



**THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE  
MISSION AND OPERATIONS MANUAL  
(Standing Rules)**

*Our Mission Statement*

*The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is a community of disciples  
that engages in worshipful work in order to further the mission of God.*

*Our Core Values*

*Our identity as the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is grounded in the Triune God:  
in Jesus Christ,  
who moves us from brokenness to shalom.  
in God the Creator, whom Jesus called Abba, Father,  
who moves us from fear to generosity.  
in the Holy Spirit,  
who moves us from isolation to relationship.*

*Our Vision*

*The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is a community of churches and church leaders whose role is to  
guide and support the work of its constituents, striving to build up the body of Christ through  
connections of mutual support, creating a culture of leadership excellence, and church transformation.*

## **SECTION ONE**

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is grounded in its purpose to be faithful in its call to honor and serve our Triune God. The Presbytery's operations are rooted in its mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, to support the ministers of the Word and sacrament and ruling elders, and to build up the churches and ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Middle Tennessee. As specific contexts for ministry change and as we grow in clarity about ways God may be calling us, we commit to these guiding principles:

- Live in purposeful community, cultivating relationships of trust and love, fortified by honesty, transparency, and mutual accountability.
- Model inclusivity and accessibility, being especially attentive and welcoming to groups or persons who experience marginalization from our structure, operations, or practices.
- Engage collaboratively, as valued partners, inviting diverse voices to be heard and crucial conversations to be framed by mutual respect.
- Welcome, consider, and support creative innovations, including technology, in ministry and mission aligned with the Presbytery's mission, values, and vision.
- Speak, act, organize, and advocate for social justice, focused on dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty.
- Invest in congregational vitality by providing opportunities and committing resources for leadership excellence, mutual support, and church transformation.
- Express gratitude and amplify generosity for the abundant gifts from God and the dedicated stewardship of our churches, ministries, and their leaders and members.
- Adopt practices and policies which further the overall health and well-being of the Presbytery as we commit to protect the fragility of our planet.

“The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church” (Book of Order, F-1.01). More than as an institution to maintain or a corporation to preserve, we identify as a community of believers in Jesus Christ and as disciples called to follow Him. This Mission and Operations Manual derives its value and purpose as we work to discern and boldly live out God's mission in Middle Tennessee.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE PRESBYTERY**

This Council shall be known as The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Presbytery is established by authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Synod of Living Waters, and has those duties, authorities, powers, and responsibilities specified by the Book of Order. The Presbytery shall consist of all of the Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who have been received in membership and all of its member churches in Bedford, Bledsoe, Cannon, Cheatham, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, Davidson, Dekalb, Dickson, Fentress, Franklin, Giles, Grundy, Hardin, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Jackson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Moore, Overton, Perry, Pickett, Putnam, Robertson, Rutherford, Sequatchie, Smith, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Van Buren, Wayne, Warren, White, Williamson, and Wilson Counties, Tennessee.

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THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), is a public benefit corporation created by operation of Tenn. Code Ann. § 48-68-104(2) and a religious corporation within the meaning of Tenn. Code Ann. § 48-51-201(43). This Corporation was formed by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee pursuant to G-4.0101: “to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the council.” The Corporation is to facilitate the management of the Presbytery's civil affairs in such a manner as may be directed by

the Presbytery, or its Administrative and Finance Committees, according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the laws of the State of Tennessee.

The Corporation has no members. It is governed by a three-member Board of Trustees, who act as the Corporation's board of directors within the meaning of Tenn. Code Ann. § 48-58-101(d). The Board of Trustees consists of the currently serving Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Treasurer of the Presbytery. Presbytery's Moderator serves as President of the Corporation, Presbytery's Treasurer serves as Treasurer of the Corporation, and Presbytery's Stated Clerk, though not a Trustee, serves as Secretary of the Corporation. The Trustees may act only as authorized by Presbytery, either through actions taken at a stated or called meeting of the Presbytery or as directed by Presbytery's Administrative and Finance Committees. The signature of any two Trustees, with the attestation of the Stated Clerk, shall be binding on the Presbytery.

In so far as may be consistent with civil law, each meeting of Presbytery shall be considered as a meeting of the Corporation. The Corporation's fiscal year shall begin on January 1st of each year and end on the following December 31st. A quorum for the conduct of corporate business shall be 75 commissioners.

### **Matthew 25**

The Presbytery is a Matthew 25 mid council, approving the denominational invitation in July 2020, to boldly and compassionately act to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned, or poor. The three foci of this commitment are building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

### **Presbyterian Women**

Purpose: "Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Presbyterian Women ("PW") are committed to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study; support the Mission of the church worldwide; work for justice and peace; and build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom."

## **MEETINGS, MEMBERSHIP, AND STRUCTURE**

The Presbytery shall be governed in its meeting and in the actions of its committees and commissions by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Mission and Operations Manual of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, and where neither of these applies, by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order. Commissioners to the Presbytery shall be teaching elder members of the Presbytery and ruling elders elected by their sessions in accordance with the Book of Order. To ensure parity, other ruling elders shall be enrolled with voice and/or vote as stipulated in the Missions and Operations Manual. A quorum for the conduct of business shall be 75 commissioners.

Meetings of Presbytery should be inspirational, educational, and deliberative, and shall include worship. Routine business shall be transacted as expeditiously as possible, without at the same time shortchanging the proper deliberative functions of Presbytery. Whenever possible, the Presbytery will make use of a consent agenda. Notice of any Presbytery meeting shall be sent not less than seven days in advance to each teaching elder, each ruling elder with voice and/or vote as set forth in this manual, and to the clerk of session of every church.

