

Responsibilities of Clerk's of Session at a Glance

1. Keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the session. (G-3.0104, G-3.0107)
2. Keep the roll of session membership and attendance. (G-3.0104)
3. Arrange for the careful preservation of session records, making recommendations to the session for permanent safekeeping of its records. (G-3.0107)
4. Furnish extracts from the minutes when required by another governing body of the church. (G-3.0104)
5. Maintain and preserve rolls and registers required of session. G-3.0104)
6. Be responsible for the preservation of the records of the Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees. (G-3.0107)
7. Be familiar with the responsibilities of the session as described in the *Book of Order*. (G-3.02)
8. Notify the session or congregation of special meetings, describing accurately the business that will be transacted. (G-3.0203)
9. Be sure that the Online Annual Statistical Report requested by the General Assembly is completed accurately and submitted by the deadline. (Keep a hard copy for your records). (G-3.0104)
10. Be sure that the Clerk's Annual Questionnaire, when requested by the General Assembly, is completed accurately and submitted by the deadline. (Keep a hard copy for your records). (G-3.0104)
11. Submit the session minute book, register book, and Operations Manuals to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery or representative of the Administrative Ministry Team of the Presbytery for annual review. (G-3.0104)
12. Serve as secretary for the meetings of the congregation (G-1.0506), see that the minutes are received by session and are inscribed in the permanent session minute book.
13. Bring all official correspondence to the attention of session, and respond as directed by session.
14. Keep a list of unfinished business, including all matters to be referred to a committee or staff member for a later report to session, and remind the appropriate person(s) if not completed expeditiously.
15. Be prepared to respond to questions of parliamentary procedure in meetings if requested to be a parliamentarian. (Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, except where it conflicts with PCUSA Constitution). (G-3.0105) Copies of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, and the latest *Book of Order* should be available at meetings.
16. Receive and submit communications from/to other governing bodies.
17. Assist the moderator in preparing the agenda for session meetings, as requested.
18. Assist the pastor in church officer training when requested.
19. In consultation with the moderator, prepare a statement of highlights of session and actions and reports following the meeting for information for the congregation (may be included in the next issue of the congregation's newsletter.) Note: Confidential matters should not be included.
20. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the session or moderator.

Guidelines for Session Minutes

Minutes of each session meeting must include:

1. Whether the meeting is a regular or special meeting
2. The name of the church, the place, date, and time of the meeting.
3. The name of the moderator of the meeting.
4. The opening and closing of each meeting with prayer.
5. The roll, listing elders present, elders absent and any who are excused; the clerk, moderator and other staff present or excused, others present and their identities (Always use first and last names.)
6. The affirmation of a quorum (G-3.0203). Sessions shall provide by rule a quorum for meetings. A quorum of session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session.
7. The approval of the agenda. (In the case of a special meeting, the call to the meeting stating the purpose becomes the agenda. (G-3.0203)
8. The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. (Any corrections of previous minutes shall be listed.)
9. Clerk's report: may include correspondence, announcements, and report of the serving of the Lord's Supper, in addition to listing baptisms, marriages, and changes in membership rolls.
10. Reports of the pastor, other staff, the treasurer, and committee moderators should be summarized in the minutes.
11. All motions and amendments, if any, and whether they passed or failed. Names of those making/seconding the motion are not recorded.

(Details of discussion should not be recorded, except where needed to give a sense of the action.)

12. When a previous action of the session is referred to, the page on which it is recorded, or the date of the meeting at which it occurred, should be designated.

When appropriate, include the following:

13. The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be reported at the next succeeding regular meeting. When the sacrament has been administered to those unable to attend public worship, the name of the minister officiating and the name of elder or elders assisting should be noted. (This may be part of the clerk's report or the report of the worship committee.)
14. The administration of the Sacrament of Baptism at the next succeeding regular meeting, giving the name of adults baptized including maiden name of married women; the record of infants baptized, noting the name of the child, date of birth, the names of the parents or one rightly exercising the parental responsibilities. (W-3.0403) (This may be part of the clerk's report, the pastor's report or that of the appropriate committee.)
15. The full name of applicants for church membership (in the case of married women, include the maiden name) and the manner of their reception.
 - a. by profession of faith, previously baptized
 - b. by profession of faith, and baptism
 - c. by reaffirmation of faith
 - d. by letter of transfer, giving the name of the church from which received
16. The full title of the church to which a certificate of transfer is granted and the full name of the person transferred with the date of the transfer.

