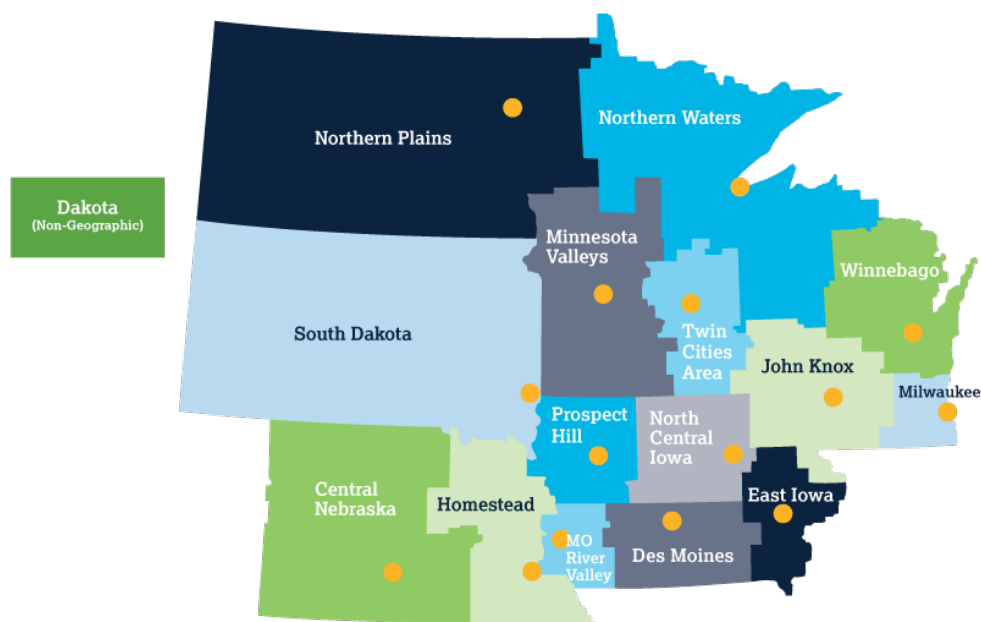


# Synod of Lakes and Prairies

## ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL 2024



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# **Administrative Manual**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **CHAPTER 1: SYNOD MISSION**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies covenants to partner our presbyteries to support and equip their congregations as they promote the vitality of communities of faith, hope, love, and service.

### **CHAPTER 2: SYNOD HISTORY**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies was formed by action of the 1972 General Assembly effective January 1, 1973 and the meeting to officially organize was January 2-3, 1973 at the Fort Des Moines Hotel in Des Moines, Iowa. Elder Lee Nelson presided as Moderator and Eler Louise Cox served as the Stated Clerk for the meeting.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States became the legal and ecclesiastical successor of the Synod of Iowa of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Presbyterian Synod of Minnesota, the Synod of North Dakota of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (with the exception of Box Butte Presbytery), The Synod of Nebraska of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States, The Synod of South Dakota of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States, the United Presbyterian Synod of Wisconsin, Inc. Board of Trustees of the Synod of Wisconsin of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and Board of Trustees of the Administrative Council of the Synod of Wisconsin of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The strategy of forming regional Synods was to empower a “more effective performance of the mission of the Church’ as well as “sustain the connectional nature of our Church, its strength and its unity.” (Minutes, GA 1972, p. 354) After meeting with Presbyterian leaders in every part of the country and studying “so many pages of text, statistics, table and maps, that no one person could possibly read, let alone study them in their entirety” (Ibid., p. 355), the committee of the General Assembly proposed 14 Synods. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies was constituted with 325,555 members and was the third largest Synod in terms of membership (behind the Synod of Pennsylvania and West Virginia and the Synod of the Covenant).

### **CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC MISSION PLAN**

The Synod will maintain a strategic mission plan and it will be reviewed no less than every five years.

For our Strategic Mission Plan for 2019-2024, we adopt three Strategic Priorities:

#### **I. Priority A: Partner with our presbyteries to be the hands and feet of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission strategy.**

This will include:

- A. Building communities of faith that advocate for equity for all people and God’s creation, including:
  - 1. Providing financial resources for American Indian and/or Peoples of Color [to] have opportunities to obtain leadership experience or education.