The Presbytery may meet by electronic means if all minister members of the Word and Sacrament, ruling elder commissioners, and ruling elders who have voice and / or vote pursuant to this Manual have reasonable notice of the electronic meeting and the ability to discuss, deliberate, discern the will of God, and vote on business items. The technology employed must provide the opportunity for the full

participation by all members, the opportunity for simultaneous participation by all members, and the ability to recognize any member wishing to speak. Adequate instructions shall be provided for all those participating in the meeting.

### **Stated Meetings**

The Presbytery shall meet in February, May, August, and November on dates to be determined by the Administrative Committee and announced in advance. Ordinarily, meetings shall alternate between Saturday and Thursday. For the convenience of commissioners and organizational planning, the date, time, and place of the next stated meeting shall be announced at the conclusion of each Presbytery assembly. For any stated meeting of the Presbytery, the quorum shall be fixed at 75 commissioners.

### **Called Meetings**

The Administrative Committee may call a meeting. The synod may direct the Presbytery to convene a called meeting for the transaction of designated business. Any request for a called meeting must be in writing and submitted to the Moderator and the Stated Clerk. Notice of the called meeting shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted. A quorum for a called meeting shall be at least twelve teaching elders and twelve ruling elders from different congregations.

### **Membership**

The Presbytery shall consist of all of the teaching elders who have been received in membership and all of its member churches. Each congregation in the Presbytery shall have one ruling elder commissioner to each meeting of Presbytery. For the purpose of parity and representation, the Presbytery's racial ethnic congregations shall have no fewer than two ruling elder commissioners to each Presbytery meeting. The Presbytery uses the following policy to determine additional ruling elder commissioners from its member congregations, based on congregation size, as determined by the previous year's statistics as reported by the sessions:

Membership of	101 – 500 – one additional commissioner (two total commissioners)
	501 – 1000 = two additional commissioners (three total)
	1001 – 2000 = three additional commissioners (four total)
	2001 – 3000 = four additional commissioners (five total)
	3001 – 4000 = five additional commissioners (six total)
	4001 – 5000 = six additional commissioners (seven total)

The Stated Clerk of Presbytery is also authorized to enroll as members of Presbytery, any ruling elders serving as Presbytery's Executive Presbyter, Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Moderator-in-Nomination, chairs of committees, members of the Administrative Committee, members of the Finance Committee, and the Moderator of Presbyterian Women. Ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, and ruling elders who have previously served as Presbytery moderator, within five years of the completion of his/her term of service, are also enrolled. Persons so enrolled shall be entitled to voice and vote.

Any ruling elder serving as a committee representative to a particular meeting of Presbytery, in the absence of the committee chair, shall have the privilege of voice and vote on the floor of the Presbytery for that particular meeting of the Presbytery. Persons certified in church service who are ruling elders shall have the privilege of voice and vote at all meetings of the Presbytery, during their term of service in ministry in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Persons certified in church service, who are members of congregations in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, shall have the privilege of voice at all meetings of the Presbytery during their term of service in a congregation or other ministry validated by the Presbytery. Should a question arise concerning the enrollment of any person, the Presbytery shall resolve the matter.

The rolls of teaching elders who are members-at-large or Honorably Retired and live out of state or are not able to participate in the work of the Presbytery, will be adjusted for the purpose of parity. The process and formula for parity will be reviewed every five years by the Administrative Committee or its designees, in consultation with the Stated Clerk.

### Structure

All meetings of the Presbytery shall include worship. The Presbytery's moderators will plan worship for Presbytery meetings. The Moderator-in-Nomination will convene the moderators for worship planning and will include the pastoral staff of the host church / agency, worship leaders, and the Presbytery staff.

All meetings of the Presbytery will include a timed agenda prepared by the Stated Clerk with input from the Executive Presbyters and the Moderator and approved by the Administrative Committee. If necessary, the Moderator, the Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyters shall approve the agenda for the Presbytery meeting. The format shall be based on written requests for action items submitted through committees and commissions of the Presbytery to the Stated Clerk. Such reports shall include a statement of purpose, relevant information, and any recommendations to the body. No item requiring action by Presbytery may be considered unless the item has been submitted to the commissioners in writing at least seven days prior to the meeting. Provision shall be made for written reports and action items from any committee or commission of Presbytery at every meeting. Inclusion of extended time on the agenda for community building, leadership development, and other relevant focus areas is encouraged. Requests for displays at Presbytery meetings are to be made in writing to the Stated Clerk for approval by the Administrative Committee.

All bills and overtures which are directed to higher councils must be submitted for Permanent Judicial Commission review and comment(s) prior to the Presbytery meeting. The Stated Clerk shall place overtures, policy changes, resolutions, and amendments presented to Presbytery on the floor of Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall make certain that all constitutional requirements are met.

### Neighborhoods

The Presbytery will be divided into neighborhoods to foster community and communication within the Presbytery's geographic areas. These neighborhoods will be utilized by the various committees as well as the Pastor-to-Pastor Program:

<b>CHURCH NEIGHBORHOODS (Revised 2021)</b>			
<b>CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD (20 Churches)</b>	<b>EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD (15 Churches)</b>	<b>SOUTHERN NEIGHBORHOOD (22 Churches)</b>	<b>WESTERN NEIGHBORHOOD (23 Churches)</b>
Brentwood, Brentwood First	Alexandria, Liberty Hill	Ardmore, Bethany	Bethpage, Oak Grove
Brentwood, East Brentwood	Allardt, First	Belfast, Belfast	Clarksville, First
Brentwood, Harpeth	Alpine, Christ Church	Columbia, First	Clarksville, Macedonia
Franklin, First	Buffalo Valley, Buffalo Valley	Columbia, Westminster	Dickson, First
Franklin, Historic Franklin	Cookeville, Double Springs	Cowan, Cowan Fellowship	Dickson, Pond

