

**Presbytery of Des Moines  
Synod of Lakes and Prairies  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
By-Laws**

**The Article I  
NAME OF THE PRESBYTERY**

The Presbytery shall be known as The Presbytery of Des Moines of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Presbytery is incorporated under Chapter 504A, Code of Iowa.

**Article II  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Presbytery values and is instructed by the following statements:

- A. Believing that the attitudes of individual persons are more important to the efficient functioning of the Presbytery than is the structure, all presbyters should be guided by “forbearance in love” in whatever they say or do.
- B. Presbytery’s fundamental life is in and through local congregations: affirming and supporting all congregations, wisely using and continuing to discover the varied gifts of its people and responding to issues as they arise from the local churches.
- C. Instead of trying to be everything to everyone, Presbytery will focus on three key ministries: (1) extending the ministry of local churches, (2) supporting local churches, and (3) providing efficient governance.
- D. Because of the disorder and injustice that so easily pervert our common life when authority is only personal and there is no accepted way of deciding issues that inevitably arise among us, we are clearly a church of law and seek to follow it with diligence. Because our law depends upon and is rightly used considering relationships of love and trust with one another and with God through Jesus Christ, we seek to build and maintain relationships within the Presbytery and its parts.
- E. The Presbytery as part of the Body of Jesus Christ understands itself as a Christian community, seeking a balance of worship, business, education, fellowship and service.
- F. The Presbytery values the spiritual growth of persons and seeks to nurture spiritual growth in all the work and worship of the church.
- G. The Presbytery cares for persons by building up Ministers of Word and Sacrament, training Elders, supporting the ministry of the laity, being inclusive of all persons, and in all ways enabling the effective participation of all members of Presbytery.
- H. The Presbytery values an equal role for women and men, laity and clergy, in the life and leadership of the church.

- I. The Presbytery values intentional calling of persons to service.
- J. The Presbytery values education as a means of building up both individual lives and the Body of Christ through leadership development and continuing education of laity and clergy.
- K. The Presbytery values the small church as a viable and necessary vehicle for worship and caring community.
- L. The Presbytery values its committees and council as people gathered by the Holy Spirit to be caring and sharing communities through which delegated responsibilities for Presbytery planning and coordination are carried out thoughtfully and effectively.
- M. The Presbytery values a cooperative spirit which anticipates and prepares in advance for the work of the church and convenes persons to establish consensus and coordination of mutual concerns and responsibilities (i.e., communication and coordination).

The Presbytery as an employing body values the work of paid staff and is committed to providing a work environment that encourages staff growth and development, and policies and procedures that adequately and fairly define positions and compensate staff and is committed to the employment and support of staff who are productive and professional.

## **Article III BOUNDARIES**

The area of this Presbytery shall include the following counties in the State of Iowa: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Audubon, Cass, Clarke, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Guthrie, Jasper, Keokuk, Lucas, Madison, Marion, Mahaska, Monroe, Polk, Poweshiek, Ringgold, Taylor, Union, Wapello, Warren, and Wayne.

## **Article IV MEMBERSHIP**

All ministers enrolled by action of the Presbytery shall be full voting members, except those on the inactive roll. Every congregation shall be represented by at least one elder. Congregations with memberships in excess of 250 members will be represented in accordance with chapter G.3.0301 of the **Book of Order**. If additional elder representation is necessary to correct a lay-clergy imbalance, the procedure will be followed as set forth in the **Manual of Operations**.

Elders not representing their churches, but members of Standing Committees, are without vote and do have privilege of the floor to speak only on matters pertaining to their committee. Certified Educators related to this Presbytery shall have the standing of advisory members, with privilege of the floor, but not vote. Presbyters (Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elders) in good standing in other governing bodies of this Church or in any other Christian Church, who are present at any meeting of the Presbytery, may be invited to sit as corresponding members, with voice but without vote. Ministers who are laboring within the bounds of the Presbytery of Des Moines may be invited to sit as corresponding members with voice, but without vote, for the period of their service. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Women of Des Moines Presbytery has the standing of an advisory member, having voice but

without vote.

Elder Commissioners: Sessions shall normally elect elders to serve as commissioners to Presbytery for a term of not less than one calendar year but not more than three calendar years. Churches not represented by an elder at Presbytery for one calendar year will be notified by the Stated Clerk of this failure and be requested to give reasons for its absence.

Minister/Elder Balance: If, in examining the number of resident ministers and the number of elders eligible for election by local congregations, the Stated Clerk finds the number of ministers to be larger, he/she shall invite churches to send additional commissioners until the categories are balanced. Those churches to be asked to send additional commissioners as set forth in the **Manual of Operations**.

Minister Members: Unless honorably retired, ministers who are on the "Active" or "Members-at-large" roll of Presbytery are expected to be commissioners to Presbytery on a regular basis. Any such member who fails to attend at least two Presbytery meetings during one calendar year shall be counseled by the Stated Clerk and considered for "Inactive" status.

