

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SESSION ORGANIZATION

(Revised August 2008)

The SESSION - will consist of fifteen Elders in three classes of five each, any youth elders, and the moderator. There are six (6) Committees of the session which organize the mission and ministry of the church.

The SESSION will meet every other month on the second Sunday at 6:30 p.m. and whenever necessary to conduct other business. Each meeting will normally include a worship time, reports by Committees, recommendations for Session action, and other essential business.

COMMITTEES of the SESSION will meet every other month during Assembly Night. These meetings will also take place on the second Sunday night at 6:30 p.m. Committees are encouraged to cancel meetings if they do not need to meet or schedule additional meetings if they are necessary.

COMMITTEES are asked to submit any minutes from meetings to the church office the Wednesday before the Session meeting so that Session Packets can be prepared. If there are items for Session Action, they should be printed in the form of a motion in the minutes of the committee and in **BOLD** letters.

Committee Responsibilities

ADMINISTRATION

- I. MEMBERSHIP:** At least four (4) Elders and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the tasks.
- II. RESPONSIBILITIES:** Generally this Committee is in charge of finances, administration, and day-to-day operations of the Church Office, staff, and facilities. The committee will also lead the Session and congregation in annual and strategic planning.
- III. POSSIBLE SUB-COMMITTEES:** Finance, Personnel, Stewardship, Building and Grounds, and Strategic Planning.
- IV. DUTIES:**
 - A. FINANCE**
 1. To prepare the budget for Session approval.
 2. To oversee the budget and report monthly to the Session.
 3. To elect, oversee, and evaluate the work of the Church Treasurer.
 4. In consultation with the Treasurer, maintain procedures for the counting, disposition, and expending of funds.
 5. Select and have oversight over an audit committee from the Church at large whose duties shall be to audit the church books during the first quarter of a new year and report in writing to the committee of their findings.
 6. Determine policies with Session approval, for receiving property gifts from individuals.
 - B. PERSONNEL**
 1. Work with the pastor to conduct an annual job review of each staff member.
 2. Conduct an annual review of the pastor.
 3. Provide salary guidance annually for the budget preparation.
 4. Be available to assist the Minister in any administrative problems.
 5. Review and recommend changes in personnel policies.
 6. Oversee the implementation of the *Safe Place Policy*.

C. STEWARDSHIP

1. To provide a total stewardship program for the Congregation.
2. To conduct an annual financial commitment and educational emphasis. Provide a program of education and training in Christian stewardship of material possessions and of life work so that each member may be led to express fully his/her commitment to Christ and to participate in Christ's mission in and to the world. (This responsibility is not a seasonal one, but should be exercised throughout the year. A year-round stewardship emphasis is essential.)
3. To provide regular stewardship information for the bulletin and newsletter.
4. To provide opportunities to educate members about faithful and wise financial planning practices.

D. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

1. Be responsible for maintaining the grounds, building, and equipment of the church.
2. Prepare and keep up-to-date, a property inventory, with remarks as to the condition of each specific group of items.
3. Be in charge of and responsible for the custodian and other personnel hired for purposes of upkeep and maintenance.
4. Set policies, with Session approval, for use of equipment for non-church functions or off-premise use.
5. Review the insurance coverage of the church at least once per year and increase the coverage amounts as necessary.
6. Service and maintain the church van.
7. Be responsible for the upkeep of Mount Vernon Church and the Union Church Cemetery.

E. STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. Evaluate progress of the Session and its committees in accomplishing goals.
2. Keep and co-ordinate an annual calendar of activities for the church and seek to maintain a common focus in church ministries.
3. Be responsible for strategic planning for the church (e.g. goals, expectations, etc.) Lead the officers in goal setting.
4. Annually review the needs of the Church for staff and personnel.