Gallatin, First	Cookeville, First	Decherd, Decherd	Nashville, Bellevue
Gallatin, Sudanese American Neur	Cookeville, Post Oak	Fayetteville, First	Nashville, Downtown
Hendersonville, First	Crossville, Calvary of Big Lick	Fayetteville, St. John	Nashville, Eastminster
Hendersonville, New Creation	Fairfield Glade, Westminster	Lawrenceburg, First	Nashville, Emmanuel
Hermitage, Hermitage	Lebanon, First	Lewisburg, Bethbirei	Nashville, First
Milton, Hopewell	Lebanon, Spring Creek	Lewisburg, First	Nashville, Glen Leven
Murfreesboro, First	Sparta, Blue Spring	Lynnville, First	Nashville, Glencliff
Murfreesboro, Northminster	Sparta, Hickory Valley	Manchester, First	Nashville, Hillsboro
Nashville, Donelson	Sparta, Robinson Chapel	McMinnville, First	Nashville, Hillwood
Nashville, Priest Lake	Watertown, First	Mt. Pleasant, First	Nashville, Nashville Korean
Nashville, Woodland		Normandy, Normandy	Nashville, Second
Old Hickory, Old Hickory		Petersburg, First	Nashville, Southminster
Readyville, Cripple Creek		Pulaski, Brick Church	Nashville, St. Andrews
Smyrna, First		Pulaski, First	Nashville, Trinity
Thompson Station, Bethesda		Shelbyville, First	Nashville, Westminster
		Spring Hill, First	Springfield, First
		Tullahoma, First	Springfield, Milldale
			Waverly, Ellis Grove

## **OFFICERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND REPRESENTATIVES**

### **OFFICERS**

The Presbytery has the following elected officers: the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, the Stated Clerk, and the Treasurer. A description of each officer's responsibilities follows.

#### **Moderator**

The Moderator's one year term shall begin on January 1. The office of Moderator shall ordinarily alternate between a ruling elder and a teaching elder. The Moderator shall be a member of the Administrative and Finance Committees and serve as an ad hoc member of all of the committees of Presbytery. The Moderator shall serve as the President of the corporation of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee and shall serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.

The Moderator of the Presbytery (or her or his designee) is ordinarily the moderator of all commissions to ordain, install, or ordain and install ministers of the Word and Sacrament. It is the duty of the Moderator to preside and propound the constitutional questions to the Minister. The service of worship is a meeting of the presbytery and, therefore, should be held at a time that will enable as many members as possible to attend.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall complete the Moderator's term, as well as the term the Vice-Moderator was elected to serve. A nominee for Moderator-in-Nomination shall be presented for election at the next Presbytery meeting.

### **Vice-Moderator**

In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall be installed to complete the Moderator's term, as well as the term the Vice-Moderator was elected to serve. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as chair of the Administrative Committee, serve as a member of the Finance Committee, and serve as an ad hoc member of all of the committees of Presbytery. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as a member of the Board of Trustees. The Moderator-in-Nomination shall assume the duties of the Vice-Moderator upon the Vice-Moderator's installation as Moderator.

The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall ordinarily alternate between a ruling elder and a teaching elder. Resignation from the position of Moderator, Vice-Moderator, or Moderator-in-Nomination automatically includes resignation from all assigned committees and responsibilities by virtue of the office.

### **Stated Clerk**

The Presbytery shall elect a Stated Clerk to serve a term of three years. He/She shall be eligible for re-election. The Stated Clerk shall serve according to the provisions of the Book of Order, the Mission and Operations Manual, and the Personnel Policies. The Stated Clerk is an elected staff position and shall not hold another Presbytery staff position. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for setting the structural framework for Presbytery meetings, preparing an agenda for approval by the Administrative Committee, assisting with site selection, reporting to each meeting of Presbytery, and other duties as required. The Stated Clerk shall support the work of the committees as needed. The position description for the Stated Clerk shall be approved by the Presbytery. Additional responsibilities of the Stated Clerk are detailed in the position description. The Stated Clerk shall serve as the Secretary of the corporation of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

If the Presbytery should become the respondent in a remedial complaint, the Stated Clerk shall inform the Moderator of Presbytery, who shall have the power, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the chair of the Commission on Ministry, to designate no more than three persons to be a committee of counsel. The appointment of the committee of counsel shall be reported at the next stated meeting of Presbytery.

Likewise, upon receipt by the Stated Clerk of an accusation of improper conduct against a teaching elder, the Stated Clerk shall inform the Moderator of the Presbytery, who shall have the power, in consultation with the chair of the Commission on Ministry and the convener of the Mediation Team (unless one of those persons are the subject of the investigation), to appoint an investigating committee, ordinarily composed of members of the Mediation Team, to investigate such accusation. In the event that the Moderator of the Presbytery is the subject of the investigation, these duties shall be carried out by the Vice-Moderator. The appointment of an investigating committee shall be reported at the next stated meeting of Presbytery. The final report and membership of the investigating committee shall be

reported to the Presbytery. However, for good cause shown, the Administrative Committee is authorized to advise the Stated Clerk not to publish the names of the investigating committee.

The Stated Clerk may appoint a Recording Clerk to serve for a term of one year. He/She shall be eligible for reappointment. The Recording Clerk shall perform duties subject to the direction of the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk may appoint Temporary Clerks to serve during the meeting to assist in his/her functions. They shall perform duties subject to the direction of the Stated Clerk.

### **Treasurer**

The Presbytery shall elect a Treasurer to serve a term of three years. He/She shall be eligible for re-election to a second term not to exceed six consecutive years of service. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of the Administrative Committee, and as a member of the Board of Trustees of Presbytery and Treasurer of the corporation of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. He/She shall report to the Presbytery at each meeting regarding the financial status of the Presbytery including information about investments and the review or audit when completed each year. He/She shall submit regular written reports to the Administrative Committee and at Presbytery meetings that include:

- Receipts from individual churches comparative to commitments;
- Expenditures of committees as related to Presbytery's budget;
- Receipts and disbursements of non-budgeted funds;
- The standing of all savings, reserve funds, and investments;
- Expenditures of staff salaries and benefits;
- Funds transmitted to General Assembly and Synod; and
- The status of all outstanding loans.

The Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter and the Administrative Committee, shall assist the Finance Committee in developing an annual budget; receive and disburse funds of the Presbytery in accordance with the budget; consult in the posting of Presbytery's financial accounts, the maintenance of payroll records, and the preparation of monthly financial reports. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee shall review and submit Financial Policies and Procedures and Investment Policies to Presbytery for adoption and shall ensure that the Presbytery, its committees, and staff follow those policies after adoption.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The Presbytery has the following elected officials: the Executive Presbyter and the Moderator-in-Nomination. A description of each official's responsibilities follows.

#### **Executive Presbyter(s)**

The Executive Presbyter serves as the Presbytery's chief executive officer and head of staff for all employees, except in regard to those constitutional responsibilities outlined in the Book of Order, for which the Stated Clerk is accountable directly to the Presbytery. The Executive Presbyter shall serve according to the provisions of the Book of Order, the Mission and Operations Manual, and the Personnel Policies. The Executive Presbyter will consult on the agenda and worship for Presbytery meetings, present a report to each meeting of Presbytery, and lead the Presbytery in sharing concerns and celebrations. The Executive Presbyter is an ad hoc member of all Presbytery's committees, commissions, task forces, teams and committees of council. The position description of the Executive Presbyter shall be approved by the Presbytery. Additional responsibilities of the Executive Presbyter are detailed in the position description.

#### **Moderator-in-Nomination**

The Presbytery shall elect a Moderator-in-Nomination at the November meeting to serve as Moderator the year following service as Vice-Moderator. The Vice-Moderator and Moderator-in-Nomination will

alternate between a ruling and a teaching elder. The Moderator-in-Nomination shall be a member of the Administrative Committee. The Moderator-in-Nomination will convene the Moderator and Vice-Moderator for planning worship for Presbytery meetings, in consultation with the Presbytery staff and the pastoral staff of the host church. Costs associated with such must be approved by the Administrative Committee. The Moderator-in-Nomination shall chair the Ad Hoc Appointing Group charged with appointing members to the Nominating Task Force. The Moderator-in-Nomination may attend the Moderators' Conference sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with the expenses for this conference paid through the budget of the Administrative Committee.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice-Moderator, the Moderator-in-Nomination shall assume the duties of the Vice-Moderator, as well as the term the Moderator-in-Nomination was elected to serve; a nominee for Moderator-in-Nomination shall be presented for election at the next Presbytery meeting. In the event of a vacancy for Moderator-in-Nomination, a nominee shall be presented for election at the next Presbytery meeting.

Resignation from the position of Moderator, Vice-Moderator, or Moderator-in-Nomination automatically includes resignation from all assigned committees and responsibilities by virtue of the office.

### **ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The Presbytery has representatives elected to specific responsibilities, including readers of standard ordination examinations, as well as commissioners to the General Assembly and the Synod of Living Waters. A description of responsibilities follows.

**Readers of standard ordination examinations**, as well as alternate readers, are elected at the November meeting to serve a term of three years and are eligible for re-election. Care will be taken to ensure an opportunity for ruling and teaching elders from various regions within the bounds of the Presbytery will be nominated.

**Commissioners to the General Assembly and the Synod of Living Waters**, as well as alternate commissioners, are to be elected at the November meeting the year prior to their term of service. The Nominating Task Force shall nominate General Assembly commissioners, General Assembly advisory delegates, and Synod commissioners, as well as their alternates, according to the number allotted to the Presbytery by the respective councils. The following criteria for selection for nominees to the General Assembly and the Synod of Living Waters, shall be used, and published on the Presbytery's website and to the Presbytery at the August stated meeting:

- Teaching and ruling elders and young adults will ordinarily only be elected once to serve as commissioners to General Assembly or Synod from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.
- Teaching elders who have been members of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee for at least seven years.
- Teaching and ruling elders who have a history of active involvement in the work of the Presbytery.
- Ruling elders from churches who have not sent a representative as a commissioner to General Assembly or Synod in four years or more.
- A balance between men and women, teaching and ruling elders, and young adults from churches outside the Nashville area and those within the Metro Nashville area.
- Prior General Assembly and Synod alternates, and Presbytery moderators, will be given consideration as commissioners.
- The ability to work effectively with technology and materials from the General Assembly and Synod committees and plenary sessions, understanding that stamina and energy are required.

- The ability to understand and the willingness to communicate the work of the General Assembly and Synod to the Presbytery and the ability to understand and the willingness to communicate the work of the Presbytery to the General Assembly and Synod.

The Stated Clerk shall keep a cumulative list of commissioners, alternates, and young adult advisory delegates to the General Assembly and Synod, for the use of the Nominating Task Force, in order to ensure compliance with the criteria.

### **SECTION THREE** **THE WORK OF THE PRESBYTERY**

#### **COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, TEAMS, AND WORK GROUPS**

The Presbytery may designate commissions, committees, task forces, teams, and work groups as it deems necessary and helpful. Commissions and committees shall provide minutes of their meetings to the Presbytery office, the Administrative Committee, and the Stated Clerk for the Presbytery's permanent record, in a timely manner. Task forces, teams, and work groups will provide reports to their respective committees within agreed upon deadlines. All actions of commissions and committees shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

#### **Commissions**

Commissions are empowered to consider and conclude matters delegated by a council. The council shall state specifically the authority, scope, and responsibilities of the commission. Membership of commissions shall consist of teaching elders and ruling elders, in numbers as nearly equal as possible, none of whom will represent the same congregation. A quorum for commission meetings shall be a majority of the members. The Presbytery has two commissions: the Commission on Ministry, and the Permanent Judicial Commission. The chair of the Commission on Ministry is approved by the Presbytery, and its clerk is elected by the commission; the Permanent Judicial Commission elects its own chair and clerk.