2. Sharing information to empower congregations and presbyteries to work to change laws that perpetuate economic exploitation of people and natural resources.
- B. Building communities of hope that take risks to demonstrate God's new creation by:
1. Providing resources to presbyteries for innovative approaches to dismantle poverty in their area;
  2. Witnessing to the resurrection of diversity in our structures of community and ministry; and
  3. Advocating for access to mental-health resources for all people in all areas.
- C. Building communities of love that seek reconciliation and actively tear down wall that separate God's children from each other by:
1. Providing resources to presbyteries that work in specific ways to dismantle white privilege and systemic racism;
  2. Affirming our Native American roots by encouraging a portion of each sale of building/land within the Synod be set aside for American Indian ministry;
  3. Building and strengthening those who are estranged, marginalized or strangers and eliminating barriers to the communities of love; and
  4. Participating in and advocating for interfaith cooperation and partnerships.
- D. Building communities of service and witness that point beyond self to the Good News of God's grace by:
1. Creating awareness of and eliminating systems, beliefs, and practices that underlie discrimination, poverty, homelessness, criminal injustice systems, and other areas of oppression;
  2. Strengthening Presbyterian camp and conference ministries as well as Presbyterian collegiate ministries throughout the Synod and;
  3. Encouraging presbyteries and their congregations to become Matthew 25 entities.

**II. Priority B: Partner with presbyteries as they attract, support, and retain high quality leadership for their communities of faith, hope, love, and service.**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies will do this by:

- A. Providing continuing education opportunities through Synod School and the Leadership Summit as well as in collaboration with the Board of Pensions and other entities (transitional ministry training, planning for retirement, financial wellness).
- B. Developing a Synod-based coaching program to serve pastoral leaders, particularly those in their first call, by identifying interested people and providing training and support.
- C. Developing a Synod-wide mentoring program to address the sense of isolation many feel by:
  1. Developing a list of people willing to serve as mentors and their particular area of focus;
  2. Providing them access to Zoom as well as a small stipend for their work; and
  3. Gathering data from mentors and users to evaluate the program's effectiveness.
- D. Developing cultural competence by offering training to create expertise.

- E. Promoting congregational vitality and transformation by:
  - 1. Providing and/or developing an instrument to assess congregational readiness for vitality and transformation.
  - 2. Offering an annual congregational vitality and transformation training for pastors and their church's leaders.
  - 3. Providing financial incentives for those engaged in the vitality and transformation program who actively and joyfully engage with their community and world in new ways.
  - 4. Challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith.
  - 5. Providing information about resources that promote congregational health and vitality for congregational leaders to use in their congregations.
- F. Encouraging educational debt assistance in each presbytery.
- G. Offering a shared Commissioned Pastor training program (the Academy) to ensure that all commissioned pastors can faithfully serve where they may be called.
- H. Helping seminaries become more acquainted with our Synod by:
  - 1. Engaging seminary professors by inviting them to teach/lead events so they can become more acquainted with our Synod and share the good news about the Synod with those who are seeking calls.
  - 2. Including seminaries in marketing about the Synod.
- I. Encouraging presbyteries to develop, recruit, and sustain more diverse leadership.

### **III. Priority C: Partner with presbyteries by providing resources and services that can best be done together.**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies will do this by:

- A. Providing optional financial services that include but are not limited to:
  - 1. bookkeeping,
  - 2. payroll,
  - 3. investments,
  - 4. training of financial officers.
- B. Providing financial resources to support the mission of the Synod in a variety of ways from loan relief services to re-deployment of Synod investments.
- C. Providing optional communications services that champion this region and our ministries, including by not limited to:
  - 1. Consulting and strategizing with Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs) about how to market their unique congregation/vision:
  - 2. Access to recording services to help market each presbytery for prospective ministers;
  - 3. Synod website that clearly identifies resources for pastors who are part of the Synod;

