

WELCOME TO THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN FRANCISCO

A GUIDE FOR COMMISSIONERS and VISITORS

The Presbytery of the San Francisco is a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a fellowship made up of approximately 275 minister members and an equal number of ruling elders. Together, Presbytery commissioners set policy, develop plans for mission, and promote the spiritual welfare of the people in 68 PC(USA) congregations with 12,000 plus members in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo counties. We also oversee the ministry and mission of specialized ministries, two new church developments, and several new worshipping communities.

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 minister of Word and Sacrament 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 and persons usually move in succession from Vice Moderator to Moderator to spokesperson for Mission & Vision Leadership. Either ministers of Word and Sacrament 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. In 2017, the Moderator is the Rev. Debra Avery, pastor at First PC in Oakland. Our Vice Moderator is Ms. Enicia Montalvo, member and ruling elder at Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana, Oakland. Enicia pastors Mision Hispana New Church Development, Concord, as a commissioned ruling elder. The next vice moderator is being recruited to begin serve in 2018. *(Talk to Nominating if interested in this or other positions!)*

The Stated Clerk is an ecclesiastical officer of and parliamentarian for the Presbytery and is an employee of Presbytery. The Clerk coordinates setting the docket and other planning for each meeting and, before and during meetings, makes recommendations as to the constitutionality of proposed actions. A recording clerk helps by taking minutes of the meeting. Currently the Rev. Dr. Keith Geckeler is our Transitional Stated Clerk. He was elected in September 2017 for a term through the end of February of 2018. His term may be extended, if needed, as the Presbytery clarifies the scope of work needs to be covered by this position.

The Treasurer is the fourth officer of the Presbytery, also a volunteer, and serves as controller and advisor on financial matters. Elder Cindy Cake from Noe Valley Ministry in San Francisco is serving a first term that extends through 2018.

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

How often does presbytery meet? Per our Presbytery Standing Rules we set meetings as needed to do our work. For 2017, the Presbytery voted to set four full plenary meetings – February 7, May 9, September 9 (a Saturday) and November 14. We also will hold two sets of regional meetings. Additional special meetings may be arranged as needed. Much work of Presbytery is done by smaller committees and teams 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 are ordinarily posted 10 days before the meeting.
- Arrive before the time for convening to enjoy opportunity for fellowship.
- Register and make yourself a nametag.
- 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 meal 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 joins us in unity, even when we hold diverse opinions.

How does one place a proposal before Presbytery?

Our business is proposed by Mission & Vision Leadership, officers, committees, working groups and/or project teams of the Presbytery. New items of business may be introduced at the time provided for this near the end of the docket. To allow for consultation, prayer and study, new business is ordinarily postponed to a future meeting or referred to a presbytery committee.

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 are unable to stand, ask a fellow commissioner to go to the microphone and request permission for you to speak.
- Once invited by the moderator, begin by stating your name, office (ruling elder or minister) and congregation/ministry, 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 meetings rotate among the congregations and other ministries of Presbytery. To learn about hosting a meeting, talk with 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.

Resources:

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

**We moved in June of 2017! Our address is 545 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530.
Our phone number remains the same: 510-849-4393.
Staff members' extensions and email addresses are available on the website.**