F. CLERK OF SESSION

1. Perform the duties defined in the Book of Order.
2. Recommend to the Session representatives to the meetings of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly.
3. Organize the nominating committee for the officer nominations.
4. Review the Church membership rolls annually.
5. Coordinate who will lead the prayer with the session and pastor before worship each Sunday.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- I. MEMBERSHIP:** Two (2) Elder and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the task.
- II. RESPONSIBILITIES:** To develop activities/programs that nurture people educationally, relationally, and spiritually, and assist them to be more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.
- III. POSSIBLE SUB-COMMITTEES:** Church School Administration, Older Adult and Adult Ministries, College and Young Adult Ministries, Youth Ministries, Children's Ministries, and Vacation Bible School.
- IV. DUTIES:**

A. GENERAL

1. Develop a comprehensive philosophy to be used in each of the above areas in order to lead people in these categories to become more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Develop a program of home and family nurture for the members of the congregation.
3. Develop a program of systematic study that best meets our needs and will include, among others, the following responsibilities:
 - a. Recommend the overall policies of the Church School in regard to activities of various groups, personnel, curriculum, assignment of space, etc.
 - b. Recommend financial plans suitable for accomplishing the Church School Program.
 - c. Conduct Leadership Training for all teachers, advisors, and child-care givers.
 - d. Encourage and promote Camps and Conferences.
4. Maintain an approved list of Church School personnel by the Session and review this list annually. Ensure that all volunteers adhere to the *Safe Place Policy*.
5. Co-ordinate all activities of the Church School including nursery and child care.
6. Furnish administrative support.

B. OLDER ADULT AND ADULT MINISTRIES

1. Develop and help oversee programs in the following areas:
 - a. Church School
 - b. Wednesday Night Bible Study
 - c. TTT at Bethelwoods
 - d. Retreats
 - e. Special Studies
 - f. Small Groups

C. COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

1. Provide opportunities for college and young adult aged members to learn and grow in fellowship and faith.
2. Seek to maintain contact with members who are temporarily living away from town.
3. Evaluate programs to determine that themes and topics are available which appeal to this age group.

D. YOUTH MINISTRIES

1. Develop and help oversee programs in the following areas:
 - a. Church School
 - b. Fellowship - Sunday Night Youth Group
 - c. Retreats
 - d. Recreation
 - e. Service Projects
 - f. Special Studies
2. Provide opportunities for youth to be involved in the life of the church.
3. Provide training for youth advisors and parents interested in leadership.

E. CHILDREN AND PRE-SCHOOL MINISTRIES

1. Develop and help oversee programs in the following areas:
 - a. Church School
 - b. Presbyterian Pals
 - c. Service Projects
 - d. Vacation Bible School
 - e. Wednesday Night Live
 - f. Nursery and Pre-K

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

- I. MEMBERSHIP:** Two (2) Elders and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the task.
- II. RESPONSIBILITIES:** To provide opportunities for members of the congregation to build relationships with one another and receive appropriate care in times of need so as to enhance fellowship and build a more caring community.
- III. POSSIBLE SUB-COMMITTEES:** Congregational Care, Fellowship, and Special Events.
- IV. DUTIES:**
 - A. CONGREGATIONAL CARE**
 1. Maintain a Shepherd Program, focusing primarily on all the families of the church being contacted on a monthly basis, especially those with special needs and concerns. (Example: Prayer Chain).
 2. Spiritual Care Committee (Visitation) – Assist the pastor in visiting and contacting those in the congregation with special needs and others who may be homebound.
 3. Organize and maintain a Prayer Partner Ministry where each member of the church has a partner member praying for them.
 - B. FELLOWSHIP**
 1. Develop a broad range of opportunities for fellowship, including Family Night Suppers, Socials, and Outings.
 2. Organize an effective structure to ensure that Family Night Suppers are successful and enjoyable.
 3. Develop a “Dinner-for-Eight” program where members eat and fellowship together on a monthly or regular basis during the school year. Dinners can be in homes or in restaurants depending on the interest of the members.
 - C. SPECIAL EVENTS**
 1. Co-ordinate and oversee all congregational special events. (Example: The celebration of our 100th anniversary in our sanctuary.)
 2. Co-ordinate the periodic printing of a Church Directory or Pictorial Church Directory.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

- I. MEMBERSHIP:** Two (2) Elders and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the task.
- II. RESPONSIBILITIES:** To assist the church in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in the community and enable new church members to become more “at-home” at First Presbyterian Church.
- III. POSSIBLE SUB-COMMITTEES:** Publicity, Evangelism Training, New Members.
- IV. DUTIES:**
 - A. PUBLICITY**
 1. Maintain contact with all program committees and session to be informed about all activities that need to be publicized in the community.
 2. Find creative ways through newspaper, billboards, mailings, banners, signs, etc., to share the news about ministries that the church provides.
 3. Access demographic data from the “Percept Group Account” available through Presbytery in order to ensure that publicity is reaching its intended audience.

