



Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

GA Amendment Recommendations

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence – Stated Clerk



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The background features a teal surface with several notebooks. One notebook is open, showing lined pages. Another notebook has the word 'NOTES' embossed on its cover. Dried, pressed leaves are scattered in the upper right corner, and a metal paperclip is visible near the top center.

Book of Order Amendments to be included on the CONSENT AGENDA

FOUNDATIONS OF POLITY

Recommendations

The change in language is being recommended in (22A) F-1.0302c and (22B) F-1.0404, so the provision is more inclusive of all people, abilities, and genders. The main focus of the changes is on inclusiveness in abilities and genders.

- ✓ The GA Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends approval.
- ✓ The presbytery stated clerk recommends approval as this presbytery already seeks in its work to be as inclusive as possible.

22A – F-1.0302c

The Catholicity of the Church – changes are recommended so the language we use in our governing documents is inclusive of all people, abilities, and genders.

- ✓ The GA ACC recommends approval.

22B – F-1.0404

Openness to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit – changes are recommended so the language we use in our governing documents is inclusive of all people, abilities, and genders.

- ✓ The GA ACC recommends approval.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT – ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

Recommendations

The changes in the following *Book of Order* provision relates to approvals for electronic meetings. *The presbytery stated clerk recommends approval.* It is already the practice of the Presbytery, as well as its commissions and committees, to meet electronically. The presbytery bylaws already authorize electronic meetings per *Robert's Rules of Order*. Further, many sessions regularly contact the stated clerk with the desire to have congregational meetings electronically.



Since that seems to be the will of many within the presbytery and the unauthorized practice of some, the stated clerk recommends approval of this provision.

22C – G-1.0501

Meetings of the Congregation: Meetings – provides constitutional language to allow (NOT mandate) congregational meetings via electronic meeting media.

This preserves the requirement for the ability of all to engage in simultaneous debate and vote. Electronic meetings are not in order if that ability is not preserved.



The GA ACC recommends approval.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT – ELECTRONIC MEETINGS


22M – G-3.0104

General Principles of Councils: Officers –

clarifies that sessions may adopt language for their bylaws or in other governing documents to allow electronic meetings and allows those that moderate to do so remotely.

This preserves the requirement for the ability of all to engage in simultaneous debate and vote.

Electronic meetings are not in order if that ability is not preserved.

 *The GA ACC recommends disapproval because the provision is redundant. The PCUSA Constitution already authorizes electronic meetings if a council's bylaws or manual of operations authorize them.*

22N – G-3.0105

General Principles of Councils: Meetings –

consistent with G-1.0501, this provision clarifies that all councils and their commissions and committees may meet electronically as long as all members can hear and be heard simultaneously, and the council should adopt special rules of order and standing rules to govern those meetings.



The GA ACC recommends the amendment be adopted.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT – BUSINESS PROPER TO A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Recommendations

This change is to make G-1.0503 consistent with mandates found within the Rules of Discipline.

- ✓ *The presbytery stated clerk recommends approval since the change would make rules consistent with practice.*

22D – G-1.0503

Business Proper to a Congregational Meeting – added that business proper for a congregational meeting is to receive a disciplinary decision against a member. This simply makes the provision consistent with other parts of the *Book of Order within the Rules of Discipline*, which require the congregation to be notified via a congregational meeting.

- ✓ *The GA ACC recommends approval.*

FORM OF GOVERNMENT – BOUNDARY TRAINING FOR INQUIRERS, CANDIDATES, CREs, CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS, AND REQUIRED TRAINING/POLICIES RELATED TO BOUNDARIES

Recommendations



The presbytery stated clerk recommends approval since these are already the long-standing practices of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

*Note:22P (G-3.0106) adds the requirement for an anti-racism policy.

22G – G-2.0603

Preparation for Ministry: Purpose of Inquiry - mandates boundary training for inquirers and candidates.

22H – G-2.0605

Preparation for Ministry: Oversight - mandates that sessions report boundary violations of inquirers and candidates under care to the presbytery and clarifies that the inquirer or candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery when under care.

