommend to the presbytery action on proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
- d. To accomplish its work in light of the presbytery policy on Overtures Presented to the Presbytery.

3.08 *Review and Evaluation:* This committee shall be responsible

- a. To coordinate the ministry of the presbytery, including all its entities and staff, providing for regular review of the functional relationship between presbytery’s structure and its mission (G-3.0301 and 3.033a); and
- b. To approve the minutes of meetings of presbytery, after preparation by the Stated Clerk, and upon review by the Moderator of Presbytery;

3.09 *Plenary Functions:* In addition to the committee functions outlined above, the Presbytery Council shall have responsibility for the following:

- a. To propose to the presbytery, at the recommendation of the Administration and Finance Committee, the annual asking and operating budgets for the presbytery, including levels of funding for the various ministries of the presbytery, and to circulate those budgets among the sessions;
- b. To nominate for election by the presbytery the membership of the Nominating and Representation Committees; and
- c. To address such matters as may be referred to the council by the presbytery
- d. To administer the following policies in the presbytery’s policy manual:
  - Policy for Giving
  - Presbytery-wide Annual Offerings for the Benefit of Outside Entities

3.10 The Presbytery Council may, at its discretion, establish such *ad hoc* task forces or committees as needed to accomplish particular tasks.

3.11 The Presbytery Council shall ordinarily meet approximately one month prior to each stated meeting of the presbytery.

## 4 RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

4.01 The presbytery possesses significant resources to support and strengthen the ministries of its congregations in its commissions, committees, and covenant relationships; in the validated non-parish ministries of its teaching elder members; and in its staff. The

commissions, committees, and relationships of the presbytery are not the ministry of the presbytery; rather, they are resources upon which the presbytery and its congregations may draw as they seek to participate in the mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

## Commissions

4.02 *Standing Commissions and Trustees.* The Presbytery of St. Augustine shall maintain the following standing commissions:

- a. Permanent Judicial Commission
- b. Examinations Commission
- c. Trustees
- d. Presbytery Council, for matters arising between stated meetings (sec. 3.01 above)

The presbytery encourages its commissions and committees to meet in person when possible. However, electronic meetings (teleconference, audio-conference, Internet) are authorized so long as they provide an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those held in one room or area. The notice of the meeting shall include an adequate description of how to participate in it. A committee may allow some members to participate in person and others by the type of electronic connection described above. The by-laws of the corporations may provide for voting by e-mail as permitted by Florida corporate law, but only under the guidelines contained in those bylaws.

4.03 Members of standing commissions shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee for election to terms of up to three years and shall be eligible for reelection, provided that no member shall serve an aggregate of more than six consecutive years on the same commission. Terms shall begin on 1 January and expire on 31 December.

4.04 *Permanent Judicial Commission.* The Permanent Judicial Commission shall hear and decide cases of process on behalf of the presbytery according to the Rules of Discipline. The function, membership, terms of service, and manner of election of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be in every way consonant with the provisions of D-5.0000 of the *Book of Order*, and of the Rules of Discipline as a whole. The commission shall have nine members, as nearly equally divided as possible between ruling elders and teaching elders.

4.05 The Moderator of the Presbytery, the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, and the Stated Clerk are empowered to act on behalf of the presbytery to create an Investigating Committee and/or a Committee of Counsel as needed under the provisions of the Book of Order D-6.0302a and D-10.0201b

4.06 *Examinations Commission.* The Examinations Commission is empowered to examine and admit to membership all persons seeking membership in the Presbytery of St. Augustine, and to approve terms of call and commissions of ordination and/or installation for those it examines (G-3.0109b(3)). The functions, membership, terms of service, and manner of election of the Examinations Commission are defined in the policy, "Examination Process for Candidates and Ministers." The commission shall administer the



presbytery's policies on "Clergy Compensation" and "Mentoring for Incoming Ministers." The commission shall have nine members, as nearly equally divided as possible between ruling elders and teaching elders.

4.07 *Trustees.* The Trustees shall serve as the trustees of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc. and of Montgomery Conference Center, Inc., under the provisions of G-4.0101 of the *Book of Order*, and shall recommend annually to the presbytery at its Winter Stated Meeting the election of the President of the Corporations. The President may not be the current Moderator of the presbytery or Moderator of the council.