## **Article V MEETINGS**

Stated Meetings: There shall be four (4) stated meetings a year: Second Saturday in February; Third Tuesday in May; Third Saturday in August; Second Tuesday in November. The November meeting will be the annual meeting of the corporation.

Adjourned Meetings: An adjourned meeting shall be regarded as a continuation of the stated meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be sent to all ministers and clerks of session.

Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called in accordance with the Book of Order, G3.0304. The church(es) or minister(s) on whose behalf a special meeting is called shall bear the cost of the meeting which is **one hundred dollars (\$100.00)**

Quorum: A quorum for presbytery meetings is ten percent of the Ministers of Word and Sacrament currently on the roll of the presbytery and one ruling elder commissioner from ten percent of the congregations on the roll of presbytery. Proxy voting is not allowed. A quorum shall be established by the Presbytery.

Invitation to Entertain Presbytery: All invitations shall be extended to Presbytery through the Moderator and Stated Clerk with the acceptance to be determined by Presbytery. In the absence of invitations, the Moderator and Stated Clerk shall recommend arrangements to Presbytery. The Moderator and the Stated Clerk shall have the authority to set the hour of all stated meetings.

## **Article VI OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION**

The Presbytery's officers shall serve as officers of the Corporation as follows: Moderator - President; Vice Moderator - Vice President; Stated Clerk - Secretary; and Treasurer - Treasurer,

each of whom shall be a Minister of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall be enrolled as a member of the Presbytery for the duration of their terms of service if not continuing members.

Terms: The term of office for the Moderator and the Vice Moderator shall be one year. Ordinarily, the Vice Moderator will be nominated as Moderator at the end of his/her term as Vice Moderator. The term of office for Stated Clerk and Treasurer shall be three years.

Election: All officers shall be elected by the Presbytery at the Stated Meeting in November, taking office on January 1 of the following year. Election at other times shall be for completion of a regular term.

Duties of all officers are set forth in the Manual of Operations or Form of Government. The directors of the corporation shall be the Officers and the Moderator of Leadership Council and shall perform the duties of directors as prescribed by the Articles of Incorporation of the Presbytery and the Laws of the State of Iowa.

## **Article VII**

### **REPORTS AND RECORDS**

Reports and Apportionments: All church sessions shall be required to enter their Statistical Reports online by the twentieth-day of January. General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery apportionments are to be paid by the twentieth day of January of the year in which they are due unless an exception is granted by the Stated Clerk as authorized by Presbytery.

## **Article VIII**

### **COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS**

The Presbytery shall have the following Standing Committees and Commissions as defined in the **Manual of Operations**.

Membership, duties and responsibilities of all Standing Committees shall be specified in either the **Book of Order or Manual of Operations**. Commissioners from the Presbytery to meetings of Synod of Lakes and Prairies and General Assembly shall be selected as specified in the Manual of Operations.

Administrative Commissions may be appointed at any meeting of the Presbytery for specific administrative responsibilities. They shall function according to the provisions of the **Book of Order** and the direction of the Presbytery. Task Forces may be established as provided in the **Manual of Operations**. Resignations from any Presbytery elected position shall be made to the Stated Clerk. Resignation from all other positions shall be handled in accordance with the **Manual of Operations**.

Quorum: A quorum for a committee meeting shall be at least fifty percent of its membership, except as provided elsewhere in these By-laws.

## **Article IX**

### **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

The duties and powers of the Leadership Council shall be those conferred upon it by action of

the Presbytery, detailed in the ***Manual of Operations***.

The Leadership Council shall report in writing at each stated meeting of the Presbytery every action it takes. Its decisions shall be immediately operative wherever power has been conferred but may be reviewed and reversed by Presbytery.

Membership: Is defined in the ***Manual of Operations***.

## **Article X** **FINANCIAL APPORTIONMENTS**

The monies for the usual administrative expenses of Presbytery shall be provided by a per capita apportionment upon its churches by vote of Presbytery. A motion for a special apportionment shall be presented in writing at one stated meeting but tabled for vote until the next stated meeting.

## **Article XI** **AMENDMENTS**

These By-laws may be suspended as to their temporary application by a two-thirds vote; and may be altered or amended by a majority vote at any stated meeting, provided due notice of the changes proposed has been given in writing at least thirty days prior to proposed action.

## **Article XII** **MANUAL OF OPERATIONS & PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Details for the operation of Presbytery shall be outlined in a ***Manual of Operations*** that may be amended by a majority vote at any stated meeting of Presbytery provided due notice of the change proposed has been given in writing at least thirty days prior to proposed action. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of ***Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*** except in those cases where the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides otherwise.

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By-laws for the Presbytery of Des Moines; Adopted June 28, 1983, Amended April 11, 1984, Amended Nov. 19, 1985, Amended Nov. 18, 1986, Amended July 16, 1988, Amended July 15, 1989, Amended May 15, 1990, Amended July 21, 1990, Amended March 16, 1991, Amended Jan. 28, 1992, Amended May 19, 1992, Amended March 20, 1993, Amended Sept. 20, 1994, Amended February 9, 2019.