4. Sharing best practices and resources for developing a web presence for presbyteries and their congregations (such as How do we use social media in the 21st century? How can we use it to target people? How to do online Bible studies, pastoring, etc., live stream sermons?);
  5. Resources and possible funding for graphic design for events and presbyteries;
  6. Cultivating lists of resources to aid in video production, graphic design, social media planning, etc.;
  7. Helping to tell the stories of communities of faith, love, hope, and witness throughout the Synod in a variety of ways (video clips that could be used in worship, periodic newsletters, etc.);
  8. Explaining the role of the Synod and its resources; and
  9. Sharing best practices across the presbyteries.
- D. Providing support for presbytery leaders through such processes as:
1. leadership forums
  2. support for presbyteries in transition and presbytery leader search processes,
  3. training and support for presbytery personnel committees, and
  4. advocating for equitable pay/benefits.
- E. Providing and supporting Synod staff who will partner well with presbyteries to advance this strategic plan by:
1. Aligning position descriptions with the strategic plan.
  2. Providing clear, consistent policies and procedures for staff.
  3. Ensuring equity and inclusion in policies and practices.
  4. Ensuring the staffing design meets the vision and mission of the Synod.

#### **CHAPTER4: SYNOD LOGO**

Updated in 2021, our history, our present, and our future are represented in this logo.

Native roots are evident in the circle, reminiscent of the medicine wheel and our call to heal divisions, make amends and further reconciliation through our ministries. The four quadrants remind us of the four directions (east, south, west, and north) which symbolize the life of both humans and the world in which we live.

The blue and green represent the waters and prairies of this region, gifts that nurture us and gifts we will protect for the future. The lines in the green speak to the farmlands and the food grown in this synod used around the world.

The Celtic style cross prompts memory of our Scottish heritage as Presbyterian. This image alludes to the gifts of creation, symbolized by the sun and its rays. The shape of the cross also suggests a wind turbine and our responsibility as stewards of this creation.



# **ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this corporation is The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is incorporated under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317A (Minnesota Non-Profit Corporation Act), and all amendments or supplements thereto.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND OBJECT**

Section 1. The general purpose of this corporation shall be for religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent purposes as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or its successor.

Section 2. The object of this corporation shall be to promote the Christian Religion in its doctrines, form of government, discipline, and worship, as these are set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or its successors, which presently consists of the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order (the Book of Order contains the Directory for the Service of Worship, the Form of Government, and the Church D).

## **ARTICLE III: POWERS**

Section 1. The powers of the corporation shall embrace all of the powers now or hereafter permitted to a non-profit corporation by law. These powers shall include but not be limited to:

- a. The powers authorized by Minnesota Chapter 317A, cited as the Minnesota Non-Profit Corporation Act;
- b. The power to acquire, hold, manage, operate, maintain, repair, keep, preserve, and otherwise dispose of real and personal property, including corporation and individual securities and evidence of indebtedness, by any lawful means absolutely or in trust;
- c. The power to borrow money by any lawful and convenient means and, subject to statutory restrictions, to issue any necessary and convenient securities in connection with such borrowing;
- d. The power to assist in the financing of subsidiary, related and affiliated religious, educational, charitable, hospital, ecumenical, and beneficial corporations, and groups by all lawful means;
- e. The power to act as Trustee;
- f. The power to acquire by gift or purchase, sell, rent, lease, mortgage, encumber, erect, build, construct, repair, remodel, expand, manage, control, operate, maintain, promote, and have dominion over and to affiliate with churches, missions, cemeteries, retreats, hospitals, homes for the aged, for children, for the needy, and for unfortunate persons, orphanages, child care facilities, schools, colleges, seminaries, and other agencies or facilities necessary or convenient to Christian service; and
- g. The power to do all things lawful and convenient in connection with the execution of the purposes of the corporation.

Section 2. The matters expressed in each of the foregoing clauses shall, unless herein otherwise expressly provided, be in no ways limited by reference to or inference from the terms of any other clause, but shall be regarded as independent objects, purposes and powers and shall not be construed to limit or restrict in any manner the meaning of general terms or

the general powers of the corporation, nor shall the expression of one thing be deemed to exclude another not expressed, although it be of like nature.

#### **ARTICLE IV: TERRITORIAL LIMITS**

The territorial limits over which The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) exercises jurisdiction are in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Nebraska, except the following counties in the State of Nebraska, as follows: Sioux; Dawes; Box Butte; Sheridan; Scottsbluff; Morrill; Garden; Banner; Kimball; Cheyenne; and Deuel; and those churches or congregations in the Presbyteries of Dakota and The Northern Plains located in the State of Montana, and those churches or congregations in the Presbytery of Northern Waters located in Gogebic County, Michigan, and such additional or diminished territory as from time to time may be determined by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or its lawful successor.

