

First Presbyterian Church of the City of Columbus, GA (FPC)

Bylaws

Adopted January 28, 2018

Statement of Purpose

The First Presbyterian Church Columbus, GA has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the Congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

Relation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-1.01)

The First Presbyterian Church Columbus, GA is a member church of the Flint River Presbytery in the Synod of South Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Through this relationship, the Session and Congregation participate in the life of the broader church with all the rights and responsibilities appropriate to this association.

Governance of the Church (F-2.02 and F-3.04)

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* which is defined as the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*. These documents are subject to Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. Consistent with that *Constitution*, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for *this* church. The latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

Membership of the Congregation (G-1.03 – G.1.04)

In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ. First Presbyterian Columbus, GA welcomes all persons who trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church. No person shall be denied membership for any reason not related to profession of faith.

Persons may enter into active church membership in the following ways:

1. Public profession of faith, made after careful examination by the Session in the meaning and responsibilities of membership; if not already baptized, the person making profession of faith shall be baptized.
2. Certificate of transfer, when a person is a member of another Christian church at the time of transfer.
3. Reaffirmation of faith, for persons previously baptized in the name of the triune God and having publicly professed their faith.

The membership of First Presbyterian Church Columbus, GA includes baptized members, active members, and affiliate members. Other participants, including members who have ceased active participation, are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of the church and receive its pastoral care and instruction.

Meetings of the Church (G-1.05)

There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Congregation in the first quarter of the calendar year, at which at least the following business shall be presented (if not presented earlier at an appropriately timed meeting):

1. Annual Reports from ministry teams and the Session (information only).

2. Financial Report for the preceding year.
3. Budget for the current year (information only).
4. Changes in the terms of call for the Pastor(s).

Special meetings may be called by the Session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call. (G-1.0501)

Notice of Meetings (G-1.05)

Adequate public notice of all Congregational Meetings shall be given, including notice given at regular Services of Worship prior to the meeting. Notification for all Congregational Meetings shall be verbal and written (in the Sunday Worship Bulletin) on two Sundays, including the week during which the meeting is to be held. The notice is to be included in electronic communication to the Congregation.

Quorum for a Congregational Meeting

The quorum for a Congregational Meeting shall consist of ten percent of the church membership at the time of the meeting.

Moderator and Secretary of Congregational Meetings (G-1.0504; G-1.0505)

The pastor shall moderate the meetings. If there is no pastor or the pastor is unable to attend the Session may invite another minister of the presbytery to preside. The Clerk of the Session shall be the secretary of the meetings. If the clerk is not able to serve, the Congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting.

Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the secretary, attested by the moderator and the secretary and approved by the Session at its next regular meeting. The approved minutes are then recorded in the Minute Book of the Session.

The Session (G-1.0503a; G-2.0401)

The Congregation shall elect, from its membership, 15 elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three year term. The Session will call a meeting of the Congregation for this purpose. Other matters may be presented at this meeting as well. No elder shall serve more than six consecutive years and an elder having served 6 consecutive years is ineligible for reelection to the Session for a period of one year.

The class of Elders should be representative of the Congregation in terms of age and gender. The Session shall have the responsibility for governing the Congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world. Accordingly, members shall be at least 25 years old and have been a member of FPC for at least one year.

The Session, at its first meeting following the installation of new elders shall appoint an individual who is or has previously served as an elder to serve as clerk. The Session will annually elect a Treasurer and may elect Assistant Treasurer's. There is no specified term limits for the office of clerk, treasurer or assistant treasurer. The pastor shall serve as the moderator of the Session.

A quorum for a meeting of the Session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer, and 50% plus 1 of the installed elders. The quorum for a meeting to receive new members is the moderator and two elders.

The Diaconate (G-2.0202; G-2.040)

The Congregation shall elect, from its membership, 6 Deacons divided into 3 equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The Session will call a meeting of the Congregation for this purpose. Other matters may be presented at this meeting as well. No Deacon shall serve more than six consecutive years and a Deacon having served 6 consecutive years is ineligible for reelection for a period of one year.