17. Record the job descriptions for employed personnel, both clergy and non-clergy, as they are approved.
18. Name of elders elected to be commissioners to meetings of the Presbytery, and the exact period for which they are elected. (G-3.0301)
19. Record that commissioner(s) to the presbytery reported to session: the report may be summarized.
20. When the session finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the Form of Government and Rules of Discipline should be carefully studied by a committee of the session and if discipline be administered, the minutes of the session must contain such a record of the proceedings which will enable Presbytery to know who was disciplined and how.
21. In case of a sale, mortgage, gift or lease of property, the session records must show:
 - a. Name, address and legal description of the property
 - b. Name of buyer/lessee
 - c. Sale price
 - d. Loan amount, purpose and terms, including the name of the lender
 - e. Lease terms and liability insurance
 - f. Concurrence of Presbytery

Be sure to include the following each year:

22. Approval of the annual budget.
23. Approval of the distribution of the church's benevolences.
24. Record the annual review with each pastor of the adequacy of compensation.
25. Record the recommendation to be made to the congregation for changes in the terms of call for each pastor.
26. Note the annual review by the personnel committee (or other responsible

body appointed by the session) of the adequacy of compensation of all paid staff.

27. Note whether new officers have received training and been examined. (G-2.0104b)
28. Report the ordination and/or installation of elders and deacons at the next succeeding meeting.
29. Report the recognition of trustees (if applicable) at the next succeeding meeting.
30. Report that property and liability insurance has been obtained (G-3.0112) (Insert photocopy of the church's certificate of insurance.)
31. Approval of the annual statistical report to be submitted to General Assembly.
32. Updates to policy manual.
33. Review of sexual misconduct policy, harassment policy, youth, child, and vulnerable adult policy, anti-racism policy, boundary training requirements, and any updates.

At the last meeting of the calendar year, please include the following in the Clerk's Report

34. Record that job descriptions have been approved for all employed personnel, both clergy and non-clergy, and indicate by page number where the latest job description for each staff person is located in the minute book.
35. Record changes during the year in the Session, the Board of Deacons, and the Trustees through death, resignation or removal.
36. State the composition of the Session with regard to racial ethnic members,

women, men, and age groups, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation. (This requirement may be fulfilled by photocopying the annual statistical report required by General Assembly into the session records).

37. Record the date of the latest renewal of the articles of incorporation with the state. Michigan requires this every year.
38. Report in the minutes where records of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees are kept.
39. Include an Annual Narrative Report. (Moderator's annual report, or periodic reports to the session of ongoing church life will satisfy this request.

Guideline for Recording Session Minutes

The method of recording session minutes is somewhat dependent on local circumstances. The following is a suggested procedure used by most churches:

- a) The Clerk takes notes for minutes at the meeting
- b) The Clerk writes the minutes or arranges for them to be typed
- c) The Clerk makes copies and distributes them before the next meeting
- d) At the next meeting, the minutes are either approved as correct or corrections are made and the corrections are noted in that meeting's minutes
- e) The Clerk types or arranges for someone to type the approved minutes in the session's permanent record book (these may be photocopies as long as archival quality paper is used)
- f) If using a computer for minutes in the permanent minute book, a laser printer and archival-quality paper must be used
- g) If you wish, 200-250 pages may be professionally bound into volumes. This can be done by the Presbyterian Department of History, Presbyterian Historical Society, at a reasonable cost (215-627-1852)

Do not use erasures, whiteout, interlineations, or footnotes; or insert in the records separate sheets of paper with written or printed matter on them.

The records of each session meeting are to be duly attested (signed in ink) by the clerk or the moderator. The records of congregational meetings are to be attested by the clerk AND the moderator.

The minutes of congregational meetings, the annual report of the church treasurer(s), and the annual statistical report required by the General Assembly are to be included. These are to be typed or photocopies into the permanent minute book and not included as inserts. ALWAYS KEEP A COPY!

Congregational and Corporation Meetings

Minutes of all congregational and corporation meetings shall be included in the session minute book along with session minutes in one chronological order.

Minutes of these meetings shall include:

1. Indication of whether the meeting is "regular" or "special"
2. If it is a "special" meeting, the minutes shall include the call to the meeting, which will serve as the agenda
3. Name of the church
4. Date, time, and place of the meeting
5. Name of the moderator or presiding officer
6. Presence of a quorum
7. Opening and closing of the meeting with prayer
8. Record of all actions, whether adopted or defeated

9. When applicable, action by the congregation on any change in each pastor's compensation, with terms of call specified
10. Minutes of the meeting of the congregation or corporation at which the annual financial reports are received should indicate, at least:
 - a. report of full financial review of the financial records (G-3.0113) Use of the Guidelines for Financial Review is a helpful tool.
 - b. A complete, itemized report of income and expenditures for the year
 - c. Provide the complete, itemized proposed budget adopted by the session for the coming year
 - d. Details of the status of loans from General Assembly, Synod, or Presbytery, if any are outstanding
11. If the congregation does not approve the minutes before adjournment, session may approve the minutes at its next scheduled meeting.

Congregational meeting minutes must be attested (signed in ink) by the moderator and the clerk.

