

SESSION OPERATING PROCEDURES

The session has responsibility for governing and guiding the congregation. Those serving on session are leaders by word, example, and attitude. Session members faithfully support church activities and participate in a variety of ways, including active worship attendance.

The officers of the session are the moderator and the clerk of the session. The moderator is the Pastor and will convene and preside at all meetings of the session. The moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and conducting efficiently the business of the session. For good order, the session should be generally guided by *Robert's Rules of Order* as needed. The moderator shall report to the session any problems that relate to the health and welfare of the congregation. The moderator will serve as ex-officio member and resource of all committees of the session. The moderator is a member of session and can vote.

The clerk is elected annually by the session and must be an elder. If the clerk is not a member of session, the clerk may not vote or enter into discussion or debate, but may answer direct questions, ask for clarification of motions, and present the clerk's report.

Stated meetings of the session will be at such time that the session determines would be best for all. Called meetings of the Session shall be at the request of two members of the Session, or the moderator, or the Presbytery for any reason within the Book of Order, provided sufficient notice is given. The business conducted at a called meeting will be only that for which the meeting is called. A quorum of the session for meetings shall be 51% of the session. On an exception basis, a session member, not able to attend a meeting, may be allowed to teleconference in, with the approval of the moderator, and will be included in the quorum. Two elders plus the moderator is a quorum for the reception of new members.

Voting may be done by voice, written or, between meetings, email. Voting is allowed by those present and those teleconferencing. A simple majority is required to pass a motion (eg, if 10 are at a meeting, 6 "yes" votes are required to pass a motion.) Voting by proxy, note or email at a meeting is not allowed.

Email vote (e-vote) requests, approved by the moderator and sent out solely by the clerk of session, are allowed between meetings when necessary. The clerk's email should clearly state the motion and include any background information. Any questions to the clerk and responses from the clerk or others should be sent to all session members. E-voting is to be open for 5 days from the time of the clerk's email, unless otherwise stated in the email. E-votes must be cast with 'reply all'. A simple majority of all session members is required to pass a motion (same as a meeting with all attending). If two elders request further discussion of the motion at a meeting, the e-vote must be delayed until a regular or called meeting is held. (E-voting on money/financial motions are allowed with this provision in place.) The clerk will notify session of the results after a majority is reached or after 5 days (or prescribed voting period) or if a meeting is required. The motion and results are to be reported in the minutes of the next session meeting.

Attendance at meetings of the session is mandatory when circumstance allow. If a member is unable to attend any meeting, the clerk shall be notified. If an elder has two unexcused absences in a year, the clerk will notify the moderator for further action.

The session is composed of the moderator and twelve duly elected and installed Ruling Elders, divided equally into three classes. A youth elder may also be elected for a one year term, making a possible total of 13 elders on session. Ruling Elders are elected to a three-year term and are eligible for election for two consecutive three-year terms. Chairs of session committees are appointed for a term of one year, with no limit on how long they can serve as chair. The session term begins May 1.

Session meetings are open to the congregation, unless the session votes to go into Executive Session to discuss confidential business. Session members are advised to keep details of session business confidential. Paid staff members working for St. Mark are not allowed to become members of session because of the potential for or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Spouses and immediate family members of session elders should not serve on session at the same time. No session member shall be involved with a ministry supported by a staff person who is a spouse or immediate family member.

The Session has standing committees, and may appoint special committees, task forces or sub-committees to fulfill its purpose and responsibilities. There are currently eleven standing committees:

Adult Connections	Outreach
Children/Youth Christian Education	Personnel
Communication	Property
Congregational Life	Stewardship
Finance	Worship
Host Ministry	

The session shall ensure that there shall be an annual meeting of the congregation early in the calendar year at which the following business shall be presented:

- Annual Report containing reports from session committees and organizations
- Financial report from the preceding year
- Budget for the current year (for information, not voting)
- Vote on changes in terms of call for the pastor
- Election of members to serve on the Representative Nominating Committee or other offices requiring congregational vote
- Any other business or of sufficient relevance to the congregation

The quorum for congregational meetings shall be one tenth (10%) of the members on the active roll. Motions in congregational meetings shall be decided by simple majority. The Pastor is not a member of the congregation and may not vote in a meeting of the congregation.

Usually, the annual meeting of the Corporation follows directly after the annual congregation meeting adjourns to hear the report of the Trustees. The Chair of the Trustees shall be moderator of this meeting.

Section G-3 of the Book of Order and the St. Mark Congregation By-Laws outline additional information about session.