

BYLAWS  
for  
THE SESSION  
of  
*GILBERT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*  
of  
GILBERT, ARIZONA

Adopted: May 29, 1990  
Revised: August 21, 2012  
Revised: June 18, 2019

## **I. Establishment**

The affairs of the Congregation and of the Corporation shall be governed by the Session, which shall have full administrative responsibility for the Gilbert Presbyterian Church (hereafter called “the church”), in both spiritual and corporate matters. The Session shall serve as the Board of Trustees until such time as it is deemed necessary to have two separate boards. The Session shall have all powers and duties necessary and appropriate for administering the affairs of the Congregation and Corporation except those powers and duties reserved and limited by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by the laws of the State of Arizona, and by the Bylaws of the Congregation.

## **II. Number and Qualification**

The Session shall consist of the installed pastor, the interim pastor, or a minister appointed by the Presbytery, who shall be the Moderator of the Session; and of a maximum of twelve (12) members of the congregation, elected to the position of Ruling Elder by the members of the congregation at a specially called meeting in October of each year, or as otherwise provided below.

## **III. Eligibility, Election and Term of Office**

The term of office for a Ruling Elder shall be three (3) years, and one-third (1/3) of the Ruling Elders shall be elected each year as described in Section II. In addition, nominated persons shall be elected to vacancies caused by death, resignation, or transfer by a specially called meeting of the congregation. No Ruling Elder shall serve on the Session for more than two three-year terms (six years), and shall be ineligible to be elected to a new term until two (2) years have elapsed. Care shall be taken so that no two (2) members of the same household shall serve as elected members of the Session at the same time.

## **IV. Meetings and Quorum**

- A. The Session shall hold Stated Meetings each month on a regularly scheduled night as set by vote of Session. Meetings shall normally be held in the church building.

Change of date of a meeting, or elimination of a meeting shall be determined by two-thirds (2/3) vote of Session.

B. Special meetings of the Session may be called: (G-3.0203)

1. By the Moderator at his/her discretion.
2. By the Moderator when requested in writing by two or more members of Session.
3. By the Presbytery.

C. The Clerk of Session is responsible for notifying all members of a specially called meeting. Such notification shall be a reasonable period of time prior to the Called Meeting.

D. All meetings of session shall be open to observers from the congregation except when Session votes to meet in executive session. Observers are not entitled to speaking privileges. Those wishing to address Session must receive permission from the Moderator in advance of the meeting.

E. One-half (1/2) of the Ruling Elders and Moderator shall be necessary to constitute a quorum, except for specially called meetings for the sole purpose of receiving or dismissing members when the quorum shall be the Moderator and two (2) members of Session (G-3.0203). The quorum required for the Board of Trustees to conduct business is a simple majority of its members.

## **V. Selection of Officers of Session**

A. The officers of Session are the Clerk of Session and the Treasurer/Financial Secretary. It is not mandatory these officers be members of the Session.

B. The officers continuation or election shall take place each year no later than the December Stated Meeting of Session.

C. The Clerk of Session will be nominated from among ordained Ruling Elders in the congregation. He or she may or may not be a member of Session. When the Clerk is not a member of the Session he or she will have voice but no vote. Only when the Clerk is a member of Session shall he or she have a voice and vote in the meeting.

D. The Clerk of Session is responsible for:

1. Relaying requests and/or concerns of individuals or groups to Session.
2. Writing official communications from Session.
3. Keeping accurate minutes and rolls (G-3.0107).
4. Other appropriate duties requested by Session.

- E. Session officers (Clerk, Treasurer/Financial Secretary) may resign their office by a thirty-day notice submitted in writing to Session.

## **VI. Responsibilities of Session**

- A. Session is responsible for duties outlined in Chapter III of the “Book of Order”, the Bylaws of the Gilbert Presbyterian Church, and these Bylaws.
- B. Additional responsibilities are:
  - 1. Annual evaluation of programs and activities within the church.
  - 2. Elicit and respond to suggestions and ideas from the congregation, committees, and groups within the church.
  - 3. Insure effective communication within the church.

## **VII. Treasurer**

- A. The Treasurer shall be authorized to pay in priority order:
  - 1. Salaries and pensions according to the approved schedule.
  - 2. Utilities, insurance premiums, church repairs and maintenance, and per capita assessment.
  - 3. Debt retirement according to schedule
  - 4. Local mission, committee and office expenses, and the authorized percentage for Benevolence and Mission to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the appropriate governing bodies.
- B. Expenditures must be approved by the appropriate committee chairperson or staff by signing his or her name to the invoice and/or requisition form.

## **VIII. Presbytery**

A Ruling Elder(s) shall be elected by the Session each February for an annual term as Ruling Elder Commissioner to attend and report on Presbytery meetings. The number of commissioners per church is set by the Presbytery.

## **IX. Absences and Resignations**

- A. Session members should notify the Clerk or Moderator if they are unable to attend regularly scheduled meetings of Session.

- B. If a Session member is absent from three (3) consecutive Stated meetings without asking to be excused, the Clerk of Session and Moderator are to investigate and report on the circumstances.
- C. The resignation of a Ruling Elder becomes effective only after receipt of a written resignation by Session. A majority approval is necessary to accept the resignation.

## **X. Amendments**

- A. Amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing at any regular Meeting of Session to be voted on at the next regularly schedule meeting.
- B. Amendments shall require approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of Session.