The Trustees shall serve as a commission of the presbytery to consider and decide requests for approval and/or guarantee of loans to congregations under the provisions of G-4.0206a of the *Book of Order*, and all requests to sell or lease real property held in trust by congregations of the presbytery under the provisions of G-4.0206a,b of the *Book of Order*, subject to the exceptions granted by the presbytery under the provisions of G-4.0208 of the *Book of Order*. The process for considering approval for church loans and property sales is defined in the policy, "Loan Guarantee and Property Sales Approval between Meetings of Presbytery." The Trustees may, at their discretion, forward to the presbytery a loan guarantee request that might benefit from the consideration and vote of the whole presbytery. The Trustees shall further be guided by the presbytery's policies on "The Purchase and Sale of Property for New Church Developments" and "Title Transfer of New Church Development Sites."

The Trustees shall have nine members, as nearly equally divided as possible between ruling elders and teaching elders.

4.08 *Other Administrative Commissions.* The presbytery may elect such administrative commissions as it deems necessary to its work, under the provisions of G-3.0109b of the *Book of Order*.

## **Committees**

4.09 The presbytery shall maintain the following committees, as well as those it deems beneficial and contributory to its ministry:

- a. Committee on Ministry (G-3.0307 and 3.0305c-d, and section 4.11 below)
- b. Committee on Preparation for Ministry (G-3.0307 and section 4.12 below)
- c. Presbytery Council (section 3 above)
- d. Nominating Committee (G-3.0111 and section 4.13 below),
- e. Representation Committee (G-3.0103 and section 4.13 below), and
- f. Administration and Finance Committee (section 4.14 below)
- g. St. Augustine Mutual Mission Committee (section 4.15 below)

The quorum for the meetings of all committees of presbytery shall be at least 50 percent.

4.10 Members of presbytery committees shall be elected by the presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee. They shall serve terms of 3 years or less and are

eligible for reelection, except that no person shall serve more than an aggregate of six consecutive years on the same committee. Terms shall begin on 1 January and expire on 31 December.

4.11 *Committee on Ministry.* The purposes of the Committee on Ministry shall be to “serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and Certified Christian Educators; to facilitate relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, and Certified Christian Educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery wherever possible and expedient” (G-3.0307). In addition, the committee shall seek to provide resources for the ministry areas of the presbytery as defined in section 1.04 above, especially in the area of Strengthening Missional Congregations. The Committee on Ministry shall administer the following policies in the presbytery’s policy manual

- Certified Christian Educators
- Counseling Guidelines for Church Pastors
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Guidelines for Collegial Relations
- Minimum Terms of Call
- Mission Study Task Force
- Pastoral Care Network
- Relationship with Pastoral Counseling Center
- Scholarship Support for Pastoral Counseling
- Policy Regarding Seminary Indebtedness
- Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- Validating the Ministry of Continuing Members

The committee shall be constituted as a standing commission to approve requests for the transfer of a teaching elder to another presbytery. The committee shall consist of at least eighteen members, with ruling elders and teaching elders in roughly equal numbers.

4.12 *Committee on Preparation for Ministry.* The purpose of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall be “to guide, nurture, and oversee the process of becoming a teaching elder” for persons in the care of the presbytery (G-3.0307). In addition, the committee shall seek to provide resources for the ministry areas of the presbytery as defined in section 1.04 above, especially in the area of Forming Missional Leadership. The Committee on Preparation shall administer the presbytery’s policies on “Candidate Support Fund Offerings” and “Authorization to Transfer Candidates.”

The committee shall consist of fifteen members, with ruling elders and teaching elders in roughly equal numbers.

4.13 *Nominating and Representation Committees.* The responsibilities of the Nominating Committee are defined by G-3.0111 of the *Book of Order*. The Nominating Committee shall administer the presbytery’s policies on the process for nominating for election commissioners to General Assembly and to Synod.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of nine members, arranged in three classes and each serving three-year terms. The membership shall be one-third teaching elders and two thirds members of congregations, equally men and women. They shall be nominated by the Presbytery Council for election by the presbytery at the Fall Stated Meeting each year.