#### **Administrative Commissions**

Administrative Commissions are designated to consider and conclude specific matters and shall be approved by the Presbytery. Membership of commissions shall consist of teaching elders and ruling elders, in numbers as nearly equal as possible. Every effort will be made to have only one member from the same congregation. A quorum for commission meetings shall be a majority of the members. The committee proposing an administrative commission is responsible for nominating the initial membership and any additions or replacements, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk, for election by the Presbytery. An administrative commission shall report quarterly to the originating committee, and on a regular basis to the Presbytery through the Stated Clerk.

#### **Committees**

In order to fulfill its mission, the Presbytery shall be organized into committees, task forces, teams, and work groups, all of which shall be directly responsible to the Presbytery through its Administrative Committee. Committees are to carry out priorities established by Presbytery. All policies and programs envisioned by committees shall be reviewed by the Administrative Committee and adopted by Presbytery prior to being implemented and funded.

A quorum for committees shall be as prescribed in Robert's Rules of Order which is "...a majority of the members." Membership of committees, arranged in three classes, shall consist of both teaching elders and members of congregations, unless otherwise directed, with at least one-half being members of the congregations. Teaching elders, ruling elders, and members of congregations are eligible for committee membership after one year of joining the Presbytery or one of its congregations. The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery shall serve as ad hoc members of the committees of the Presbytery.

The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for nominating committee chairs, through the Nominating Task Force, for election annually at the November meeting of Presbytery. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as chair of the Administrative Committee, and the Treasurer shall serve as chair of the Finance Committee. Committees shall elect a vice-chair to serve in the absence or inability of the chair to serve. The Moderator-in-Nomination shall serve as vice-chair of the Administrative Committee.

Committees may set their own meeting schedules, and may utilize teleconferencing / video conferencing (i.e., conference call, Zoom, Skype, etc.) to take action. Meetings shall ensure that all members can participate, a quorum is present, and minutes are prepared and provided to members within a reasonable period of time after the meeting. Committee minutes, including team, task force, and work group reports, shall be provided to the Administrative Committee, as well as to the Executive Presbyters and the Stated Clerk. The notice of the meeting shall include any motions and / or documents or other information necessary for the committee's work. Any action(s) taken shall be reported at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee through its minutes, and to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery through its report. Non-members may participate in the meeting, at the invitation of the committee chair and with the approval of a majority of the committee members. Voting by electronic means on committee matters shall be allowed as long as the vote is received within the time limit set by the chair of the committee.

Regular attendance by members of committees is necessary and expected for the effective work of the Presbytery. When a person has unexcused absences from three consecutive meetings of a committee, this shall constitute an automatic resignation of the member. Any and all resignations shall be reported to the chair of the Administrative Committee and the chair of the Nominating Task Force in order to proceed with a replacement.

The term of office for persons elected to serve on committees and the Commission on Ministry shall be three years except for the Permanent Judicial Commission, whose members are elected for one six-year term. Membership shall be arranged in three classes. No person shall serve an aggregate of more than six consecutive years on a committee. After six consecutive years of service, a member must rotate off for one year before being eligible to serve another term on that committee; the only exception to this rule is service as Moderator of the Presbytery.

### **Task Forces**

Committees may annually appoint task forces for defined tasks. Such task forces may include persons not elected as members of the committee. The chair of a task force shall be a member of the appointing committee. Unless defined herein, tasks, terms of responsibilities, and composition of a task force shall be reported to the Administrative Committee and to the Presbytery through the appointing committee. The Presbytery has three standing task forces - Nominating and Personnel, each of which is chaired by a member of the Administrative Committee, and Investment, chaired by a member of the Finance Committee.

### **Teams**

Teams are groups of people whose skills in specialized areas are recognized and utilized by the Presbytery to further the Presbytery's mission. Composition of a team shall be reported to the Administrative Committee and to the Presbytery through the appointing committee. Selection of team members is done in consultation with the chair of the Commission on Ministry, the Executive Presbyter, and the Stated Clerk.

### **Ad Hoc Appointing Group**

The Ad Hoc Appointing Group shall appoint five (5) persons to serve on the Nominating Task Force. The chair of this task force shall be the Moderator-in-Nomination; the membership of the Ad Hoc Appointing Group shall be the chairs of the Committee on Mutual Support, Committee on Leadership Excellence, Committee on Church Transformation, Commission on Ministry, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and the Committee on Social Justice. The Ad Hoc Appointing Group shall meet in January each year to appoint the members of the Nominating Task Force.

The description of each committee and related entities follows.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE**

The Administrative Committee and the Finance Committee jointly share responsibility for the work, mission, spiritual health, and financial well-being of the Presbytery. The Administrative Committee serves as Presbytery's principal visioning, strategic planning, and coordinating body in carrying out the mission priorities of Presbytery. Its purpose is to:

- coordinate all mission programs and projects according to Presbytery's mission priorities and goals;
- establish the annual calendar of Presbytery events;
- assure that Presbytery policies and actions are fully implemented;
- review the work of the committees and commissions, to ensure their work is in accord with the mission goals of Presbytery or their approved charge, and make any necessary recommendations to the Presbytery;
- regularly review the Mission Statement and the Mission and Operations Manual and recommend revisions as needed;
- plan and assist at all Presbytery meetings, in coordination with the Stated Clerk;
- review the balanced annual operating budget proposed by the Finance Committee;
- work with the Finance Committee to ensure that requests for temporary and permanently designated funds, grants, and special offerings are in compliance with all policy and grant requirements;
- review information provided by the Finance Committee on real estate transactions under \$25,000, and take action, on behalf of the Presbytery, on any recommendation(s), with such action(s) to be reported to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting;
- real estate transactions exceeding \$25,000 shall be submitted to Presbytery with a recommendation from the Finance and Administrative Committees;
- coordinate Synod, General Assembly, and ecumenical concerns for which the Presbytery is responsible; and
- be responsible for dealing with any items which require the attention of Presbytery but that do not fit otherwise into the structure of the Mission and Operations Manual, making recommendations for their disposition as each may require.