#### **ARTICLE V: PECUNIARY GAIN**

This corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members.

#### **ARTICLE VI: DURATION**

The duration of this corporation shall be perpetual.

#### **ARTICLE VII: REGISTERED OFFICE**

The registered office of this corporation shall be 2115 Cliff Drive, City of Eagan, Dakota County, Minnesota 55122.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: CAPITAL STOCK**

The corporation shall not issue or own any capital stock of its own and shall declare no profits, dividends, fees, or commissions to any member.

#### **ARTICLE IX: PERSONAL LIABILITY**

None of the officers, directors, or members of the corporation shall have any personal liability attached to them for the obligations of the corporation.

#### **ARTICLE X: MEMBERS**

Section 1. Voting members. The voting members of this corporation shall be elected for three year terms as commissioners from each presbytery which is a constituent member of The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or its successors. Each commissioner shall be eligible to serve two successive terms. Any term to fill a vacancy will count as one of the two successive terms if it included a period of time when a called meeting of the Synod occurred. After serving two terms, individuals will be eligible to serve again after at least one year. There shall be equal numbers of elders and ministers from each Presbytery, in the following proportion: each Presbytery consisting of not more than 7,500 members shall elect one elder and one minister; each Presbytery consisting of more than 7,500 members and not more than 20,000 members shall elect two elders and two ministers; and each Presbytery consisting of more than 20,000 members shall elect three elders and three ministers; and these persons, so elected, shall be called commissioners to the Synod.

Section 2. Non-voting members. In addition to the voting members of the corporation, the by-laws define persons who shall have voice, but not vote, at meetings of the members of the corporation.

Section 3. Functions. The members shall perform the duties and functions of directors and shall be the directors of the corporation under the Minnesota Non-profit Corporation Act, under the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or its successors.

#### **ARTICLE XI: MEETINGS**

The meetings of the corporation shall be as set forth in the Bylaws and shall be consistent with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

#### **ARTICLE XII: OFFICERS**

The officers of the corporation shall be those required by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such other officers as set forth in the Bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE XIII: DISSOLUTION**

In the event of the dissolution, liquidation, or abandonment of this corporation, its property shall not go to its members, nor shall it inure, directly or indirectly, to the benefit of any member, officer, or other individual to any extent whatsoever. In such event, all property shall go to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or its successors, which shall then, and in that event, be charged with using the same for charitable or religious purposes for the welfare and benefit of charitable or religious purposes then exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Notwithstanding anything apparently or expressly to the contrary hereinabove contained in this Article XIII, if any such assets are then held by this corporation in trust or upon condition or subject to any executory or special limitation and the condition or limitation occurs by reason of the dissolution of this corporation, such assets shall revert or be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with the terms and provisions of such trust, condition, or limitation.

#### **ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENTS**

These Articles of Incorporation may be amended at any annual, stated, or special meeting of the voting members, duly called upon ten (10) days written notice and said notice shall include the proposed amendments, and then are approved by a majority vote of the members present at such meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XV: EFFECTIVE DATE**

These Restated Articles of Incorporation shall become effective on May 2, 2017.

- Originally adopted at the Organizing Meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on January 2-3.
- Restated Articles of Incorporation adopted at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on June 13, 1984.
- Amended at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on June 19, 1985.
- Restated Articles of Incorporation adopted at the Twenty-second Annual Meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on June 22, 1994.
- Restated Articles of Incorporation adopted January 19. 1995.

# BYLAWS

## PREAMBLE

God our Creator, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, has called out a people of God to be a living, serving body of Christ in the world. We have selected the following manner to govern ourselves and direct our mission toward fulfillment of that call in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## ARTICLE I: CONSTITUTION

1. Definition. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is an intermediate council of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. Incorporation. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota and domesticated under the laws of the States of Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The corporate name is "The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."
3. Jurisdiction. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction according to the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and under the authority of the General Assembly of said denomination over the Presbyteries of Central Nebraska, Dakota, Des Moines, East Iowa, Homestead, John Knox, Milwaukee, Minnesota Valleys, Missouri River Valley, North Central Iowa, Northern Plains, Northern Waters, Prospect Hill, South Dakota, Twin Cities Area, Winnebago, and any other presbytery of the Synod that may hereafter be constituted.
4. Members of Synod
  - a. Commissioners. The members of the Synod shall be those ministers and elders who have been elected in equal numbers as Commissioners to Synod by their several Presbyteries, and who have enrolled as members of the Synod upon presentation of their duly attested commissions. In addition, the Moderator of Synod shall be a member-at-large with all rights and privileges of a commissioner at following Synod meetings and until the successor has been elected and duly installed.
  - b. Election of Commissioners. The Synod Assembly shall consist of equal numbers of elders and ministers from each Presbytery, in the following proportion: each Presbytery consisting of not more than 7,500 members shall elect one elder and one minister; each Presbytery consisting of more than 7,500 members and not more than 20,000 members shall elect two elders and two ministers; and each Presbytery consisting of more than 20,000 members shall elect three elders and three ministers; and these persons, so elected, shall be called commissioners to the Synod. The number of members of a Presbytery shall be determined as of January 1 of each year. In the event that the number of members of a Presbytery falls below or rises above 7,500 members or 20,000 members as the case may be, the number of commissioners from said Presbytery shall not be adjusted until the year following, except that no commissioner elected to a full term shall have his or her term shortened or lengthened by reason of a change in the number of commissioners to which a Presbytery is entitled.
  - c. Term of Election. Commissioners, both ministers and elders, to Synod shall be elected for the terms prescribed in the Articles of Incorporation for the election of voting members of the Synod. The term of office for commissioners shall begin on January 1.

- d. Others. The following ministers and/or elders, when not commissioners, shall be members of Synod "ex officio" and without vote: officers of the corporation who are not also members of the corporation, Synod Executive, and program staff of the corporation, one staff person from each presbytery, moderator of Presbyterian Women of the Synod, General Assembly staff deployed in the Synod.
- e. The Synod Executive shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod, who shall be responsible for the administration and coordination of Synod's organizational system, the supervision of staff, and with the synod Moderator, the representative of Synod in relation to other groups

## ARTICLE II: ORGANIZATION

### 1. Meetings and Quorum

- a. Annual Meeting. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall convene annually in the Spring at such place, date and hour as shall be set by the Synod.
- b. Stated Meetings. In addition to the annual meeting of the Synod, the members shall hold at least one other stated meeting during the calendar year at the time and place as determined by the Steering Committee.
- c. Special meetings. The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request or with the concurrence of three ministers and three elders, representing at least three presbyteries, all of whom must have been commissioners to the last preceding stated meeting of the Synod. Should the moderator be unable to act, the vice moderator shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both the moderator and vice moderator are unable to act, the stated clerk, under the same conditions, shall issue the call. The General Assembly may direct the Synod to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. Commissioners to the special meeting shall be the commissioners elected to the last preceding stated meeting of the Synod. A presbytery may, however, elect a commissioner to replace one who has died or changed presbytery membership.
- d. Notice. Notice of each meeting shall be sent not less than ten calendar days in advance to each commissioner and to the stated clerk of each presbytery. For special meetings, the notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.
- e. Proxy Voting Prohibited. No voting by proxy shall be permitted at any annual, stated, or special meeting of Synod.
- f. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of business at any Synod meeting shall require the presence of not less than ten ministers and ten elders from not less than one-third of the constituent presbyteries.
- g. Electronic Meetings: The Synod and any of its committees, commissions, or other entities is authorized to meet by electronic or virtual means such as the internet, telephone and video conferencing at such time and means as determined by the moderator of the particular entity, in consultation with the stated clerk, provided the following conditions are met:
  - i. The technology employed provides the opportunity for simultaneous participation among all participating members.

- ii. The meeting notice includes adequate description for how to participate in the meeting, including telephone numbers and codes to be dialed, links to meeting rooms, and technical accessibility.
- iii. Arrangements satisfactory to the member can be made for the participation of any member who lacks the necessary equipment without incurring personal expense.
- iv. All members are able to participate fully and can be recognized when they wish to communicate.
- v. Any member has the right to demand a roll call at any time if they doubt the presence of a quorum, unless the technology employed can determine the number present in another way. A quorum must be present throughout the meeting.
- vi. Minutes shall be taken, and all votes recorded. Voting procedures are deployed with adequate instructions for use of the technology and in accordance with the Book of Order.

## 2. Officers

- a. Officers. The officers of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall be the Synod Moderator, Synod Vice Moderator, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer.
- b. Moderator of Synod
  - i. The Synod Moderator shall be elected by the Synod at the Fall meeting from among the commissioners and shall be installed at the conclusion of that meeting.
  - ii. The Synod Moderator's duties shall be those defined in the Form of Government (G-3.0104). The Moderator shall see that all business is conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except in those cases where the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides otherwise, and the Bylaws of the Synod. The Synod Moderator shall represent the Synod at ecclesiastical and public occasions. The Synod Moderator shall appoint such committees as are authorized by action of the Synod for which no other provision for appointment has been made.
- c. Vice Moderator of Synod.
  - i. The Synod Vice Moderator shall be elected by the Synod at the Fall meeting from among the commissioners and shall be installed at the conclusion of that meeting.
  - ii. The Synod Vice Moderator will serve as Moderator in the absence of or by invitation of the Moderator.
- d. Stated Clerk
  - i. The Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Synod.
  - ii. The duties of the Stated Clerk shall be those which ordinarily devolve upon the office under the provisions of the Form of Government, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, and the Bylaws of the Synod.
  - iii. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for the preparation of a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the council and may appoint such assistants, as the Stated Clerk deems necessary.

e. Treasurer

- i. The Treasurer shall be elected by the Synod and the office may be coupled with that of the Director of Finance for the Synod.
- ii. The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds and securities of the Synod; shall receive and disburse funds of the Synod; and shall present a full and accurate account of all funds and securities at each meeting of the Synod.
- iii. The Treasurer shall be bonded in an amount to be determined by the Synod. All of the Treasurer's accounts shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant and the report of said auditors shall be submitted to the spring meeting of Synod.

f. Terms of Office

- i. The Moderator and Vice Moderator of Synod shall be elected for terms of one year. Except in the event of a Vice Moderator succeeding to the office of Moderator due to a vacancy in the office of Moderator, a person may only serve one term as Moderator and Vice Moderator.
- ii. The Stated Clerk shall be elected for terms of up to five years
- iii. The Treasurer shall be elected to an indefinite term.

g. Vacancies

- i. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Synod Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall succeed to the office of Moderator until the next annual meeting.
- ii. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice Moderator of Synod, the Synod Moderator shall appoint another person from among the current commissioners to serve as Vice Moderator of Synod.
- iii. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk or Treasurer, the Synod Moderator in consultation with the Moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee shall appoint a person to serve as Acting Stated Clerk or Acting Treasurer until their successor is elected.
- iv. "Vacancy" is hereby defined as occurring through death, disability, resignation, disqualification, or removal from the bounds of Synod.

h. Compensation. Officers named in this article may receive such compensation as the Synod may fix from time-to-time.

i. Nominations. Nominations for office shall always be in order from the floor.

3. Administration

- a. Accountability. The Synod Executive, acting as the chief administrative officer of the Synod, is accountable to the Synod Assembly.
- b. Relationships. The Synod Executive is the chief administrative officer of the Synod and shall function in that capacity exercising duties and responsibilities in relating to the member presbyteries, General Assembly agencies, other synods, and ecumenical and interfaith bodies as directed and approved by the Synod.

- c. Serve as a member ex-officio, without vote, on Synod Assembly, Synod committees, and ecclesiastical committees and commissions (except the PJC)
- d. Serve as a signatory on all bank and investment accounts and property documents.

#### 4. Directors

- a. The voting members of the corporation shall also be and constitute the Board of Directors of this corporation. Each voting member of this corporation shall automatically become and be a member of the Board of Directors concurrently with his or her being elected as a voting member/commissioner from his or her presbytery, shall continue to be a director for so long as he or she is a voting member of the corporation, and automatically shall cease to be a director concurrently with his or her ceasing to be a voting member of the corporation.
- b. This corporation shall indemnify every member, director, officer, or their agents, their heirs, executors and administrators against expenses reasonably incurred by her or him in connection with any action, suit or proceeding to which she or he may be made a party by reason of her or his being or having been a member, director, officer, or their agents of the Synod, except in relation to matters as to which she or he may be finally adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct; in the event of a settlement, indemnification shall be provided only in connection with such matters covered by the settlement as to which the corporation is advised by counsel that the person to be indemnified did not commit such a breach of duty. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be exclusive of other rights to which she or he may be entitled.

### ARTICLE III: COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS AND TASK FORCES

#### 1. Synod Nominating Committee

- a. Responsibilities. The Synod Nominating Committee shall make the necessary annual nominations to Synod to at-large positions on the Committees, except standing committees of the Synod, and Permanent Judicial Commission; shall keep the necessary records and provide information for filling vacancies between meetings of Synod; shall make or report to the Synod the nominations to boards of subsidiary and affiliated corporations; shall make and present annually nominations to positions on the councils and agencies of the General Assembly as necessary and be empowered to make any necessary nominations between annual meetings of Synod to fill vacancies on the General Assembly level; and shall make such other nominations as directed by the Synod. Nominations by the Committee to at-large positions shall not preclude nominations from the floor of Synod. In proposing nominees, the Synod Nominating Committee shall demonstrate the denomination's commitment to participation and representation expressed in G-3.0103 of the Form of Government.
- b. Members. The Synod Nominating Committee shall consist of one representative from at least half of the constituent presbyteries. The Synod Nominating Committee shall have the responsibilities as stated in these Bylaws. Membership shall be consistent with the Constitutional requirements in G-3.0109 and G-3.0111 of the Form of Government.
- c. Nomination and Election. Each presbytery shall nominate its representative. Members shall be elected by the Synod, unless otherwise provided.
- d. Nominating Committee Moderator. The moderator of the Committee shall be nominated by the Synod, but nominations from the floor of Synod shall not be precluded; shall be elected by the Synod to a two-year term unless otherwise provided and may be a presbytery



representative member of the Committee or an additional member of the Committee. A person (whether as a presbytery representative or as an additional member) shall not serve as Moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee for more than four consecutive years.

- e. **Terms and Classes.** No member shall be elected to the Synod Nominating Committee for a term of more than three years, nor shall a member serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A member having served for consecutive terms aggregating six years shall be ineligible to serve thereon for a further term until at least one year has elapsed from the expiration of the last term for which the member was elected. There shall always be three classes of members as nearly equal in number as possible, one class only of which shall expire each year and terms shall always be for three years, except when it is necessary to equalize the numbers in the classes or to fill vacancies. A year as applied to terms of service shall be interpreted as extending from January 1 through December 31 of the calendar year.
- f. **Vacancies.** Vacancies shall be filled by the Moderator of Synod until the next meeting of Synod.
- g. **Limitations to Nominations.** No person while serving on the Committee shall be eligible for nomination to any position for which the Committee has responsibility for making nominations, except for membership on boards of subsidiary or affiliate corporations and for members and the Moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee.

## 2. Permanent Judicial Commission

- a. **Composition.** The Synod shall elect from the ministers and elders subject to its jurisdiction a Permanent Judicial Commission, which shall be composed of twelve members, six ministers and six elders, no two of whom shall be from the same Presbytery.
- b. **Term.** The term of each member of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be six years and no person who has served on the Permanent Judicial Commission for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until after four years have elapsed. A year as applied to terms of service shall be interpreted as extending from January 1 to December 31 of the year the term ends.
- c. **Nominations.** Nominations shall be made by the Synod Nominating Committee with the privilege of nominations from the floor of Synod. Terms of office shall commence upon election, except that any predecessor(s) shall complete any trial that was in progress at the moment of election. The members of the Permanent Judicial Commission shall be divided into three equal classes.
- d. **Vacancies.** Any vacancies due to resignation, death, or to any other cause, may be filled by the Synod at any meeting thereof by the election of a person for the unexpired term.

## 3. Presbytery Administrative Review Commission

- a. **Members:** The Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies
- b. **Responsibilities:** to oversee and execute the annual administrative review of Presbyteries in regard to the Book of Order mandate, G-3.0101a; a report shall be submitted to the Synod after actions taken, such as approval of minutes, records and administrative documents required by the Book of Order.

- c. