

**Suncoast Florida Presbytery  
of the Presbyterian Church in America**

**Standing Rules 2021**

(Revised February 09, 2021)

**Including changes: Original 2004; 2007; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2018;  
2020; 2021**

# Suncoast Florida Presbytery

## *Presbyterian Church in America*

### **2021 STANDING RULES**

#### **1. Name**

- 1.1. The name of this body shall be the “Suncoast Florida Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America” hereafter called “Presbytery”

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of the Suncoast Florida Presbytery is to ~~seek to~~ bring glory to Christ by advancing His Kingdom in South West Florida.
- 2.2. The Presbytery wholeheartedly confesses our commitment to the following theological core values:
  - 2.2.1. - the transforming power of the gospel;
  - 2.2.2. - the strategic significance of local congregations;
  - 2.2.3. - the establishment of new churches; and
  - 2.2.4. - the regional unity of the church.
- 2.3. The governmental and doctrinal standards of this Presbytery shall be those stated in the Book of Church Order (BCO) of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) and Catechisms.
- 2.4. The standing rules are not to conflict with the BCO, and, in any case of conflict, the standards of the BCO shall take precedence.

#### **3. Membership**

- 3.1. Members of this Presbytery shall be in two classes: (1) Ordained ministers of the Word and sacrament, or teaching elders (TE) and (2) Particular congregations of the Presbytery.
- 3.2. Standards for examination for membership of both teaching elders and congregations shall be as set forth in the BCO. [TE’s BCO 21-4 and 13-6; Congregations BCO 13-8 and 5-8 and 5-9].
- 3.3. Commissioners to meetings for the Presbytery shall be teaching elders of the Presbytery and ruling elders representing their particular churches. Representation by ruling elder commissioners shall be in accordance with the provisions of the BCO 13-1.

#### **4. Leadership**

- 4.1. The officers of the Presbytery shall be a Moderator, a Treasurer, and a Stated Clerk. All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of commissioners.
- 4.2. Both teaching and ruling elders are eligible to serve as Moderator and Stated Clerk. In the case of churches utilizing a “rotating system” for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve in these offices, with the consent of their Sessions.

- 4.3. The Moderator shall function as the presiding officer of all meetings of Presbytery and otherwise serve as outlined by the BCO 10-3. The Moderator shall be an ex officio member of the Administrative Committee of the Presbytery.
- 4.4. The Moderator shall serve for a term of one year. Elections for Moderator shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year and the moderator elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the year. No one may serve as Moderator for more than two consecutive terms.
- 4.5. The Stated Clerk shall perform his duties as outlined in the BCO 10-4, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall be an ex officio member of the Administrative Committee of the Presbytery, and shall work under the supervision of the Committee. His duties shall include the following:
  - 4.5.1. - keeping proper records of all meetings of Presbytery and its commissions;
  - 4.5.2. - providing certified extracts when required;
  - 4.5.3. - maintaining orderly records of all correspondence to and from Presbytery
  - 4.5.4. - preparing and transmitting all reports, overtures, and other information to and from the General Assembly;
  - 4.5.5. - opening meetings of Presbytery when the Moderator is not available, and presiding until an acting moderator may be elected.
  - 4.5.6. The Stated Clerk shall serve for a term of three years. Elections for Stated Clerk shall be held at the last stated meeting of any calendar year and the Stated Clerk elect shall assume office at the first stated meeting of the year. The Stated Clerk may succeed himself in future terms.
  - 4.5.7. When helpful in the performance of his duties, the Moderator or the Administrative Committee may appoint other commissioners to serve as assistant clerks.
- 4.6. The Treasurer may be a teaching elder, a ruling elder, a deacon, or any communicant member of a church or mission of the Presbytery.
  - 4.6.1. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Administrative Committee and shall work under the oversight of the Committee. He shall be considered an ex-officio member of the Administrative Committee.
  - 4.6.2. The Administrative Committee may also appoint an Assistant Treasurer who shall be authorized to fulfill the Treasurer's duties should he be unable to do so due to illness, absence or some other reason. He shall also assist the Treasurer in the performance of the regular duties of the office at the request of the Treasurer.
  - 4.6.3. The Treasurer's duties shall be those incident to the office of Treasurer as required by the Presbytery, which shall include the following:
    - 4.6.3.1. -maintaining custody of the funds and securities belonging to the Presbytery;
    - 4.6.3.2. -receiving, depositing, and disbursing such funds as directed by Presbytery;
    - 4.6.3.3. -keeping accurate accounts of the finances of the Presbytery, including the issuing of reports to Presbytery at each stated meeting.