The Administrative Committee shall consist of a total of nine (9) persons, including the Presbytery's Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Moderator in Nomination, and the Treasurer of the Presbytery. The other five (5) members shall be ruling elders and teaching elders, none of whom shall represent the same congregation, in numbers as nearly equal as possible, and with particular attention given to geographic representation. Those five members and the Treasurer shall be arranged in three classes, and their term of service shall be for three years with an option to renew for another three-year term if elected by the Presbytery. Under no circumstances should a member serve longer than six consecutive years. If the Presbytery's Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Moderator-in-Nomination, or the Treasurer resigns before their term ends, their service on the Administrative Committee is automatically ended. Persons nominated for service on the Administrative Committee must have previously served on a Presbytery committee or commission.

Ruling elders serving as members of the Administrative Committee shall have voice and vote at all Presbytery meetings during their term of service. The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for two standing task forces, Nominating and Personnel. A description of these task forces follows.

### **Nominating Task Force**

The Nominating Task Force, under the direction of the Administrative Committee, shall be responsible for nominating qualified persons to serve in all elected positions of the various committees to ensure representation, inclusiveness, and diversity. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group shall appoint persons each year to serve on the Nominating Task Force which shall be chaired by a member of the Administrative Committee. The membership of the Nominating Task Force shall be six (6) members, which includes the chair.

The Nominating Task Force will nominate persons to fill vacancies that occur annually by reason of rotation, death, resignation, or removal from office. The Task Force shall be representative of the Presbytery, and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity.

Members of the Nominating Task Force shall solicit and consider recommendations for various elected positions from the churches and teaching elders of the Presbytery, from the Moderator, from the Administrative Committee, and from the committees affected, in consultation with the professional staff of the Presbytery. Except as provided for and/or required in the Mission and Operations Manual, ordinarily no person shall be elected to, or serve on, more than one committee at a time. In the event of a vacancy of an elected or called staff position, it shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Task Force to nominate a search committee to secure a new person for election by Presbytery.

The Task Force shall present its major report at the November meeting of Presbytery, having ascertained the willingness of nominees to serve prior to formal nomination. Those persons elected at that meeting shall take office the following January 1. The Task Force may report to any meeting of the Presbytery and recommend persons for election to fill vacancies. The Nominating Task Force shall specify the class in which the nominee is to serve. With every report to Presbytery, the Nominating Task Force shall include a list of all current members of Presbytery committees and commissions.

### **Personnel Task Force**

The Personnel Task Force, under the direction of the Administrative Committee, is authorized to evaluate personnel and implement policies relating to all those employed by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Personnel policies will include the processes of electing and hiring staff, the descriptions of responsibilities and accountabilities for each position, the purpose and method of performance review, and the process for termination. The Personnel Task Force will collaborate with the Executive Presbyter to identify relevant goals, shape the framework for achieving crucial strategies, and secure resources to enable staff to successfully lead the Presbytery in its mission. Membership shall be five persons – four members shall be appointed by the Administrative Committee, in consultation with the Executive Presbyters, and the fifth member shall be a member of the Administrative Committee and shall serve as its chair. No member shall serve more than six consecutive years. Chairpersons will be limited to three years as chair.

The Presbytery shall employ staff in positions which are required by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which enrich the Presbytery and enable it to achieve its identified mission, and which are financially feasible. The Personnel Task Force shall periodically evaluate the staffing model based on these criteria.

## **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

The Commission on Ministry serves as advisor to teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, certified Christian educators, sessions, and congregations of the Presbytery. The Commission on Ministry oversees the processes for congregations in transitions in pastoral leadership, and guides sessions seeking temporary pastoral relationships.

The membership of the Commission on Ministry shall be 18 persons - nine ruling elders and nine teaching elders, with no two ruling elders representing the same congregation. Commission on Ministry members shall exercise appropriate confidentiality in the committee's work. The Commission on Ministry may use teaching elders and ruling elders not among its members for service in particular capacities.

The Commission on Ministry is granted authority by the Presbytery to act on its behalf on the following:

- Approve calls of teaching elder members of the Presbytery within the Presbytery;
- Recommend to Presbytery the initial commissioning of ruling elders to particular pastoral service;
- Annually review the commissions of commissioned pastors, and review and renew commissions, not to exceed three years;
- Call meetings of sessions;
- Approve moderators of sessions for churches without an installed pastor;
- Designate persons to moderate session and congregational meetings;
- Designate members of the Commission on Ministry, the Executive Presbyter, or the Stated Clerk, to preside at meetings of the session and / or congregation; such person may not moderate the session of the church of which that person is a member;
- Perform the initial in-depth examination of candidates seeking ordination by the Presbytery, after clearance of appropriate background checks;
- Perform the in-depth examination of all teaching elders seeking membership in the Presbytery, after clearance of appropriate background checks; if the teaching elder does not receive unanimous approval of the Commission on Ministry, a subsequent examination of the teaching elder must occur at Presbytery upon request;
- Ordinarily, the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee does not receive a teaching elder seeking membership in the Presbytery as a member-at-large unless the teaching elder is the spouse of a teaching elder being received by the Commission on Ministry for the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, or a teaching elder pursuing postgraduate study within the bounds of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. The Commission on Ministry will review any such request on a case-by-case basis.
- Approve commissions for installations (commissions to ordain or to ordain and install are to be approved by Presbytery);
- Annually review and approve terms of call for teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders;
- Annually review and approve temporary pastoral relationships, including Interims, as well as concur with the termination of temporary pastoral relationships when requested by sessions;
- Annually review the validation of ministries of teaching elders not serving in congregations;
- Annually review the status of member-at-large ministers;
- Dissolve installed pastoral relationships when the teaching elder and congregation concur, and abolish pastoral positions when requested by the congregation;
- Dismiss teaching elders to other presbyteries, upon the request of the calling Presbytery;
- Grant requests from teaching elders for release from exercise of ordered ministry with the reasons for such release recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery;
- Grant status of Honorable Retirement to teaching elders;
- Grant status of Member-at-Large to teaching elders;

