

The Florida Presbytery

Manual of Procedure

(By-laws of the Florida Presbytery, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church)

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Article I **ORGANIZATION**

A. Name

The name of this Presbytery shall be “The Florida Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.” Within this document “The Florida Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church” is also referred to as “the Presbytery.”

B. Bounds

The bounds of the Presbytery shall be the state of Florida.

C. Membership

1. The membership of the Presbytery shall be all ministers duly enrolled by it and one ruling elder from each congregation. Larger congregations shall have additional representation, which shall be elected according to the Form of Government. The moderator, vice moderator, principal clerk, reading clerk and chairs of each standing committee must be members of the Presbytery. The Treasurer shall be an advisory member of the Presbytery.

2. Advisory membership in any committee, commission or body established by the Florida Presbytery is a limited membership. It does not carry with it the right to make motions, speak in debate or vote. Advisory membership is for persons with expert, professional or valued opinions or abilities as they serve the needs of the Presbytery, committee, commission or any body established by the Presbytery.

3. If a ruling elder, in good standing, leaves active service with his session while serving as an elected or appointed officer within any committee, commission or body established by the Florida Presbytery, full membership privileges shall be extended to such an individual for the duration of his term, so that he may fulfill his duties to Presbytery and complete his term of office.

Article II PURPOSE, RESPONSIBILITY, and AUTHORITY

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Presbytery is to give oversight to the congregations within its bounds.

B. Responsibility

The Presbytery's primary responsibility shall be the initiation, planning, organization and administration of programs designed to enable it to carry on the mission of God in Christ's Church by word and deed in the Presbytery, the General Synod and the whole world.

C. Authority

The governing authorities shall be, in order of priority, the Holy Scriptures, the Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, this Manual of Procedure, Committee Operation Manuals, and where none of these apply, Robert's Rules of Order (Version: Robert's Rules of Order, General Henry M. Robert, Scott Foremen/ Harper Collins Pub., 1990).

Article III MEETINGS

A. Stated Meetings

1. The Presbytery shall have two stated meetings each Church year, one in April and the other in October.
2. The specific dates and times of the meetings shall be set for the following church year by the Presbytery at its April stated meeting.
3. Stated meetings shall ordinarily be held in the churches of the Presbytery in the chronological order in which they became members thereof.

B. Called Meetings

A called meeting may be held upon the call of the moderator or the principal clerk with notices mailed to each minister and clerk of session at least ten days before the meeting. No business shall be transacted except as specified in the call.

C. Quorums

1. The quorum for stated meetings shall be one-third of the ministers of the Presbytery, and the elder delegates from one-third of its congregations.
2. The quorum for called meetings shall be two ministers from different congregations and two elder delegates from at least one congregation not represented by the ministers.
3. Both stated and called meetings require a minimum of two officers to conduct business. These officers are a moderator and a clerk. The highest-ranking officer to the Presbytery present may appoint them *pro tem*. If there is no officer of the Presbytery present at the meeting, no official business may be conducted.

D. Visitors

The moderator at all meetings of Presbytery shall recognize visitors. These shall include observers from mission churches, licentiates, students of theology and other guests. The Presbytery may grant these visitors the privileges of the floor.

Article IV OFFICERS

A. Moderator

1. The moderator shall be elected at the April stated meeting for a term of one year, as the first item of business. His installation shall take place and term begin immediately.

2. The office of moderator shall be served alternately between ministers and ruling elders. The ministers shall ordinarily be elected in rotation according to seniority of years in the Florida Presbytery. The lay moderators shall ordinarily be chosen and elected in rotation according to the chronological order by which the congregations became members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. A minister or ruling elder may pass up his right to serve as moderator, in which case the opportunity to serve goes to the next in line.

3. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Preside at all meetings of the Presbytery.
 - b. Serve as chairman of the Presbytery Council.
 - c. Appoint such committees, including commissions, as the Presbytery directs him.
 - d. Ordinarily preach a sermon at the April stated meeting that ends his term. When the moderator is a ruling elder, he may appoint a minister of the Presbytery to preach the sermon.
 - e. Act as an *ex officio* member of all Presbytery committees, except the Nominations Committee.
 - f. May appoint a parliamentarian for the duration of his office.
 - g. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

B. Vice Moderator

1. The vice moderator shall be elected at the April stated meeting for a term of one year. His installation shall take place and term begin immediately.
2. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Act for the moderator in his absence or incapacity, and assist the moderator in any way requested.
 - b. In case of the resignation or death of the moderator, assume all of the duties of the moderator until the Presbytery fills the vacancy.
 - c. Prepare himself to assume the duties of moderator for the following year.
 - d. Serve as a member of the Presbytery Council.
 - e. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

C. Principal Clerk

1. The principal clerk shall be elected at the April stated meeting for a term of three years. His term shall begin immediately. He may succeed himself for only one additional term.
2. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Keep the roll of ministers and congregations according to the length of membership in the Presbytery.
 - b. Mail notices of all Presbytery meetings at least ten days before said meetings.
 - c. Call the roll of Presbytery at each meeting and present any requests to be excused.
 - d. Record all proceedings and authenticate all documents of the Presbytery.
 - e. Make note of all unfinished business, which needs to come before the Presbytery.
 - f. Serve as custodian of the records, documents and papers of Presbytery.
 - g. Sign all orders and official papers of Presbytery.
 - h. Execute requests referred to him by General Synod.
 - i. Publish and distribute the minutes of all Presbytery meetings to the members of Presbytery. This shall be done within thirty days following each stated meeting.
 - j. Send and receive all official communications on behalf of the Presbytery.

- k. Inform, by written notice, all those who have been elected to Presbytery committees, and notify the chairman of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of new committee members.
- l. In the absence of a moderator and vice moderator, he is to call the meeting to order and immediately bring before the Presbytery the election of a moderator *pro tem*.
- m. Issue ordination papers, licenses and letters of transfer, pending authorization from The Minister and His Work Committee.
- n. Serve as a member of the Presbytery Council.
- o. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

D. Reading Clerk

1. The reading clerk shall be elected at the April stated meeting for a term of three years. His term shall begin immediately. He may succeed himself for only one additional term.
2. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Assist the principal clerk.
 - b. Read the minutes, and other papers, on request.
 - c. Serve as a member of the Presbytery Council.
 - d. Perform the duties of the principal clerk in his absence.
 - e. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

E. Treasurer

1. The treasurer shall be elected at the April stated meeting for a term of three years. His term shall begin immediately. He may succeed himself for only one additional term. The principal clerk may assume the responsibilities of the treasurer upon his absence.
2. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Be custodian of funds committed to him by the Presbytery.
 - b. Dispense monies as authorized by Presbytery.
 - c. Maintain an up-to-date accurate record of all receipts and disbursements.
 - d. Make a financial report to the Presbytery at each stated meeting.
 - e. Annually notify each congregation of Presbytery's *per capita* assessment for the coming year.
 - f. Serve as an advisory member of the Stewardship Committee.
 - g. Serve as an advisory member of the Presbytery Council.
 - h. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

F. World Missions Liaison

1. The world missions liaison shall be elected at the April Stated Meeting for a term of three years. His term shall begin immediately. He may succeed himself for only one additional term.
2. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Foster, nurture and sustain a high level of interest in and support of world missions within the churches of Florida Presbytery.
 - b. Coordinate visits of World Witness missionaries and staff among the churches of Florida.
 - c. Assist local churches in their planning of world missions conferences and ARP World Witness activities in Florida.
 - d. Inform Presbytery of any extraordinary needs of World Witness missionaries.
 - e. Offer special encouragement to missionary candidates within the Presbytery.
 - f. Serve as member of the Presbytery Council.
 - g. Serve as an *ex officio* member of Synod's Board of World Witness.
 - h. Perform other duties as requested by Presbytery.

Article V PRESBYTERY COUNCIL

A. Purpose

1. The Presbytery Council is the Executive Committee of the Presbytery. It shall coordinate and promote the programs of various committees and agencies of the Presbytery, and relate the programs of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod to the local churches.
2. It shall be responsible for long range planning as well as the current activities of the Presbytery. All Presbytery Council decisions shall be subject to review and approval by the Presbytery. In discharging business specifically delegated to it by the Presbytery, the Presbytery Council shall have commissioned authority to act.