## 5. **Officers of the Corporation**

- 5.1. The Officers of the Corporation shall be the same as the Officers of the Presbytery. The Moderator shall be President, the chairman of the Administrative Committee shall be the Vice President (unless he is also the Moderator; in that case the Administrative Committee will appoint one of its members as VP), the Treasurer will be the Treasurer, and the Stated Clerk will be the Recording Secretary. Teaching and Ruling elders may serve as Officers of the Corporation. In the case of churches utilizing a "rotating system" for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently

active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve as an officer of the corporation with the consent of their Sessions.

## 6. Meetings

- 6.1. The time and place of each stated meeting shall ordinarily be determined by the Presbytery at the last stated meeting of the year, or should Presbytery fail to make this decision, by the Moderator, with the approval of the Administrative Committee.
  - 6.2. Stated meetings will be held the second Tuesday of February, May, and September. The Administrative Committee may recommend changes to the schedule of stated meetings, but only with the approval of the Presbytery.
  - 6.3. Called meetings shall be held in strict accordance with the provisions of BCO 13-12. A called meeting of Presbytery (BCO 13-12) may be held online in accordance with the restrictions and provisions outlined in Section 11.
  - 6.4. Meetings shall be conducted according to the provisions of the BCO. Stated meetings of this Presbytery shall ordinarily include the following elements:
    - 6.4.1. - a worship service including communion,
    - 6.4.2. - at least one time of corporate prayer; and
    - 6.4.3. - a regular meeting for Presbytery business.
  - 6.5. The ordinary docket for the business portion of stated meetings may include the following along with other business deemed necessary by the presbytery.
    - 6.5.1. - formation of the roll, including receiving requests for excused absences.
    - 6.5.2. - introduction of visitors and granting them the privilege of the floor;
    - 6.5.3. - the approval of minutes of previous meetings;
    - 6.5.4. - the adoption of the agenda for business meeting;
    - 6.5.5. - reports of the permanent Ministry Committees of the presbytery, as well as any special committees and commissions erected by the presbytery for any purpose;
    - 6.5.6. - the review of Session records
    - 6.5.7. - time and place of the next stated meeting; and
    - 6.5.8. - adjournment with prayer.
  - 6.5.9. The docket may include any other business that is deemed suitable by the Presbytery; but, in any event, such business must be added to the docket at the time of its approval.
  - 6.5.10. The time of the Report of the Candidates and Credentials Committee will be a *Special Order* immediately following lunch, if there is an examination to be done.
- 6.6. All business shall ordinarily be brought before the Presbytery through one of its Ministry Committees.
    - 6.6.1. In order to be considered, all business, including recommendations from the permanent committees, shall ordinarily be given to the Moderator and the Administrative Committee no later than *eleven (11)* days prior to a stated meeting.

## 7. Committees

- 7.1. Most business of the Presbytery shall be delegated to permanent committees. The presbytery may also erect special committees to serve a particular purpose; however, such committees shall only exist for the duration of the stated meeting that created them except in the case of an

- investigative committee in a disciplinary matter. The permanent committees are as follows:
- 7.1.1. Administrative Committee (AC)
  - 7.1.2. Candidates and Credentials Committee (C&C)
  - 7.1.3. Outreach Committee (OC)
  - 7.1.4. Reformed University Fellowship Committee (RUF)
  - 7.1.5. Review of Session Records Committee (RSR)
  - 7.1.6. Shepherding Committee (SC)
- 7.2. The quorum of the permanent committees shall be set by each committee but shall not be less than 3 committee members.
  - 7.3. Each committee shall be composed of at least six members, equally divided between ruling and teaching elders. Each member shall serve a three year term on the committee, and may be elected to an additional three year term through the ordinary nomination and election process. The committee may request an increase of their committee size upon approval of presbytery.
    - 7.3.1. No one may serve as chairman of more than one Committee at a time.
    - 7.3.2. The Administrative Committee shall serve as the nominating committee of the presbytery and shall present a slate of nominees to the presbytery for election at the first stated meeting of the year. Nominations and elections shall, as far as possible, be based on spiritual giftedness, community spirit, and willingness to serve.
    - 7.3.3. Mid-year vacancies will be filled by appointment by the Moderator at the recommendation of the Administrative Committee for the balance of the year in which the vacancy was created. An appointee may be elected to complete the unexpired term of the committee member he replaced through the ordinary nomination process.
    - 7.3.4. In the case of churches utilizing a “rotating system” for their Sessions, ruling elders not currently active on their Sessions remain eligible to serve on permanent committees, with the consent of their Sessions. Additional members of Presbytery, ruling elders, deacons and other qualified communicant members of the churches of Presbytery may be asked to serve in an advisory capacity to a permanent committee.
  - 7.4. Each committee shall elect a chairman and a secretary and shall submit its minutes to presbytery upon the approval of the committee; each committee shall meet prior to each meeting of presbytery and prepare a report stating major issues discussed and its recommendations to the presbytery to be submitted to the Administrative Committee through the Stated Clerk no later than *eleven (11)* days prior to a stated meeting. Committees may, if necessary, hold meetings by synchronous electronic means.
  - 7.5. The Presbytery may create commissions (or clothe one of its permanent Ministry Committee with the powers of a commission) to serve a particular purpose. Any such action of Presbytery shall always be done in strict accordance with the provisions of BCO 15. Committees may, if necessary, hold meetings by synchronous electronic means.
  - 7.6. **The Administrative Committee**
    - 7.6.1. The Administrative Committee is responsible for overseeing the administrative affairs of the presbytery, including the work of the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer. The Stated Clerk and Treasurer will be ex officio members of the Administrative Committee. The Moderator will serve as an advisory member of the Administrative Committee.
    - 7.6.2. The duties of this committee shall include:

- 7.6.2.1. - The creation and management of a Presbytery budget and providing oversight in all financial matters;
- 7.6.2.2. - arranging for the signing of the book of ministerial obligation (BCO 13-7);
- 7.6.2.3. - The development of the yearly schedule and the agenda for each stated and called meeting of Presbytery; reviewing and recommending for approval the minutes of Presbytery, and answering matters raised by the General Assembly in the review of our minutes (Minutes of Executive session are not exempt from review of Session records (RAO 16-3.e.6.));
- 7.6.2.4. - And serving as the nominating committee of the presbytery, both for the work of the presbytery and the General Assembly.
- 7.6.2.5. - The Administrative Committee shall prepare and submit a budget for approval by the Presbytery through the Administrative Committee.

## 7.7. **The Candidates and Credentials Committee**

- 7.7.1. The Candidates and Credentials Committee is responsible for the examination of all those seeking candidacy, licensure, ordination or transfer of membership into the presbytery (BCO 13.9).
- 7.7.2. The duties of this committee shall include:
  - Conducting examinations for all candidates and ministers;
  - 7.7.2.2. - Requiring candidates for licensure or ordination, and any TE transfers into Suncoast Florida Presbytery, to undergo an FDLE background check and provide that report to the calling church and the Candidates and Credentials Committee.
  - 7.7.2.3. - Acting as a Commission of Presbytery to approve PCA Teaching Elders seeking to transfer into or out of our Presbytery;
  - 7.7.2.4. - Reviewing the terms of call for Teaching Elders seeking membership or changing calls within the presbytery to insure that they are in compliance with PCA Call Package Guidelines and recommending their approval by the Presbytery;
  - 7.7.2.5. - Establishing and maintaining the presbytery's internship program, and overseeing the work of all interns during their internships;
  - 7.7.2.6. - Overseeing the development of men under care for the ministry, and overseeing any budget funds set aside to assist men with their seminary training;
  - 7.7.2.7. - The Candidates and Credentials Committee shall prepare and submit a budget for approval by the Presbytery through the Administrative Committee.