The responsibilities and membership composition of the Representation Committee are defined by G-3.0103 of the Book of Order.

The Committee on Representation will consist of six members, divided equally men and women, and consisting of at least three members of racial ethnic minority status and at least one person who self-identifies as disabled. Normally, the committee will have persons of varying ages and geographical diversity, as well as persons from churches of various sizes. The committee will usually consist of three teaching elders and three members of a congregation of the presbytery (not limited to ruling elders.) They will be divided into three classes of two each and elect their own chair and vice-chair, as appropriate.

After the first election, they shall be nominated by the Presbytery Council for election by the presbytery at the Fall Stated Meeting each year.

Ordinarily, the Nominating and Representation Committees shall meet together.

4.14 *Administration and Finance Committee.* The responsibilities of the Administration and Finance Committee shall be to provide oversight, planning, and management of the funds and properties owned by the Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc. and the Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc., subject always to the direction of the presbytery. It shall prepare and recommend to the Presbytery Council the annual operating budget for the presbytery, and it shall receive and communicate to the presbytery the annual operating budget for Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center. It shall provide periodic training for congregational treasurers. In all its efforts, the committee shall seek to provide financial and administrative resources to all the ministry areas of the presbytery. The Administration and Finance Committee shall administer the presbytery's Investment Policy.

This committee shall consist of six members.

4.15 *St. Augustine Mutual Mission Committee.* The function of the St. Augustine Mutual Mission Committee shall be to oversee, coordinate, and recruit participants in the various ministries of the Mutual Mission, in cooperation and consultation with our partner, the Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission. It shall administer and be guided by the presbytery's policy, "Activities of Ministers, Churches, and Session in Participating in International Missions." It shall seek to maintain and strengthen the mutual mission effort in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries and within the bounds of this presbytery. The committee shall plan ways for raising both funds and awareness in support of the mutual mission. It shall annually submit its budget to the presbytery for approval.

The committee shall consist of at least nine members.

## Covenant Relationships

4.16 *Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center.* The Presbytery of St. Augustine exists in covenant relationship with Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, a wholly-owned camp, conference, and retreat facility located near Starke, Florida. The membership of the corporation, Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc. is co-terminous with the membership of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc., and the officers and trustees of one are the officers and trustees of the other.

The presbytery supports the ministry of Montgomery Conference Center through contributions from its operating budget; the participation of its congregations and members in the programs and ministries of Montgomery Conference Center; through volunteer groups that help with improvements to the Conference Center site; through participation in the Trustees' election of the Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center Executive Operating Board, upon nomination of that Board; and through the regular welcome and grant of privilege of voice to members of the Montgomery Conference Center program staff.

Montgomery Conference Center contributes to the ministry of the presbytery by offering a ministry of hospitality on behalf of the presbytery to congregations, members, ministers, and others; by conducting a high-quality, Christ-centered ministry of camping and retreat to the presbytery and, on behalf of the presbytery, to groups and organizations who seek the benefits of such ministry; by providing a place for groups and individuals to experience the goodness of God's creation; by offering opportunities for spiritual growth and education for pastors, leaders, and members of congregations; by supporting leadership development in the presbytery through ministry with youth and young adults; and by providing both a place and leadership for occasions of recreation and retreat.

The Executive Director of Montgomery Conference Center shall participate with the executive and administrative staff of the presbytery in staff planning and coordination.

4.17 *Mutual Mission in Jamaica and Cuba.* The Presbytery of St. Augustine, Inc., exists in covenant relationship with the Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission (JEMM) for the purpose of furthering the cause of mutual mission in Florida, Jamaica, and Cuba. The mutual mission effort is governed by the terms of the document "An Ecumenical Mutual Mission: Memorandum of Understanding" and the presbytery's policy "Activities of Churches, Ministers, and Sessions participating in International Mission Relationships." The presbytery manages its relationship with JEMM through its Mutual Mission Committee.