B. Membership

1. The Presbytery Council shall be composed of ten *ex officio* members. They shall be the Moderator, Vice-moderator, Principal clerk, Reading clerk, World Missions Liaison and the chairmen of the following standing committees of Presbytery: Church Extension, Christian Education, The Minister and His Work, Nominations and Stewardship.
2. In addition, the Treasurer and the pastor of the host church for the next stated meeting may be invited as advisory members.
3. A quorum shall be a majority of its regular members.

C. Meetings

1. The Moderator shall be the chairman; the Principal clerk shall be the secretary. A chairman or secretary *pro tem* shall be elected, when necessary, by a majority vote of the members present at that Council meeting.
2. The Presbytery Council shall meet at least two weeks prior to the stated meetings of Presbytery, and more often as necessary at the call of its chairman.

D. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Maintain communication with the committees of Presbytery to the end that their work is coordinated and is in harmony with the Presbytery's over-all program and objectives.
2. Prepare and distribute an agenda for each stated meeting of Presbytery.
3. Set stated meeting dates of Presbytery.
4. Bring to the attention of Presbytery matters referred to it by the General Synod and make appropriate recommendations.
5. Prepare a formal report of the findings and recommendations of the Presbytery Council to the Presbytery at its stated meetings.
6. Make necessary interim appointments to fill vacancies among the officers and the committees of Presbytery.
7. Perform other such duties as Presbytery requests.

Article VI* *COMMITTEES

A. Definitions

1. Standing committees are bodies that have a continuing existence and are appointed to take the management of specified areas of Presbytery's work. Lay men and women, along with members of Presbytery, shall be eligible for membership on standing committees. Chairmen of standing committees must be members of Presbytery. A standing committee shall have power to manage the work entrusted to it within the general instructions given it by Presbytery, but shall be required to obey Presbytery's specific instructions whenever given. The

Presbytery reserves the right and authority to approve, disapprove or set aside any action taken by a standing committee.

2. *Ex Officio* members of any committee shall be persons who hold membership in it by virtue of their offices. *Ex officio* members have full privileges in the committee, including the right to make motions, speak in debate and vote.

3. Special committees are of two kinds: temporary committees that report their findings or recommendations to Presbytery, and commissions that are empowered to act on behalf of Presbytery. All special committees shall be elected by the Presbytery, or appointed by the Moderator at Presbytery's request for a specific work. A commission can act only within the specific instructions given by the Presbytery, unless Presbytery gives it standing powers. Any special committee's work may be conducted between stated meetings, or span a period of several stated meetings. A temporary committee shall be discharged when its report has been submitted to, received, reviewed and accepted by Presbytery, unless Presbytery directs its continuation. A commission shall dissolve as soon as Presbytery has determined it has completed the will of Presbytery regarding its specified task, unless Presbytery directs its continuation.

4. Moderator's committees shall be appointed by the moderator to serve while the Presbytery is in session and shall make its report at the meeting for which it was appointed and then be dissolved.

B. Committee Regulations

1. The term of membership for standing committees shall begin on the first of July following the election at the April stated meeting. Those elected to fill unexpired terms shall assume their responsibilities immediately upon their election.

2. Standing committee members may serve only one additional full consecutive term, with the exception of the Committee on Nominations, where the limit shall be one full term.
3. A person may serve as chairman of no more than one committee at a time.
4. Each committee shall elect its own officers. In the absence of any elected officers, the senior member of the committee shall be the chairman *pro tem*. The officers elected shall be reported to the October stated meeting of Presbytery. Before his term of office expires, each retiring or resigning chairman shall be responsible for the election of a new chairman.
5. A quorum for all standing committee meetings shall be forty percent of its members.
6. All committees shall create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.
7. All committees shall keep full and accurate records of their proceedings and submit them to the Presbytery, upon request.
8. All standing committees shall ordinarily submit written reports to the Presbytery Council for its meetings prior to the stated meetings of Presbytery.
9. Each standing committee report to Presbytery shall be given by its chairman. If he does not agree with the report, or for any other reason does not wish to give the report, the committee will appoint another of its members to give the report.