## 7.8. **The Outreach Committee**

- 7.8.1. The Outreach Committee is responsible for “devising measures for the enlargement of the Church within the bounds” of the presbytery (BCO 13.9.g)
- 7.8.2. The duties of this committee shall include:
  - 7.8.2.1. - Promoting church planting and evangelism, locally and regionally;
  - 7.8.2.2. - Promoting works among ethnic groups within the bounds of presbytery;
  - 7.8.2.3. - The encouragement of world missions and the raising up of missionaries from the churches within our bounds;
  - 7.8.2.4. - Mercy ministry and disaster relief.
  - 7.8.2.5. - The Outreach Committee shall prepare and submit a budget for approval by the Presbytery through the Administrative Committee.

## 7.9. **The RUF Committee**

- 7.9.1. The RUF Committee is responsible for the oversight of the presbytery's ministry to the campuses within our boundaries in cooperation with Reformed University Fellowship (RUF).

- 7.9.2. The duties of this committee shall include:
- 7.9.3. - Carry out and oversee by advising and supervising the campus ministries under its jurisdiction according to the principles and policy set forth in the “Manual for Campus Ministries, Presbyterian Church in America” (passed by 1979 General Assembly of the PCA);
- 7.9.4. - Be responsible (in conjunction with the campus ministers) for funding the ministries under its jurisdiction, and to be responsible for determining (with the campus ministers) the budget for such ministries;
- 7.9.5. - Determine the needs of campus work within the boundary of the Presbytery and organize new works on campuses, seeking out qualified staff workers for these ministries;
- 7.9.6. - Inform the churches and people of the Presbytery of the purpose, progress and needs of campus ministry within its boundaries;
- 7.9.7. - Initiate the call for campus ministers and assist the campus ministers in evaluating potential interns to assist in the work;
- 7.9.8. - Care for the campus minister and his family through regular communication, campus visits and prayer;
- 7.9.9. - Actively participate in the work of the Florida Joint Committee on campus work and appoint two of its members (one TE and one RE) to represent the Presbytery at its meetings.

#### 7.10. **The Review of Sessional Records Committee**

- 7.10.1. The Review of Sessional Records Committee is responsible for exercising general review and control by reviewing the records of all Sessions within the presbytery’s bounds (BCO 40);
- 7.10.2. The committee will be responsible for developing and maintaining guidelines to assist Session clerks in keeping full and accurate records of their actions, and for communicating these guidelines to the churches;
- 7.10.3. The committee consists of the Stated Clerk (*ex officio*) and three additional Elders (Teaching or Ruling) to be elected at the February stated meeting for three year terms.

#### 7.11. **The Shepherding Committee**

- 7.11.1. The Shepherding Committee is responsible for the oversight of the ministers of the presbytery and the churches with whom they serve (BCO 13.9).
- 7.11.2. The duties of this committee shall include:
- 7.11.2.1. - Providing advice and counsel to the Teaching Elders of the presbytery, upon their request;
- 7.11.2.2. - Providing advice and counsel to the churches and Sessions of the presbytery, upon their request
- 7.11.2.3. – Organizing continuing education for the Presbytery;
- 7.11.2.4. - Promoting youth ministry within the Presbytery;
- 7.11.2.5. – Promoting ministries of fellowship and encouragement for the men and the women of the Presbytery;
- 7.11.2.6. - Investigating and recommending to the presbytery proper courses of action in cases of discipline
- 7.11.2.7. - Assisting Teaching Elders without call and, when necessary, making recommendations to presbytery consistent with BCO 13-2 and 34-10
- 7.11.2.8. - Reviewing the annual reports of all Teaching Elders laboring Out of Bounds and making appropriate recommendations concerning their being granted and continuing in that status;
- 7.11.2.9. - Reviewing requests for the dissolution of pastoral relations and making appropriate recommendations to the presbytery in such cases;
- 7.11.2.10.- Providing assistance to vacant churches in seeking a pastor, at the request of the Session or local pastoral search committee;

7.11.2.11.- The Shepherding Committee shall prepare and submit a budget for approval by the Presbytery through the Administrative Committee.

