

Manual of Operations

Approved June 12, 2014

I. PURPOSE

The First Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls, New York, has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. GOVERNANCE OF THE CHURCH

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. Consistent with that *Constitution*, these by-laws shall provide specific guidance for this church. The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be used for parliamentary guidance, although in any situation in which the *Constitution* and *Robert's Rules* are in conflict, the *Constitution* shall have higher priority.

III. MEETINGS

The Session hold stated meetings monthly during the program year. Special meetings may be called in accordance with G-3.0203.

The Congregation shall ordinarily hold its annual meeting in the sanctuary on the last Sunday in January. The business at that meeting shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

- a. Financial report of the preceding year
- b. Budget for the current year adopted by the Session (for information only)
- c. Review of reports from the pastor(s), the Session, and all church organizations

The Congregation shall ordinarily hold its regular congregational meeting for the election of officers on the third Sunday of May. The business at that meeting shall be limited to the following:

- a. Nominating committee report for church officers and their election
- b. Election of members to serve on the current year's nominating committee

The Congregation shall hold a third meeting, ordinarily in December, to review and vote on any proposed changes for the coming year in the terms of call for the pastor(s) in accordance with G-2.0804.

Special meetings of the Congregation may be called in accordance with G-1.05

IV. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Public notice of the meetings shall be given in printed and verbal form on at least two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. When the meeting is called for the purpose of electing a pastor, the notice shall be given in printed and verbal form at least ten days in advance, which shall include two successive Sundays. (G-1.0502)

V. QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

A quorum for the Session shall be the pastor or other duly-appointed presiding officer and one-third of the ruling elders presently serving on the Session.

A quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the persons serving as moderator and secretary and at least one-tenth of the Active Members of the congregation

Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted in any meetings.

VI. INCORPORATION

In accordance with the laws of the state of New York, the congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with G-1.03, the Session shall receive and nurture members of the church. The Session shall create and annually review rolls for all baptized members, active members, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.04 and G-3.0204, also maintaining the required registers.

All members shall carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other (G-1.0101). The pastor, along with the Session, shall provide for the instruction and examination of all those who wish to become members of the church in accordance with G-1.0303.

VIII. WORSHIP

The Session shall ensure that services of worship of God are regularly and reverently held in accord with the *Directory for Worship* and G-3.0201.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall ordinarily be celebrated on the first Sunday of every month as well as at other special times, as the Session may decide in accordance with W-2.4009.

The Sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in accordance with the principles of the *Directory for Worship*.

IX. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The congregation shall form a Nominating Committee in the following manner:

- a. There shall be nine members of the Nominating Committee
- b. Two of the members shall be ruling elders designated by the Session, one of whom shall be currently serving on the Session and shall serve as moderator of the committee.
- c. One member shall be designated by and from the Board of Deacons
- d. One member shall be designated by and from the Board of Trustees

- e. Five of the members, who are not persons currently serving on the Session, Board of Deacons, or Board of Trustees, shall be nominated and elected at a meeting of the congregation.
- f. Members of the committee shall be elected for a three-year term, and no member shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- g. The Pastor shall be a member *ex officio* and without vote.
- h. The Nominating Committee shall bring to the congregation nominations for no more than the number of positions to be filled, but if more nominations than positions to be filled are desired, or if there are additional nominations from the floor, election shall be by secret ballot.
- i. The floor shall be open for nominations at the congregational meeting. (G-2.0401)
- j. Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just, and inclusive in accordance with F-1.0403, and G-3.0103, G-3.0104, and G-2.0401.

X. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers shall be nominated and elected at the regular congregational meeting for the election of officers. Elections shall be to three-year terms. Officers shall be ordained and installed on the first Sunday in October, following a period of training and instruction.

No officer shall serve for consecutive terms on the same board, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. An officer having served a total of six years on one board shall be ineligible for re-election to that same board for a period of at least one year.

- a. Session
The Congregation shall elect nine ruling elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term.
- b. Deacons
The Congregation shall elect six deacons, divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term.
- c. Trustees
The Congregation shall elect six trustees, divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term.

XI. RECORDS

The Session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accord with G-3.0107 and G-3.0204, and shall submit any requested records to Presbytery in accord with G-3.0108.

XII. FINANCES

It is the responsibility of the Session to prepare and adopt a budget to support the congregation's mission, and determine the distribution of the congregation's benevolences. This includes authorizing offerings and accounting for the proceeds of such offerings and their disbursements, providing full information to the congregation concerning its decisions in such matters (G-3.0205: a, b, c).

The Session shall annually elect a treasurer, financial secretary, and audit committee.

Offerings taken during worship will ordinarily be counted immediately following the worship service. All offerings shall be counted by at least two people, at least one of whom shall be the financial secretary or the treasurer, the other of whom may be the clerk of session, the elder of the month, or the trustee of the month.

Those who pledge offerings to the church shall be assigned a unique number by the financial secretary for the purposes of anonymity in record-keeping. The financial secretary shall be responsible for counting the pledge envelopes to ensure the privacy of those who have pledged. The financial secretary shall then make a list of each check number and amount, the second person who is counting shall then count all checks, face down, to ensure confidentiality, but to verify the number of checks that have been received. Both counters shall count loose offerings.

The financial secretary shall ordinarily deposit the regular offering on the business day following the counting of the offering and shall then call the treasurer with the amount of the deposit. The treasurer shall then independently verify the amount of the deposit with the bank. Children's offerings shall be deposited at least monthly and stored in a secure envelope in the church office until then. Pennies-for-hunger offerings shall be counted and deposited by 2 members of the church, following the same procedure for the deposit.

In the event that the financial secretary is absent, the primary counter will be the treasurer. In the event that both the financial secretary and the treasurer are absent, they will reconvene together at their earliest convenience to count the offerings.

An audit of the church finances shall be performed at least annually by the audit committee. Audits shall be performed on-site at the church house.

XIII. MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

The policies included in this *Manual of Operations* supersede all policies formerly adopted by the Session. Attached to this manual are policies including the following:

- a. Wedding policy
- b. Building and Equipment Use Policy
- c. Funeral Policy
- d. Sexual Misconduct Policy
- e. Committee Descriptions
- f. Procedures for ruling elders participating in Worship and Sacraments