The presbytery supports the ministry of JEMM through annual contributions from its designated reserves; through the election of the members of the Mutual Mission Committee; through the recruitment of medical and dental professionals for the medical and dental missions; through the recruitment of young people and adults for the cultural exchange missions; and through hospitality to brothers and sisters from JEMM who visit within our bounds.

JEMM supports the ministry of the presbytery through its supervision of those ministries in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries which receive financial support from the presbytery; and through hospitality to brothers and sisters from the Presbytery of St. Augustine who visit in their countries.

### **Validated Ministries of Teaching Elder Members**

4.18 The Presbytery of St. Augustine is blessed by the service of many of its teaching elder members in various forms of validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church. Chaplains, pastoral counselors, teachers and professors, administrators of church-related entities – each brings unique combinations of talents and experience

### **Resource Center**

4.19 The presbytery shall operate a Resource Center that houses a circulating collection of books, curriculum, and electronic media to support the educational ministries of its congregations.

The presbytery shall employ a Director of the Resource Center who shall manage the center's collection and circulation. The director shall be a member of the administrative staff of the presbytery.

### **Presbytery Staff**

4.20 The presbytery shall elect an Executive Presbyter, after consultation with the Synod and upon nomination by a search committee elected by the presbytery. Election shall be by ballot, with the vote of two-thirds of those present and voting required for election. The term of office shall be at the will of the presbytery. The relationship between the Executive Presbyter and the presbytery may be dissolved by the presbytery under the terms of G-9.0705 of the *Book of Order*. There shall be an annual review and a five-year comprehensive review of the Executive Presbyter, as governed by presbytery policy.

4.21 The Executive Presbyter shall serve the presbytery as its spiritual leader, chief administrator, and head of the executive and administrative staff. The Executive Presbyter shall be accountable to the presbytery for the implementation of presbytery's decisions through the committees. The Executive Presbyter and/or designated members of the executive staff shall be members, *ex officio* and without vote, of every council, commission, committee, and task force; and shall perform the duties outlined in the *Book of Order*, G-9.0701.

4.22 The presbytery shall elect, upon nomination by a search committee of the presbytery, and after an open search, such Mission Coordinators as may be determined by the Presbytery Council to be necessary to serve the mission and ministry of the presbytery. Mission Coordinators shall have the status of Associate Executive Presbyter. Election shall be by majority vote of those present and voting. The term of office shall be indefinite. The Presbytery Council, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter, shall conduct annual reviews of all Mission Coordinators.

4.23 Mission Coordinators shall lead and guide the ministry of the presbytery in the particular ministry areas to which they are elected, and as assigned by the Executive Presbyter. They shall be accountable to and under the supervision of the Executive Presbyter and ultimately to the Presbytery Council for the progress of the presbytery in the particular ministry area in their charge. They shall be responsible to assist the presbytery in the accomplishment of the ministry area strategic goals in section 1.04 of this manual and as enumerated in the position descriptions appended to this manual.

4.24 The presbytery shall maintain such administrative offices as necessary for the work of the whole presbytery. There should be adequate administrative staff for the fulfillment of presbytery responsibilities. Position descriptions for all members of the administrative staff are appended to this manual. The Presbytery Council may engage or dismiss office staff as necessary, upon recommendation of the Executive Presbyter. All searches for administrative staff shall pursue affirmative action hiring procedures congruent with the principles of participation and representation in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 of the *Book of Order*.

4.25 All searches for executive, mission coordinator and executive director positions shall be conducted by representative search committees nominated by the Presbytery Council and in accordance with the provisions of G-3.0110 of the *Book of Order*, and with special attention to principles of participation and representation in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103.

4.26 All members of the executive and administrative staff of the presbytery shall be given, read, and agree to be governed by the Personnel Policies of the presbytery, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy, as a condition of employment.

