

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WPC SESSION and COMMITTEE STRUCTURE - Policies AND Procedures

Rev 3, 4/7/11; Session approved 4/14/2011

SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

This policy and procedure document covers the Session and Committee Structure utilized in the guidance and governance of Westminster Presbyterian Church. It is in compliance with the applicable sections of the Book of Order and the By-Laws of WPC. Session has the responsibility to periodically review, update and approve this policy and procedure document.

ORGANIZATION

1. The number of active Elders will be nine; comprised of 3 classes of three Elders, each serving a three year term. An Elder may not serve more than two full consecutive terms.
2. The Term of service shall be understood to begin on January 1 of the given year.
3. There will be 9 leadership committees as follows:
 - Adult Ministries
 - Children and Youth Ministries
 - Facilities
 - Fellowship
 - Human Resources
 - Membership
 - Mission and Evangelism
 - Stewardship
 - Worship
4. Except for Adult Ministries and Children & Youth Ministries each other committee will be chaired by an individual nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by Session. The Adult Ministries and Children & Youth Ministries Committees will be chaired by the Adult Ministries Coordinator and the Director of Children & Youth Ministries respectively. Except in extenuating circumstances approved by Session, an active Elder may not also chair one of the leadership committees. New Elders in particular, without any previous WPC Elder experience, are discouraged from also serving as a Committee Chair during their first year of Elder Service.
5. There will be seven volunteers serving as Committee Chairs in staggered 3 year terms such that each year either two or three volunteer Committee Chairs (depending on the year) will be nominated and approved.
6. Each active Elder will be assigned to serve as an Elder Liaison to one of the leadership committees and will represent that committee at Session. The active Elder will attend all committee meetings and be responsible for the timely preparation and issuing of the minutes of each meeting.
7. Refer to the approved individual Descriptions of the Duties and Responsibilities of Elder and Committee Chair for a more detailed description of each position.

SELECTION AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE PROCESS

The policies and procedures for selection and approval of Elders, Deacons, Committee Chairs and At Large Members of the Nominating Committee is covered in a separate Session approved document titled, "Policies and Procedures: Nominating Committee".

TRAINING

1. All training for new Elders and Committee Chairs will be completed **prior** to the beginning of the year in which their service begins. Multiple instructors will be utilized, including but not limited to the Pastor, experienced Elders and Committee Chairs, and the Treasurer. The subject areas will include both the requirements and procedures of serving [i.e. Book of Order], as well as the spiritual and motivating issues. These would include, but not be limited to, spiritual responsibilities, interpersonal/interaction skills, conflict resolution, effective listening, general leadership training, addressing issues not personalities, Elder Advocate usage, and the roles and relationship between Committee Chairs and the Elder Liaison to that committee.
2. New Elders are expected to attend the respective Session meetings in November and December before beginning their term of service in order to get "up to speed" on the issues and procedures of Session.
3. New Elders and Committee Chairs are expected to attend their assigned committee meetings in November and December before beginning their term of service in order to get "up to speed" on the issues and procedures of that committee.
4. Committee Chair training will include, but not be limited to, delegation, handling conflict, motivation, handling performance problems, finding additional members, developing a vision, mission and annual goals, correct procedures for handling committee finance paperwork, meeting efficiency, bringing the Holy Spirit into meetings, interfacing with Session [via the committee's Elder Liaison], and Committee Chair role relative to Elder Liaison, etc.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. A strong emphasis in the Annual Leadership Retreat in January will be towards team building and opportunities to better get to know each other.
2. A voluntary Elder mentoring/coaching system between new Elders and experienced active Elders is encouraged to help new Elders come up to speed. These mentor/coaches should be established before the fall training begins.
3. Those who attend Session meetings will be regularly encouraged [beginning with training and then built into Session meetings] to seek to reduce destructive conflict within Session. Examples of helpful behavior include: requesting that the pace of the meeting be slowed, an encouragement to pause for prayer, or asking clarifying questions not only about the topic under discussion, but also about the feelings of others. It is important to remember that not all conflict is bad. Only destructive conflict is bad.
4. Each year Elders will elect an "Elder Advocate" from their midst [preferably from the class of third year Elders] with and through whom the Pastor will work to address conflict issues of Session as well as Elder performance issues. Elders may also contact the Elder Advocate for Session related conflict or performance issues they are having with the Pastor or another Elder, and the Elder Advocate and requesting Elder would then begin the same 3 way conversation with all three parties.

5. A three way dialog between the Committee Chair, Elder Liaison, and Pastor is required for any discussions of 1) personal or committee performance issues or 2) communication/relationship issues. This 3-way discussion between the parties can be requested by any of the three parties, and is highly encouraged before there is any deterioration in communication.