Corporation meeting minutes must be signed by the presiding secretary.

Rolls and Registers

The rolls of the church should contain information about those who are members of the local church. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain, or to oversee the maintenance of the Rolls as required in G-3.0204.

1. Names of members shall be placed upon, removed, or deleted from the roles of the church only by order of the Session (G-3.0204a)

2. Session shall maintain the following membership rolls (G-3.0204a)
 - Baptized members
 - Active Members
 - Affiliate Members
3. **Baptized Member**
 - a. A Baptized Member is one who has received the Sacrament of Baptism but has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; and/or one who was baptized in any church and is currently worshipping regularly.
 - b. Record the name, date of baptism (if known), church where Sacrament of Baptism occurred. Names should be removed from this roll when a profession of faith is made, when the person moves from the community, parents transfer to another church or the person dies.
4. **Active Member**
 - a. An Active Member is one who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the Church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of the particular church, and participates in the church's work and worship.
 - b. Record name, date received into membership and method of reception. Record date of removal from the particular role and whether by death, transfer to another church, or removed.
5. **Affiliate Member**
 - a. An Affiliate Member is one who is an active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination of Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is located. Affiliate membership must be renewed every two years.
 - b. Record name, date of affiliation, name of home church, date of

renewal, date of return to home church.

6. Roll books usually provide double pages for a chronological roll by date of reception into membership with columns for name, how received, name of church from which member transferred if that is the manner of reception, date of deletion from the active roll and reason – by death, inactivity or transfer, in which case the name of the church to which the member is transferred is listed.
7. Pages may be provided in the same binder for an alphabetical listing of members along with the membership number that is assigned in the chronological roll. Pages may also be provided for Baptized, and Affiliate member rolls in the same binder.
8. Pages containing columns for the information requested may be obtained through Cokesbury Book Store (800-672-1789).

Registers are historical records and need to be carefully maintained. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain or oversee the maintenance of Registers as required by G-3.0204b.

1. Session shall maintain the following registers:
 - Marriages
 - Baptisms
 - Elders
 - Deacons
 - Pastors
2. **Register of Marriages** shall include marriages of members of the church, all

marriages conducted by the ministerial staff of the church, and all marriages performed on the church's property.

3. **Registers of Infant and Adult Baptisms** shall include name, parents' names and date of birth of those baptized.
4. **Register of Ruling Elders** shall include each elder's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service, and record of removals.
5. **Register of Deacons** shall include each deacon's name, the name of the church in which each was ordained, date of ordination, terms of active service and record of removals.
6. **Register of Pastors** shall include the names of the pastors, co-pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates serving the church, with dates of service.
7. All registers may be kept in the same binder, or in the binder with the rolls. Pages for each register listed may be obtained through Cokesbury Book Store (800-672-1789).

Clerk of Session Report Sample

This is a sample report that can be modified per the needs of the individual clerk. If you have questions, please contact the Presbytery's Associate Stated Clerk, Annamarie Groenenboom at agroenenboom@lakemichiganpresbytery.org, or Stated Clerk, Fran Lane-Lawrence at flanelawrenceplm@gmail.com

Clerk's Report

Clerk's Report/Correspondence/Session Records/Narration

Baptisms to be approved (name and proposed date of baptism to be celebrated)

Baptisms celebrated (name and date of baptism already celebrated)

Lord's Supper to be approved (this can be done once a year for the entire year)

Lord's Supper celebrated

Communion was served on (date) at the (time) worship service, and later that same day to (name – homebound member) by Ruling Elders/Deacon (names of Deacon or Elders), Pastor (name) took Communion to (name): Elder/Deacon (name) was present.

Weddings to be approved (name of couple, date, place)

New Members received (or to be received) (names of new members)

Transfer Request – to be approved (name, and church requesting transfer)

Restore to Active Roll (name)

Restore and Transfer Request (name and church requesting transfer)

Remove from Roll

Birth

Death

Ordinations/Installations

Total Active Membership (last meeting date) – (number) (this meeting date – number)

Note: All of the above (except birth and death) require Session action before the event takes place – or the already Session approved action is recorded as having occurred

(after the event) here in the Clerk of Session Report. This also helps the Clerk to maintain the corresponding Rolls and Registers.

References to *Clerk* or *Clerk of Session* in the *New Form of Government*, in the *Book of Order*, PCUSA (except those specific to Stated Clerk)

G-1.0506 Secretary and Minutes

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary for all meetings of the congregation. If the clerk of session is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting.