C. The Committee on Church Extension

1. The Committee on Church Extension is the Presbytery's counterpart of Synod's Board of Outreach North America. It shall promote evangelism through church planting and church revitalization within the boundaries of Presbytery.
2. The committee shall be composed of nine members, with at least three ministers and three ruling elders. The Presbytery shall elect three members each year for three-year terms. The Presbytery shall also appoint a treasurer for A.R.P. Church Extension, Inc. and make him an appointed tenth member of this committee. The Committee on Church Extension will determine the length of tenure of this position, pending approval by Presbytery.
3. The committee shall meet at least twice annually, and more often as necessary, upon the call of its chairman.
4. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. To initiate and oversee the location, planning, organization, personnel, financing of and all other matters relating to new church developments within the boundaries of Presbytery.
 - b. To oversee the work of existing church developments until they become organized churches.
 - c. To meet with developing or existing congregations interested in becoming members of Florida Presbytery.
 - d. To report to Presbytery any activities and recommendations related to potential church developments.
 - e. To support and encourage Synod's revitalization program within the boarders of Presbytery.
 - f. To act as a pastoral board in the oversight, counseling, training and nurturing of its mission developers and their families, and to hire, supervise and release mission developers as needed.
 - g. To hire a Director of Church Extension pending approval of Presbytery.
 - h. To create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.
5. The members of the Church Extension Committee shall constitute the Board of Directors of A. R. P. Church Extension, Inc., a Florida non-profit corporation. Inasmuch as the committee and the directors of A. R. P. Church Extension, Inc. are composed of the same persons, a meeting of the Committee of Church Extension shall constitute a meeting of the board of directors of A.R.P. Church Extension, Inc.
6. The minutes of the Church Extension Committee shall also comprise the minutes of the board of directors of A. R. P. Church Extension, Inc.
7. The treasurer of A. R. P. Church Extension, Inc. shall submit an annual financial report in writing to the Stewardship Committee of Florida Presbytery at its April stated meeting.

8. The chairman of the committee shall be an *ex officio* member of Synod's board of Outreach North America.

D. The Committee on Christian Education

1. The Committee on Christian Education is the arm of Presbytery that relates the ministry of Synod's Board of Christian Education Ministries to the churches of Presbytery. It shall coordinate and promote the work of Christian education in the Presbytery, both current activities and long range plans. It shall provide educational aid for congregations when educational needs might best be served through the grouping of churches.

2. The committee shall be composed of eight members. The Presbytery shall elect each member to a three-year term with no more than three and no less than two members being elected in any one year. Membership shall include at least three ministers or ruling elders. It is recommended that a Director of Christian Education from one of the Florida churches be one of the members.

3. The committee shall meet at least twice annually, and more often as necessary, upon the call of its chairman.

4. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Oversee programs relating to family life, adult Christian education, youth Christian education, camps, conferences, retreats, leadership education, literature review and proposals, and vocational guidance.

b. Communicate helpful, specific and stimulating information to local church leaders on issues related to Christian Education.

c. Encourage pastors and Directors of Christian Education to exchange information, keeping them informed of needs and improvements in local churches, and to share more effective methods of education.

d. Create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.

5. The chairman of the committee shall be an *ex officio* member of Synod's Board of Christian Education Ministries.

E. The Committee on the Minister and His Work

1. The Committee on the Minister and His Work shall serve as an instrument of the Presbytery in promoting the peace and harmony of individual churches, with special responsibilities in the area of relations of ministers with their congregations.
2. The Committee shall be composed of nine members, five of whom shall be ministers and four of whom shall be ruling elders. The Presbytery shall elect three members each year to three-year terms.
3. This committee shall meet at least twice annually, and more often as necessary, upon the call of its chairman.
4. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Appoint a moderator in churches without a pastor.
 - b. Aid and counsel sessions regarding stated and occasional pulpit supplies.
 - c. Counsel congregations regarding possible candidates and calls.
 - d. Examine ministers transferring into the Presbytery and candidates who wish to be licensed or ordained.
 - e. Review and make recommendations regarding new calls.
 - f. Authorize the principal clerk to issue ordination certificates and licenses to preach.
 - g. Upon the acceptance of a new minister as a member of Presbytery, act as a commission in the installation of ministers by appointing at least two ministers and one ruling elder, who are members of Presbytery, to serve on such a commission.
 - h. Review changes in the terms of calls to ministers of Presbytery on an annual basis and report the same at the April stated meeting.
 - i. Review annually session minutes from each congregation within its jurisdiction.
 - j. Function as a mediation committee for Presbytery, when requested by the minister or the session, by visiting the churches, inquiring into, and offering suggestions relative to, difficulties that have arisen.
 - k. Dissolve pastoral relationships when requested to do so by the minister, provided the congregation has concurred in a duly called congregational meeting. Sufficient time shall be allowed for contacting The Minister and His Work Committee.

