

WELCOME TO THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN FRANCISCO

A GUIDE FOR COMMISSIONERS and VISITORS

The Presbytery of the San Francisco is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a fellowship of ministry made up of 300-some minister members and an approximately equal number of elders. Together, presbytery commissioners set policy, develop plans for mission, and promote the spiritual welfare of the people in parts of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. We oversee ministry and mission of many specialized ministries, three new church developments, and a total of approximately 25,000 members in 78 congregations. Our newest congregation, chartered in 2011, is Latinos Unidos en Cristo, in San Mateo.

This handout answers some questions about how we work. More details about the ministry and mission of Presbytery and our committees are available at our website: www.presbyteryofsf.org.

Who is here? Who can vote? Every teaching elder (minister member) who has been admitted to the Presbytery as an active or at-large member is a continuing member of presbytery and can vote at meetings. Honorably Retired ministers also retain membership and vote.

Every congregation has two or more ruling elder commissioners who are elected by action of their session. Additional ruling elders are also enrolled as members of presbytery while in leadership positions as committee chairs or presbytery officers. Ruling elders who come as session-elected commissioners or who serve as continuing members because of a presbytery-level office all have the right to vote.

Visitors may include other interested members of our congregations, ecumenical guests, other Presbyterian ministers and students preparing for ministry. Members of other presbyteries of the PC(USA) may register as corresponding members at a meeting where they are present. Visitors may be granted voice but not vote.

Who are the officers of the Presbytery? The Presbytery elects a Moderator and Vice Moderator each calendar year for a one-year term. Either teaching elders or ruling elders may fill these volunteer offices. The Moderator and Vice Moderator share the duties of presiding at meetings of presbytery and representing this body at ordinations and installations. Rev. Theresa Cho, associate Pastor at St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, is Moderator for 2012, and Vice Moderator is Jim Coll, an elder at John Knox in Dublin. [Past Moderator, Rev. Roger Reaber, pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church in Walnut Creek, becomes Presbytery Leadership Council chair.]

The Stated Clerk is the ecclesiastical officer and parliamentarian of the Presbytery. The Clerk coordinates setting the docket and other planning for each meeting and, during meetings, makes recommendations as to the constitutionality of proposed actions. An Assistant to the Clerk takes the minutes of the meeting. In addition to serving as an officer, the Stated Clerk is a member of the Presbytery's executive staff, a full time paid position. This office is currently held by the Rev. Katherine J. Runyeon, who was elected in 2009 for a third term that extends through 2012.

The Treasurer is the fourth officer of the Presbytery, also a volunteer, and serves as controller and advisor on financial matters. Usually elected to a three-term, in April we elected Elder Jim Bever from Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church to serve through 2012, completing a vacated term.

As your officers, all are available to you. Come meet us and let us know what is needed.

How often does presbytery meet? Our Presbytery Standing Rules suggest six times a year with the schedule set as helpful to do our work. This year we will meet in January, March, May, June, September and November. Special meetings may be called as needed. Much of the work of Presbytery is done in committees which meet monthly throughout the year.

How does one prepare for the meeting?

- Download the detailed docket from our website. Print this document and bring it to the meeting. Review all of the other materials and download or print those of particular interest. Docket and reports will be posted by 10 days before the meeting.
- Arrive before the time for convening to enjoy fellowship and education opportunities.
- Register and make yourself a nametag. (Blue for commissioners; red for visitors.)
- Note that early in the meeting we will approve an omnibus motion that includes routine items from several committees. We vote on all of these items in one action. If you have questions or concerns about anything in the omnibus motion, ask to have it removed for detailed consideration, and we will discuss it during the appropriate report.
- Buy a dinner ticket so that you may enjoy food and fellowship when we break from decision-making and focus on relationship building.
- Join in praise and prayer to recall that it is Christ that calls us together and creates our unity – even when we hold diverse opinions.

How does one place a proposal before Presbytery?

Our business is proposed by Presbytery Leadership Council, officers, committees, working groups and/or project teams of the Presbytery. New items of business may be introduced at the time provided for this in the docket. New business may be considered at the end of current meeting, postponed to a future meeting or referred to a committee of the Presbytery.

How does one get recognized to speak? How does one make a motion?

- To be recognized to speak, go to the microphone and address the moderator. If you unable to stand, ask a fellow commissioner to go to the mic and request permission for you to speak.
- Once invited by the moderator, begin by stating your name, office (elder or minister) and church, and then articulate your question or concern.
- If you have a suggestion for action, say, “I move...” and describe what you wish us to do. Ask for help if you are not sure how to achieve your goal. Except for simple procedural motions, please be prepared to write your motion and hand it to the Stated Clerk.

What are the rules?

Our Presbytery follows Bylaws and Standing Rules that set forth the structure and processes of the Presbytery. These are revised by Presbytery as needed. Copies are available from the Presbytery office and on our website – www.presbyteryofsf.org. The parliamentary rules of the Presbytery are *Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (11th edition).

Why are we meeting here?

Our meeting site rotates among the member churches of the Presbytery. To offer to host a meeting of Presbytery, contact the Presbytery Meetings Working Group or the Stated Clerk.

What about follow-up?

Minutes are posted on the website. Access requires a password... the same one that we have been using since we moved to online packets. All minister members, regular presbyters and your Clerk of Session were given the password. If no one can find/remember it, you may obtain the password by contacting the presbytery office.

Commissioners are encouraged to make a creative report to your Session or ministry site to let them know what Presbytery is doing and what resources may be helpful to them.

Resource people:

Contact information for Presbytery officers, Leadership Council and committee leadership and staff are all available on the Presbytery website. Come learn more at www.presbyteryofsf.org.

**The Presbytery office is located at 2024 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704.
Our phone number is 510-849-4393.**