- Maintain the pulpit supply list and list of trained interim teaching elders; and
- Facilitate Presbytery's sexual misconduct/boundaries training, held every three years, such training to be completed by teaching elders and ruling elders commissioned to service within the first six months of reception.

### **Mediation Team**

The Mediation Team, composed of teaching and ruling elders, will be responsible for inquiring into difficulties within congregations. Members of the Mediation Team will work with the Stated Clerk, the Executive Presbyter, and the chair of the Commission on Ministry to address concerns that arise within the Presbytery. Ordinarily, investigating committee members shall be appointed from the Mediation Team. Mandatory training will be provided for the Mediation Team. The convener of this team shall be a member of the Commission on Ministry.

### **Pastoral Care Team**

The Pastoral Care Team will work with the Executive Presbyter and Commission on Ministry to provide teaching elders in the Presbytery with pastoral care. This team will include members of the Pastor-to-Pastor Program and others who may be recruited to extend care. The convener of the Pastoral Care Team shall be a member of the Commission on Ministry.

### **COMMITTEE ON CHURCH TRANSFORMATION**

The Committee on Church Transformation seeks to engage renewed enthusiasm for church growth and sustained vitality within existing congregations. God is calling us to find new and creative ways to worship, serve, and maintain community within an environment of increased electronic communications, reduced face-to-face interactions, and global health crises. Activities of the committee may include: annual "Celebrate the Journey" reports; creation of a Church Transformation and Growth strategy; Healthy Congregation seminars; planting new churches and redevelopment of churches. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members, three teaching elders and three members of congregations. The committee may utilize other members of congregations.

### **COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE**

As a learning community, the Presbytery, at its stated meetings, and at other times throughout the year, will offer opportunities for persons in ordered ministry and other church members to grow in their respective capacities as preachers, teachers, shepherds, and stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to their care. The Committee on Leadership Excellence seeks to encourage, train, and equip persons in ordered ministries and other church members. This work may include: Barnabas Leadership Group; Celebration of the Resurrection; College of Preachers; Excellence in Officer Education; and Fellowship of the Ordained. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members, three teaching elders and three members of congregations. The committee may utilize other members of congregations.

### **COMMITTEE ON MUTUAL SUPPORT**

The Presbytery seeks to encourage collaboration and community among its member congregations through the Committee on Mutual Support. This committee shall seek opportunities for the Presbytery to learn and work together in mission and ministry. The committee's work may include (but is not limited to) annual neighborhood meetings, youth, campus ministries, Guatemalan Partnership, technology, and hunger action programs, such as the Matthew 25 Food Bank.

The Committee on Mutual Support provides opportunities for young adults through campus ministries within the bounds of the Presbytery. The mission of campus ministries is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and to strengthen ongoing faith development and relationships with college students within the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. The Presbytery currently has relationships with campus ministries at

Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities (UKIRK Nashville), Middle Tennessee State University, and Tennessee Tech University.

The Committee on Mutual Support also encourages participation in the NaCoMe Camp and Conference Center. NaCoMe serves Presbyterians and others as a peaceful haven for those in search of spiritual and physical renewal. NaCoMe's mission of building community, connecting people with God, and renewing spirits comes together through summer camp options, weekend retreats, and other events.

This committee shall be composed of six (6) members, three teaching elders and three members of congregations. The committee may utilize other members of congregations.

### **COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

The responsibility of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry is to provide oversight, care and supervision of Inquirers and Candidates for ordered ministry; as such they exist in fulfillment of the Book of Order. The membership of this Committee shall be nine (9) persons, ruling and teaching elders in numbers as nearly as equal as possible, none of whom shall represent the same congregation.

The Committee's responsibilities include:

- Instructing Sessions that have endorsed an Inquirer / Candidate;
- Providing nurture and support to Inquirers and Candidates;
- Reviewing reports from seminaries / divinity schools on progress of Inquirers and Candidates;
- Reviewing annual written reports of Inquirers and Candidates regarding progress in studies and service;
- Conducting annual consultations with Inquirers and Candidates, in order to make a determination for continuation or termination of inquirer or candidacy and reporting same to Presbytery;
- Recommending to Presbytery the approval of Candidacy for Inquirers, after appropriate background check clearance is complete;
- Performing final assessment of Candidate's readiness to receive a call and reporting same to Presbytery, and upon request, providing it to Presbytery of call; and
- Participating in Commission on Ministry examinations (as non-voting members) when Candidates under care are examined.