## **XI. Standing Committees**

- A. There shall be eight (8) standing committees:
  - 1. Buildings and Grounds
  - 2. Education
  - 3. Evangelism
  - 4. Finance
  - 5. Mission
  - 6. Personnel
  - 7. Stewardship
  - 8. Worship
- B. The minimum membership on each committee will be a chairperson plus one (1) additional Session member and at least two (2) other congregation members selected by the chairperson. The use of task forces to accomplish specific projects is encouraged.
- C. Chairpersons shall be Session members affirmed to these positions annually at the December Meeting of Session.
- D. Committee job descriptions are as follows:
  - 1. Buildings and Grounds. This committee is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the church buildings and property. The responsibilities are to:
    - a. Maintain all equipment and facilities.

- b. Arrange for work sessions for cleaning, general maintenance and campus upkeep, etc.
  - c. Review and recommend appropriate insurance coverage for the church.
  - d. Organize and maintain kitchen facilities and equipment.
  - e. Maintain the esthetics of the buildings and campus.
  - f. Provide property management services.
2. Education. This committee is responsible for the total education program of the church. Specific responsibilities are:
- a. Sunday School program K—12.
  - b. Adult education program, including adult Sunday school class(es).
  - c. Maintenance of the church library.
  - d. Junior and senior high youth programs.
  - e. Conducting special educational programs.
  - f. Providing supervision in the Nursery and Toddler Room.
3. Evangelism. This committee's focus is to invite new members into the Gilbert Presbyterian Church family. Specific responsibilities are:
- a. Contacting visitors to Gilbert Presbyterian Church worship services.
  - b. Extending awareness of Gilbert Presbyterian Church by appropriate ads, posters, signs, social media, etc.
  - c. Assisting the minister with new member training.
4. Finance. This committee has oversight responsibility for the financial affairs of the church. Specific responsibilities are:
- a. Providing for an annual audit or financial review of the church's financial records.
  - b. Paying for the indebtedness incurred in the daily operation of the church.
  - c. Requesting annually that the Session elect a Treasurer.

- d. Developing an annual budget to be presented to the Session at its October meeting and then presented to the congregation at the October special Congregational Meeting.
  - e. Monitoring the financial condition of Gilbert Presbyterian Church and reporting to the Session monthly.
  - f. Approving the establishment of designated fund(s), including the purpose, governing policy, and closure of the designated fund account(s) upon completion of the designated purpose.
  - g. Approving all documentation / materials relating to the solicitation of funds prior to their distribution
5. Mission. This committee's responsibilities are to initiate and sustain programs that meet the needs of the local and world community. The responsibilities are:
- a. Promoting mission awareness through newsletters, minutes for mission and other means.
  - b. Exploring new opportunities for mission.
  - c. Supporting and overseeing existing mission programs.
6. Stewardship. This committee is responsible for soliciting gifts of time, talent and treasure to be used to the glory of God. Specific responsibilities include:
- a. Creating an ongoing atmosphere and understanding of what it means to be Christ's stewards.
  - b. Discovering and utilizing gifts of talent and time within our congregation.
  - c. Leading the annual stewardship campaign.
  - d. Coordinating special offerings as approved by the General Assembly of the PC(USA).
7. Worship. This committee is responsible for designing and implementing stimulating and inspiring worship services. Specific responsibilities include:
- a. Administration and preparation of the Sacraments.
  - b. Providing flowers and seasonal decorations for worship spaces.
  - c. Providing ushers, lay readers, and communion servers

- d. Oversight of music subcommittee (organist, choir director, bell choir director, worship song leaders) to ensure the following of worship committee guidelines.
- e. Maintaining worship elements: i.e. candles, wicks, baptismal font.
- f. Arranging for pulpit supply in the absence of the minister and at the request of Session when the pulpit is vacant.
- g. Exploring new and existing worship experiences in accordance with the Book of Order.
- h. Reviewing and specifying the order of worship.
- i. Oversight of audio-visual technology during worship, i.e. licensing, photography, videography.

8. Personnel. This committee is responsible for all contractual arrangements with paid staff, including annual performance reviews of staff. Because of the sensitive nature of personnel work, care should be taken that no two (2) members of the same household should serve together on the committee. Specific responsibilities include:

- a. Writing job descriptions.
- b. Obtaining written contracts from staff annually.
- c. Designing a basis and procedure for evaluation of staff.
- d. Recommending salary levels to Session.
- e. Conducting periodic evaluation of staffing needs of Gilbert Presbyterian Church.
- f. Initiating and terminating employment of staff.
- g. Developing, maintaining and ensuring compliance with GPC's Personnel Policy.
- h. Oversee administration services and budget.

**E. Guidelines for committees** are as follows:

- 1. The minimum membership for each committee shall be two (2) session representatives, with one affirmed to serve as chair, plus a minimum of two (2) additional members recruited from the congregation. The use of task forces to accomplish specific short-term projects is encouraged.

2. Each chairperson is affirmed by session in December. The chairperson should identify a vice-chairperson to conduct business should he/she be unable to attend a meeting.
3. At the end of each year, committee chairpersons are responsible for the Annual Report about their committee to be submitted in January of the next year.

**F. Liaison to the Deacons**—Moderator (Pastor) of the Session

1. Communicates concerns and information from the Session.
2. Communicates concerns and information from the Board of Deacons to the Session.
3. Nurtures a compatible relationship between the Boards.
4. Serves as a resource person to line up programs and/or speakers which would be helpful to the Deacons.

**XII. Nominating Process.**

In addition to the standing committees there shall be an annual committee with the responsibility of discerning individuals to be called to serve. This committee shall be formed as follows:

- A. Two (2) Session members named at the February meeting.
- B. One (1) current member of the Board of Deacons selected at their February meeting.
- C. Four (4) congregational members, with provision of two (2) alternates, elected at the Annual Meeting (February) of the Congregation as set forth in Article VI of the Bylaws of the Gilbert Presbyterian Church of Gilbert, Arizona.