- l. Authorize the principal clerk to grant letters of transfer to other presbyteries or comparable judicatories.
- m. Maintain standard procedures regarding congregational and ministerial responsibilities as they relate to the retirement or resignation of the minister.
- n. Maintain records of those laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery and those who are without a charge/call.
- o. Oversee the care of students of theology.
- p. Administer the funds of the George Morrison Student Aid Fund.
- q. Create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.

5. The chairman of this committee shall be Presbytery's *ex officio* member of General Synod's Committee on The Minister and His Work.

F. The Committee on Nominations

- 1. The Committee on Nominations shall be composed of three members, elected by the Presbytery, each serving a three-year term. One member shall be elected each year, with a rotation of appointment between a minister elected one year and a ruling elder the next.
- 2. A meeting of the committee shall be held at least six weeks before the April stated meeting of Presbytery and other times as needed, upon the call of its Chairman.
- 3. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Nominate the moderator and vice moderator (in accord with IV A 2 and IV B 2c of this manual of procedures) at the April stated meeting.
 - b. Seek to determine the best qualified persons, from as many churches as possible, to perform Presbytery's work and nominate them at the April stated meeting for election to their respective offices and committee positions or as the need arises.
 - c. Strive to place in nomination only the names of those persons who have given their consent.
 - d. Consult with the other chairmen of Presbytery's committees possible nominees and the status of inactive committee members.
 - f. Consider replacement of inactive committee members.
 - g. Present nominations, which will fill vacancies caused by resignations or deaths, to the next stated or called Presbytery meeting immediately preceding the vacancy.
 - h. Nominate a person to serve as Presbytery's appointee to the Committee on Nominations of the General Synod.
 - i. Annually ask each session to submit to the committee a list of names of qualified persons who are willing to serve as officers and/or committee members for Florida Presbytery.
 - j. Create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.

k. Nominate a person to serve Synod's Executive Board as the Florida Presbytery representative.

4. Other nominations from the floor of Presbytery at the time of any election shall always be in order. When possible, consent of the persons nominated shall have been previously secured.

G. The Committee on Stewardship

1. The Committee on Stewardship shall be composed of six members. The Presbytery shall elect each member to three-year terms with two members being elected each year. At least one member of the committee shall be a minister and at least two shall be ruling elders. The treasurer of Presbytery shall be an advisory member to this committee.

2. The committee shall meet at least twice annually, and more often as necessary, upon the call of its chairman.

3. Specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Encourage the members of Presbytery and the Florida Churches in total Christian Stewardship in terms of time, ability and material resources.

b. Serve as a liaison between local congregations and the agencies of General Synod in stewardship related matters.

c. Oversee the annual review of the books of the treasurer of Florida Presbytery and present a report at the April stated meeting of Presbytery.

d. Oversee the annual review of the books of A. R. P. Church Extension, Inc. and present a report at the April stated meeting of Presbytery.

e. Solicit from Presbytery's officers and standing committees projected expenses for the coming year and prepare a proposed annual budget for presentation to Presbytery for its adoption at the October meeting.

f. Calculate and recommend the *per capita* assessment necessary to underwrite the proposed Presbytery budget for the coming year.

f. Work with General Synod's Board of Stewardship in carrying out the stewardship program of the General Synod in the Presbytery.

g. Create and maintain an operations manual subject to Presbytery's approval.

4. The chairman shall be Presbytery's *ex officio* member on the Board of Stewardship of General Synod.

Article VII RULE CHANGES

A. Amendment

This Manual of Procedure may be amended only at a stated meeting when the proposed change shall have been presented in writing at the previous stated meeting, and the vote to carry shall be at least two-thirds. Said amendment shall take effect immediately.

B. Suspension

A two-thirds vote may suspend the Manual of Procedure for the course of a given stated meeting for a desired purpose.

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Amended: October 21, 1989,
February 26, 1991,
June 8, 1992,
February 27, 2001
April 25, 2006

Copies of this manual may be obtained by contacting
the Principal Clerk of Florida Presbytery for a minimal charge