Deacons as set forth in Scripture are to be compassionate, witness and serve and share the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed or anyone in distress. The Session will have oversight responsibility for the Diaconate and will delegate their duties.

At the first meeting following their election, the Board of Deacons will elect one its members to serve as moderator. The pastor or associate pastor will be an advisory member of the Board. A quorum for the Board of Deacons is 50% plus 1.

Trustees (G-3.02)

The Congregation shall elect from its membership, 3 Trustees, divided into 3 equal classes, one of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Columbus, GA, pursuant to the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) hereby delegates to Trustees of said church the following responsibilities:

1. To oversee and continue to implement the Special Funds Policy of January 1, 2000, as revised August 27, 2001. Said policy is attached hereto and made a part hereof by reference.
2. To select and coordinate with the investment managers concerning all funds established by the Session.
3. To determine the availability and source of funds for purposes approved by the Session.
4. To sign all deeds and other legal instruments necessary for the sale, encumbering or leasing of church real property following approval of the transaction by the congregation.
5. To assure that the Goulding-Terry Pollard gravesite in Linwood Cemetery is maintained, including its monuments and markers. They shall also assure that the planting is adequate and well groomed.

Vacancies

Vacancies on the Session, the Board of Deacons or the Trustees may be filled at a special meeting of the Congregation or at the annual meeting, as the Session may determine.

Nominating Committee (G-2.0401)

The Evaluation & Planning Ministry is responsible for calling any nominating committee the church may require and will present it to the Session and the Congregation

for approval. Under normal circumstances, the Church Officer Nominating Committees will be minimally comprised by four members of the Congregation:

1. One currently serving Ruling Elder, who serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee.
2. Another second Ruling Elder (either actively serving or not currently serving).
3. A currently serving Deacon.
4. Other member(s) of the Congregation.

The Pastor shall be a member Ex-officio and without vote. The Elders shall be selected by the Session, the Deacon shall be selected by the Board of Deacons and all members of the Committee are to be elected by the Congregation. A majority of eligible active members present and voting at the called Congregational Meeting shall be required to elect.

Manual of Administrative Operations (G-3.0106)

The Session shall create and maintain a Manual of Administrative Operations which shall include policies and procedures of the Session. The Manual may include examples of policies or procedures or offer other information that enhances or secures the ministry of the Session and Congregation.

Each Ministry shall create a similar manual for its operation. The manual will outline the ministry scope, positional duties and responsibilities to facilitate a common understanding across the ministry and session.

The Session shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child protection policy.

Financial Administration (G-3.0205)

Each year, the Session shall prepare and adopt, once approved by the Congregation, a budget to determine the distribution of the Congregation's benevolences to support the church's mission. The Session upon recommendation from the Stewardship and Finance Ministry shall elect a treasurer, who serves as an officer of the church, for an annual term. The ministry, will report monthly to the Session on all financial activities. A full review of all financial books and records and an accounting for the proceeds of offerings and their disbursement shall be conducted a minimum of every three years by an independent auditor selected by Session. Such review shall include full information and reports from those in charge of various funds. Financial reviews or compilations will be performed by outside professionals in the off-audit years.

Amendments to the Congregational Bylaw

These Bylaws may be amended by the Congregation subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of Georgia and the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* by a two-thirds vote of the Session. The proposed changes shall be circulated and distributed in printed form at the same time as the call of the meeting at which changes are voted upon.

Incorporation

In accordance with the laws of the state of Georgia, the Congregation has formed a Corporation consistent with the laws of this state. Both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the Congregation. (G-1.0503).

The President of the Corporation shall be a Trustee who is in the second or third year of their term. The sole purpose of the office of the President is to provide information required by the Georgia Secretary of State in the annual corporate registration and the Trustee designated to be President shall have no rights, duties or obligations other than as a Trustee.