## 8. **Budget and Finance**

- 8.1 The purpose of the budget of the Suncoast Florida Presbytery is to enable the Presbytery to undertake its constitutionally prescribed functions. The Presbytery shall approve the budget annually at its first stated meeting.
- 8.2 Each particular church and mission shall be asked to contribute to the general budget of the Presbytery. The amount asked of each church and mission shall be calculated by the Administrative Committee each year prior to the finalizing of the budget. "Askings" will be calculated by dividing the budget by the communicant membership of the presbytery as reported on the annual statistical report to the General Assembly for the previous year.
- 8.3 Upon approval of a budget by Presbytery, the Treasurer shall be authorized to disburse funds according to that budget without further authorization of Presbytery, upon written request of a committee chairman.
- 8.4 Amendments to any adopted budget shall first be approved by the Administrative Committee and then shall be approved by the Presbytery.

## 9. **Parliamentary Procedure**

- 9.1. It is the responsibility of the moderator to preside over the meetings equitably and efficiently, protecting the privileges of parliamentary minorities while being careful not to allow the meeting to become mired in the minutiae of procedural rules. Likewise, it is the responsibility of all commissioners to exercise proper humility and deference to one another, remembering their ordination vows to submit to one another in the Lord. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. These rules shall not supersede either the provisions of the BCO or the Standing Rules of the Suncoast Florida Presbytery.
- 9.2. The Moderator may appoint a commissioner of Presbytery to assist him as parliamentarian. He shall serve only for the duration of the meeting at which he is appointed.

## 10. **Suspension and Amendment of Standing Rules**

- 10.1. These standing rules may be temporarily suspended at any stated meeting of Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners.
- 10.2. These standing rules may be permanently amended or revoked only by a two-thirds vote of enrolled commissioners at two consecutive stated meetings of Presbytery.

## 11. **Special Rules Pertaining to Online Meetings of Presbytery**

- 11.1 An online meeting of Presbytery shall not include the business of:
- Deliberation of guilt or innocence;
  - Deliberation of a censure.



- In extraordinary cases, the Administrative Committee may recommend that Presbytery suspend the standing Rules (Section 10.1) to handle a case of the types listed above.

11.2 The technology used to conduct an online meeting of Presbytery shall ensure that all persons participating be able to hear and see each other simultaneously in order to preserve the deliberative nature of the meeting.

11.3 Before the online meeting, the Administrative Committee may appoint a person or persons to assist in the facilitation of the meeting. This includes the procurement, implementation, testing, and usage of any technology used to facilitate the online meeting. This person is not required to be a member of Presbytery, recognizing that all existing rules regarding the presence of non-members of the court still apply.

11.4 Attendance may be recorded through electronic means.

11.5 Prior to the meeting, members should be reminded that due to the nature of the meeting, the presbytery is placing much trust in its members to conduct themselves in a way that is honoring to God and their brothers. As such, among other items, members may be reminded to:

- Refrain from holding private or public conversations in the web conferencing chat tool.
- Refrain from voting multiple times on any one question.
- Have patience with the proceedings and technical challenges.

11.6 The Administrative Committee may appoint an individual to record proceedings in the chat tool of the web conferencing software to provide clarity around the actions taken by the body and to assist the Stated Clerk with record keeping after the meeting has concluded.

11.7 Those who wish to obtain the floor should indicate their desire to speak using the software provided (e.g. “raising hand,” indicating desire to speak in chat window, etc.). The moderator should grant the floor to speakers in turn. To assist with maintaining order, the moderator may mute all participants until the floor has been granted, at which time the moderator should unmute the speaker.

11.8 The video and audio recording of the meeting may be retained via electronic means for the purpose of assisting the Stated Clerk with producing the minutes. Once the minutes of the meeting have been approved by the body, the recording shall be destroyed.