22K – G-2.01002

Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service: Training, Examining, and Commissioning - mandates boundary training for CREs.

22L – G-2.1103

Certified Church Service: Christian Educators - mandates boundary training for Christian Educators.

22O – G-3.0106

General Principles of Councils: Administration of Mission - clarifies that councils must require boundary training within their sexual misconduct and child protection policies.

22I – G-2.0804 – CALL AND INSTALLATION: TERMS OF CALL

22I – G-2.0804 _____
Call and Installation: Terms of Call – mandates that congregations provide a minimum of 12 weeks of paid family medical leave as part of the minimum terms of call with continued participation in the Board of Pensions and Medical Health Insurance.

Explanation

The Presbytery’s current policy B-08 is already in compliance with the provision. The PLM Family and Medical Leave policy entitle regular employees to take up to 13 weeks of paid leave per year for the birth, adoption, or guardianship of a child; to care for a spouse or an immediate family member with a serious health condition; or when unable to work because of a serious health condition. The pay shall be at 60 percent of the employee's normal salary. The employee must take all accumulated sick days and vacation before being eligible for family and medical leave pay.

Approval of this amendment will require congregations to offer 12 weeks of Family and Medical leave per year.



Advisory Committee on the Constitution
advises disapproval as this amendment creates a constitutional problem. The amendment introduces administrative-operational detail within a policy, which should be left to councils to decide. It is a detail better left for operational manuals than governing documents. 12 weeks reflect current societal sensibilities, and the provision will likely require further and repeated revision.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy,
Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and Committee
on Representation recommend approval

Approval of this amendment will require
congregations to offer 12 weeks of Family and
Medical leave per year.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT – MISCELLANEOUS

22J – G-2.001

Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service: Functions – specifically allows CREs to be commissioned to yoked congregations – or one or more validated ministries of the Presbytery. Although language in the PCUSA Book of Order already allows Presbyteries that flexibility, this provision makes permission explicit.

22Q – G-3.0303c

The Presbytery: Relations with Session – clarifies that presbyteries must include policies for dissolution terms and for those serving in temporary pastoral service.

The presbytery already has such policies.

22R – G-3.0401

The Synod: Composition and Responsibilities – Synods are allowed to enroll TE/RE for the purpose of fulfilling the principles of participation and representation – may include synod’s racial-ethnic active leadership.

22S – G.4.0301

Confidence and Privilege: Trust and Confidentiality – clarifies that confidentiality is not an excuse to withhold secret knowledge or risk of harm in cases of sexual misconduct.

22F – G-2.0505a(1)

Minister of the Word and Sacrament: Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations – provides a process for receiving immigrant ministers ordained in other denominations and the presbytery’s responsibilities in receiving and providing education/preparation.

DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

22T – W-3.0205

Confession and Forgiveness – clarifies that within a service of worship, the sacrament of baptism is an appropriate response to confession and forgiveness.

22V – W-3.0414

Sacrament: Communion – clarifies that the prayer after communion does not have to be led by a minister of the word and sacrament. Flexibility in the prayer after communion. ***This is currently the practice within many congregations in the presbytery and a practice within the presbytery.***

22W – W-4.0403

Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning: Order of Worship – clarifies that the laying on of hands in ordination, installation, and commissioning is permissible and acceptable but not mandatory. It is not a sacrament.

22X – W-5.0104

Worship and Personal Life: Household Worship – clarifies that worship in homes and household is an important part of faith formation.

22Y – W-5.0104

Worship and Personal Life: Household Worship – clarifies that prayer before meals is appropriate and the provision stresses the significance of mealtime prayers in household worship.

22Z – W-5.0201

Worship and the Church's Ministry within the Community of Faith – clarifies an emphasis on communal discipleship within the church's practice of ministry and mission.

DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP

22AA – W-5.0204 _____
Worship and the Church's Ministry within the Community of Faith: Pastoral Care – the recommended change allows for the expansion of what ministries could be considered as specialized pastoral care ministries, for example, spiritual direction.

Since it is at the discretion of presbyteries to decide what ministries fall within that category, listing various ministries could be considered infringing on their responsibilities. It would also invite more amendments to the constitution to add to the list.