### **COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The Committee for Social Justice works to actively engage the Presbytery in the crucial social justice issues of our time and place. The committee seeks to represent our rich diversity of voices, giving particular attention to groups and persons who have been marginalized and silenced, and to mobilize the Presbytery in dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. This committee will function as the Committee on Representation, gauging practices of, and commitments to, inclusion and diversity within the Presbytery operations and in its churches and ministries. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members, three teaching elders and three members of congregations. The committee may utilize other members of congregations.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee and the Administrative Committee together with the Treasurer jointly share responsibility for the finances, work, mission, and spiritual health of the Presbytery, with its primary work related to the financial well-being of the Presbytery. Its purpose is to:

- Work with the Administrative Committee to ensure responsible stewardship of the gifts Presbytery has received;
- Provide oversight and management of Presbytery funds including loans and investments whether operating, restricted, unrestricted, reserve, or endowment funds;

- Work with the Administrative Committee to ensure that requests for temporary and permanently designated funds, grants, and special offerings are in compliance with all policy and grant requirements;
- Provide information and any recommendation(s) to the Administrative Committee on real estate transactions under \$25,000, with such information and recommendation(s) to be reported to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting;
- Real estate transactions exceeding \$25,000 shall be submitted to Presbytery with a recommendation from the Finance and Administrative Committees; and
- Recommend a balanced annual operating budget for the coming year, after review by the Administrative Committee, for approval by the Presbytery at the last meeting of the year;
- Ensure an annual review or audit is performed;
- Review and submit Financial Policies and Procedures and Investment Policies to Presbytery for adoption; and
- Ensure that the Presbytery, its committees and staff follow those policies after adoption.

The Finance Committee shall consist of a total of nine (9) members, three (3) ruling elders and three (3) teaching elders, none of whom shall represent the same congregation, with particular attention given to geographic representation, and the Treasurer of Presbytery who shall serve as chair, the Moderator, and the Vice-Moderator. Ruling elders serving as members of the Finance Committee shall have voice and vote at all Presbytery meetings during their term of service.

#### **Investment Task Force**

The Investment Task Force, under the direction of the Finance Committee, is authorized to make investment decisions and oversee Presbytery's investment funds; in accordance with the Investment Policy of the Presbytery. The membership of this task force shall be at least three (3) persons appointed by the Finance Committee – at least two members shall have investment expertise and experience. One member shall be a member of the Finance Committee and shall serve as chair of the Investment Task Force. The task force will meet at least quarterly, and one meeting will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee. The Investment Task Force will provide monthly investment reports to the Finance Committee, will review the Investment Policy annually for any suggested changes that need to be made, and will work with Finance in setting the budget and in making the necessary funds available for operation and mission.

#### **PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery shall function according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall be composed of nine members, teaching and ruling elders in numbers as nearly as equal as possible, with no two ruling elders representing the same congregation. The term of service shall be for six years, arranged in three classes, with eligibility to expire after one full term. A member having served a full term of six years shall be ineligible for re-election until four years has elapsed after the expired six-year term. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall meet in January each year to elect its own chair and clerk.

The responsibilities of the Commission include:

- Fulfilling the duties of a Permanent Judicial Commission, as outlined in the Book of Order;
- Review and comment on bills and overtures to the Presbytery which are directed to higher councils.

### **SECTION FOUR** **AUTHORITY, AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION**

This Mission and Operations Manual shall establish the basic organization of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee and shall serve as Presbytery's guide for carrying out its mission both during and between meetings of the council. If any other policy of the Presbytery or its committees contradicts the Mission and Operations Manual, this Manual takes precedence and will be followed. The Mission and Operations Manual, as the standing rules of the Presbytery, may be suspended by a three-quarters vote of members present at any meeting of the Presbytery, for that meeting only.

Policies and procedures as adopted by Presbytery are as listed:

<b>Presbytery Policies</b>	<b>Action - Date Adopted or Revised</b>
• Background Check Policy	5/17/2014; editorial revisions 2016
• Policy Concerning Former Pastors	5/6/2017
• Policy Concerning Dismissal of Congregations	7/18/2015
• Special Visioning Task Force Report	10/4/2014; reviewed 2021
• Personnel Policies	5/17/2014; editorial revisions
• Sexual Misconduct Policy	2/6/2021
• Safe Church Policy	2/6/2021
• Ministerial Compensation	2021; compensation updated each year
• Family Leave Policy	5/20/2021
• Investment Policy	2021
• Designated and Restricted Funds	10/21/2021
<b>Administrative Committee Policies</b>	
• Crisis Communication Plan	9/20/2012; revised June 2021
• Records Retention Guidelines	11/2012; process document
<b>Commission on Ministry Policies and Guidelines</b>	
• Request for Commissioning of Ruling Elder	Editorial Revisions
• Release from Exercise of Ordered Ministry	COM revised 1/10/2017
• Statement of Underlying Principles	Process document
• Designated Pastor Policy	COM revised 1/10/2017
• Guidelines Relating to Suitability	Process document
• Policy for Pastoral Response	COM revised 1/10/2017
• Policy on Temporary Pastoral Relationships	COM revised 1/10/2017
• Sample Interim Contract	COM revised 1/10/2017
• Transitions Team Manual	Editorial revisions
• COM Manual	Editorial revisions
<b>Finance Committee</b>	
• Investment Policy	revised 7/17/2021
• Financial Policies and Procedures	5/20/2021; revised 10/21/2021
• Real Estate/Property	2021; process document

The Mission and Operations Manual may be amended as follows: A proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the Administrative Committee, which in turn shall present the proposal to the next stated meeting of the Presbytery with its recommendations. To become effective, an amendment must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the members present at one meeting of the Presbytery. The contents of this Mission and Operations Manual shall take effect upon its approval by Presbytery.

*Approved by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee  
February 6, 2016; Revised February 4, 2017; Revised February 3, 2018;  
Revised February 14, 2019; Revised February 25, 2019; Revised May 30, 2019;*

*Revised February 1, 2020;  
Proposed Revisions May 19, 2022*