B. EVANGELISM TRAINING

1. Initiate and co-ordinate evangelism efforts in the Church.
2. Provide a format for members to write and share their own faith stories with others in the church.
3. Study new evangelism methods and provide training and education to members through special classes, Sunday School, or Wednesday Night Live.
4. Identify those in the congregation with gifts in evangelism and encourage them to assist.

C. NEW MEMBERS

1. Assist the pastor in conducting quarterly Inquirer/New Member Classes.
2. Help put New Member packets together for each person.
3. Provide information to the congregation about New Members once they have joined the church.
4. Maintain contact with New Members through a Sponsor program and encourage their involvement in the life of the church.
5. Assist with welcoming visitors and follow-up, including the assembly of welcome packets, visits to their home, and bread deliveries.

WORSHIP

I. MEMBERSHIP: Two (2) Elders, and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the task.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES: To enhance our spiritual growth through the worship of God.

III. POSSIBLE COMMITTEES: Ushering/Welcoming, Audio/Visual, Music and Services.

IV. DUTIES:

A. GENERAL

- a. Usher/Greeter and Acolyte training
- b. Maintaining A/V Equipment and ensuring there is a tape of each service.

B. WORSHIP SERVICES

1. Assist the Minister and Session in interpreting to the members of the congregation the meaning and nature of individual, family, and public worship and encourage attendance at public worship.
2. To further develop understanding of worship that rightly relates to Word and Sacrament.
3. Develop a wider use of available resources, both traditional and contemporary.
4. Focus the congregation's attention upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and their need to prepare themselves to partake of it.
5. Have charge of arrangements for the Lord's Supper.
6. Train Elders for serving the Sacraments.
7. Encourage familiarity with the themes of the Christian year, and with the meaning of Christian symbols that may be used in worship.
8. Encourage awareness of the relation of the people's worship to the church's mission.
9. Be responsible for planning participation in special worship events such as Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.
10. Be responsible for bulletins for worship services.
11. Be responsible for coordinating funerals in the Church.
12. Be responsible for any special use of flowers, Christmas trees, and decorations, in the Sanctuary.

13. Contact sick and homebound persons and offer to administer the Lord's Supper. Upon their request prepare elements, arrange visits, and see that at least one Elder accompanies the Minister to administer the sacrament.
14. Recruit individuals and maintain a list of those willing to serve as acolytes, ushers, readers, greeters, etc.
15. Collect Friendship Pad Inserts each Sunday and give to the pastor.

C. MUSIC MINISTRY

1. Children, Youth, and Adult Vocal Choirs
2. Handbell Choir
3. Maintenance of Musical Instruments
4. Provide Special Music Activities (Concerts from Church Members and/or outside Musicians).

WITNESS AND SERVICE

- I. MEMBERSHIP:** Two (2) Elders and as many members of the congregation as necessary to fulfill the task.
- II. RESPONSIBILITIES:** Guide the growth of persons in the Christian life, so that we nurture our own members in serving Christ in our community and around the world. Lead members, individually and corporately, to discover ways of addressing human need and suffering in both the local and world-wide community.
- III. POSSIBLE COMMITTEES:** Mission to the Community, Mission to the World, Compassion, and Mission Education.
- IV. DUTIES:**

A. MISSION TO THE COMMUNITY

1. Cooperate with the Pastor in identifying groups or individuals in need and minister to their needs through the Discretionary Fund and/or hands on outreach.
2. Co-ordinate and make recommendations for our involvement in community service projects such as: Sunday Meals, The Wallace Thomson Hospital Information Desk, Hope Ministries, Relay for Life, Red Cross, and Habitat for Humanity in Union.
3. Devise and implement programs to render service to the community (i. e. Dimes for Hunger, Heifer Project (H.P.I.), Meals on Wheels, etc.)
4. Determine how funds will be spent for local needs through the Coleman Fund and the Operating Budget.

B. MISSION TO THE WORLD

1. Define needs outside of Union that the church is uniquely suited to address.
2. Partner with Missionaries and Mission Organizations in order to offer financial, prayer, and practical support.
3. Create Opportunities for all interested church members to participate in mission experiences outside of Union.
4. Partner with Presbytery in its mission efforts to Central America and other locations.

C. MISSION EDUCATION

1. Provide resources to educate the congregation about Special Offerings, Mission Opportunities, and Mission Goals.
2. Encourage the use of the denominations Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study.
3. Co-ordinate and conduct an annual Mission Fair.