4.27 The relationship of an executive presbyter, stated clerk, or mission coordinator to the presbytery may be dissolved upon the request of the executive presbyter or mission coordinator and with the approval of the presbytery or the Presbytery Council. The relationship of an executive presbyter, stated clerk, or mission coordinator may also be dissolved by the presbytery, according to the following process:

- a. When the Presbytery Council decides to recommend to the presbytery that the relationship be dissolved, it shall notify the person in writing, stating the reasons for proposing to terminate, and offering the staff member an opportunity to resign or to request a hearing before the recommendations are adopted and reported to the presbytery for action.
- b. The staff member may appear personally at the hearing, and may be accompanied by counsel (D-7.0301 and D-11.0301), to respond to the findings of the council and present reasons and evidence why the relationship should not be dissolved. The hearing shall afford safeguards as in cases of process, following the rules of evidence in Chapter XIV of the Rules of Discipline.
- c. If, after the hearing, the Council remains determined to recommend that the relationship be dissolved, it shall report its recommendation for action by the presbytery at the next meeting. A majority of those present and voting shall be required to dissolve the relationship.

Separation of administrative staff shall be governed by the presbytery's personnel policy, section 6.

## 5. BUDGET PROCESS

5.01 All requests for funds to be included in the operating budget of the presbytery for the coming year shall be submitted to the Executive Presbyter no later than 1 September of the current budget year. Mission coordinators are responsible for submitting requests for funding in their respective ministry areas; and moderators of committees, commissions, and entities are responsible to submit requests for their work areas.

5.02 The Executive Presbyter, in consultation with the Treasurer and the Moderator of the Administration and Finance Committee, shall prepare an asking budget based on submitted budget requests and shall present that budget to the Administration and Finance Committee for its review and approval.

5.03 The Administration and Finance Committee shall present the asking budget to Presbytery Council for its approval and presentation to the presbytery at the Summer Stated Meeting of the presbytery. The presbytery shall receive the asking budget as information, and comment on the budget shall be invited from the floor.

5.04 The Presbytery Council shall circulate the asking budget among the congregations and sessions of the presbytery, together with an invitation to each session to make a commitment to the work of the presbytery (and through it, the synod and General Assembly) for the coming year and information about the General Assembly per capita assessment for the coming year. The invitation may also include opportunities to make designated or special commitments to particular ministries of the presbytery, synod, and/or General Assembly, over and above the commitment to the operating budget for the coming year.

5.05 Sessions shall prayerfully consider their commitments to the work of the presbytery, in light of the presbytery's "Policy on Giving," and communicate their commitments to the Executive Presbyter by 31 December.

5.06 The Executive Presbyter, Mission Coordinators, Treasurer, and Moderator of the Administration and Finance Committee shall prepare a draft of the operating budget, based on the asking budget and considering committed and estimated session contributions. They shall present the draft operating budget to the Administration and Finance Committee for its approval, and the committee shall present its recommended operating budget to the Presbytery Council for its approval at the January meeting of the council. The council shall present the operating budget to the presbytery for approval at the Winter Stated Meeting of each year.

5.07 Mission Coordinators, under the supervision of the Executive Presbyter, shall be responsible to approve all expenditures appropriate to their ministry areas; committee moderators shall be responsible to approve all expenditures allocated to their committees.

Overall management of the budget shall be the responsibility of the Administration and Finance Committee, which shall provide regular reports to the Presbytery Council and the presbytery.

5.08 The Executive Presbyter, in consultation with the Treasurer, the Moderator of Administration and Finance, and the Financial Secretary, shall establish and maintain a regular office procedure for handling the financial transactions and record-keeping of the presbytery, in accord with the principles of accounting.

## **6. AMENDING AND SUSPENDING THE MANUAL**

6.01 Presbytery may amend this manual after a first reading of any proposed changes at any Stated Meeting, and with a majority approval of those present and voting at a second Stated Meeting. It may also be amended by two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any Stated Meeting, provided that copies of all proposed changes are sent to all ministers and clerks of sessions no less than fifteen days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

6.02 Before any amendment to this manual is proposed to the presbytery, the amendment shall be reviewed in advance by the Stated Clerk, the Moderator, and the Moderator of the Presbytery Council.

6.03 No amendment to this manual may be adopted that is in conflict with provisions of the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

6.04 This manual may be suspended at any meeting of the presbytery, for the duration of that meeting only, by two-thirds vote of those present and voting. The reason(s) for the suspension of the manual shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.