22BB – W.5.0204 _____
Worship and the Church's Ministry Within the Community of Faith: Pastoral Care – offers theological and pastoral perspectives on the nature of healing and wholeness – not connected with physical healing.

RULES OF DISCIPLINE

22DD – D-10.0302

Communicate Determination: If Charges Are To Be Filed –

Recommended so that the provision is not using gender-binary language

22EE – D-10.0303

Communicate Determination: Petition for Review –

Recommended change mandates communication to both the person accused and the person making the accusation. Currently, only the person submitting the accusation must be notified.

22FF

Amending the use of “the accused” in the current Rules of Discipline –

Recommended changes are so that the language being used does not give the impression of bias or partiality. Would change from *the accused* to *the person accused*.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands and arms. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured blazer. Their left hand is holding a brown paper folder, and their right hand is pointing with the index finger towards a document or folder lying on a dark, reflective surface. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an office setting.

**Book of Order
Amendments to be
included on the DOCKET**

22E – G-2.0503 – CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

22E – G-2.0503 _____
Categories of Membership – recommends changing the category from *Honorably Retired* to simply *Retired*.

Explanation

The only category for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who will retire is Honorably Retired. This does not fit when some ministers are retiring for less than honorable reasons. There have been times when a pastor has acted inappropriately, but no disciplinary charges are brought. Victims are re-victimized when they are designated “honorably retired.” If this amendment is approved, there would be no impact on retirement benefits.

The ACC advises that deleting “honorably” does not alter the substance of the provisions or affect other constitutional provisions.

22P – G-3.0106 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES: ADMINISTRATION OF MISSION

22P – G 3.0106 _____
General Principles: Administration of Mission – clarifies that councils must have the following policies: sexual misconduct, harassment, child and youth protection, and anti-racism.

Explanation

The amendment clarifies that councils must have the following policies: sexual misconduct, harassment, child protection, and anti-racism. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan already has sexual misconduct, harassment, child and youth protection policies. The impact on the Presbytery of Lake Michigan would be that they will have to create and approve an anti-racism policy.

The ACC did not advise that the provision presented any constitutional difficulties, but pointed out that “the constitution is not intended to serve as a manual of operations. Generally, this would advocate against the creation of lists of requirements or rubrics on how to implement requirements.”

22U – W-3.0409 SACRAMENT: THEOLOGY OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

22U – W-3.0409

Sacrament: Theology of the Lord’s Supper – allows for pastoral discretion in the invitation to baptism – to insert the words “when appropriate” to the invitation to the table. The rationale is to provide for gracious hospitality at the Lord’s Supper.

- ✗ ACC Recommends disapproval because there is potential to weaken the link between the sacrament of Baptism and The Lord’s Supper.

RULES OF DISCIPLINE

Recommendations

Amendments 22CC, 22DD, 22EE, and 22FF are offered for amendment and will take effect only if amendment 22GG is not approved. If 22GG is approved, it supersedes the other amendments, and they are made moot.

22CC – D-3.0106

Jurisdiction in Judicial Process: When Jurisdiction Ends – Recommended amendment changes the situation in which jurisdiction ends. According to current rules, jurisdiction ends when the accused renounces jurisdiction. If approved, jurisdiction does not end, but the disciplinary process continues.



The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises disapproval. The presbytery stated clerk concurs. At the time of renunciation, the church has no further authority over the accused, nor is the accused any longer accountable to the church – these are the parties to a disciplinary case. Further, the continuation of discipline after renunciation could result in liability in the secular courts.

22GG – Church Discipline Section

Replacing the Current “Rules of Discipline: with a New “Church Discipline” Section – The “Church Discipline” section has slight differences as approved by the 225th General Assembly. In general, the section uses clearer language, and has rearranged provisions that relate to one another closer in proximity, or within the same section.

The General Assembly Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that a few revisions be made to make the provisions clearer. If this section is approved, it replaces the current “Rules of Discipline.” Any amendments to the “Rules of Discipline” are made moot.

The stated clerk will try to answer specific questions if provided the current Book of Discipline citation and the citation from the proposed Church Discipline Section.