G-2.0407 Renunciation of Jurisdiction

When a ruling elder or deacon submits to the clerk of session a written statement renouncing the jurisdiction of this church, the renunciation shall be effective upon receipt. When a ruling elder or deacon persists in work disapproved by the session, the session shall consult with him or her and shall give notice of its disapproval. If, after having been provided opportunity for consultation and upon written notice of its disapproval, the ruling elder or deacon persists in the work, the session may then conclude that the ruling elder or deacon has renounced the jurisdiction of this church. Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the ruling elder or deacon from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of the ministry. The renunciation shall be reported by the clerk of session at the next meeting of the session, which shall record the renunciation, delete the name of the ruling elder or deacon from the appropriate register, and take such other administrative actions as may be required by this Constitution.

G-3.0104 Officers

Each council shall elect a clerk who shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church. Such extracts, verified by the clerk, shall be evidence in any council of the church. The clerk of the session shall be a ruling elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine. The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly

shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the council for a definite term as it may determine, and must be a ruling elder or teaching elder. A stated clerk may be removed from office prior to completion of his or her term of service through the use of the process outlined in G-3.0110.

G-3.0105 Meetings

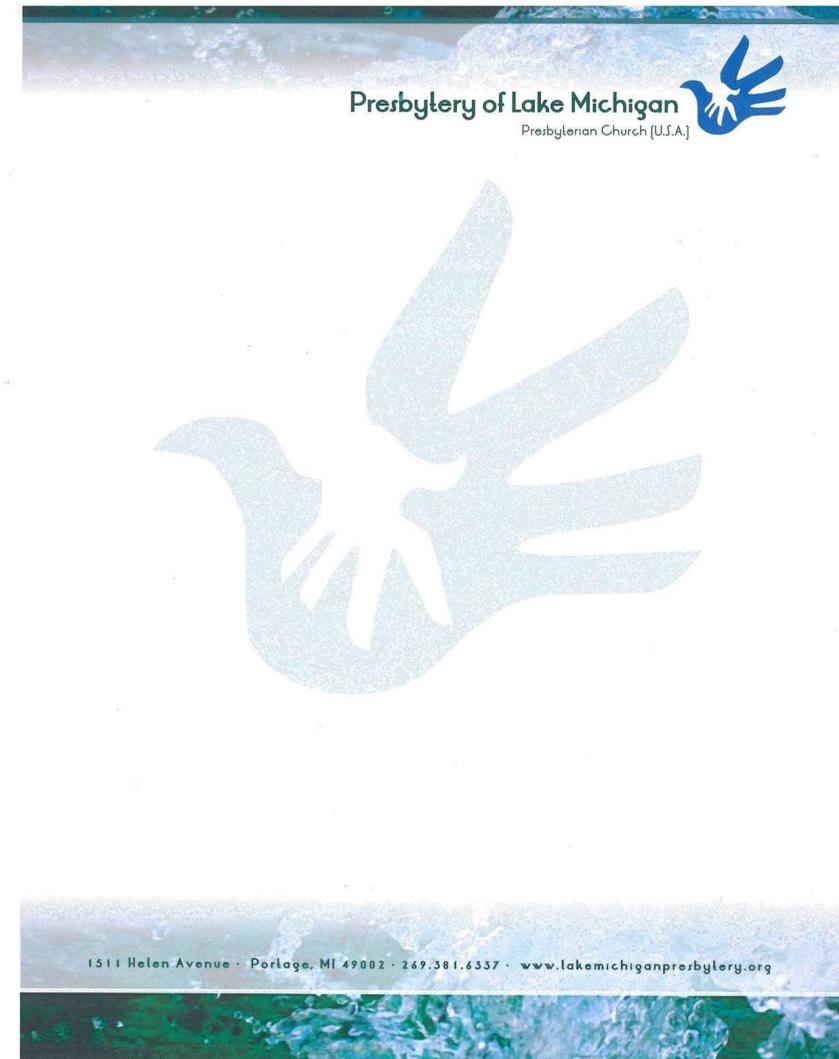
When a council makes a decision, a member of the body who voted against the decision is entitled to file a dissent or a protest. Filing a dissent or protest neither initiates nor prevents judicial process.

- a. A dissent is a declaration expressing disagreement with a decision of a council. It shall be made at the particular session during which the decision is made. The names of members dissenting shall be recorded.
- b. A protest is a written declaration, supported by reasons, alleging that a decision of a council is or contains an irregularity or a delinquency. Written notice of the protest shall be given at the particular session of the council during which it arose and shall be filed with the clerk before adjournment. If the protest is expressed in decorous and respectful language, it shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting, and may be accompanied by an answer prepared by the council. No further action is required.

G-3.0107 Records

Each council shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. Minutes and all other official records of councils are the property in perpetuity of said councils or their legal successors. When a council ceases to exist, its records shall become the property of the next higher council within whose bounds the lower council was prior to its cessation. The clerk of each council shall make recommendation to that body for the permanent safekeeping of the body's records with the Presbyterian Historical Society or in a temperature and humidity controlled environment of a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

MANUAL FOR CLERKS OF SESSION



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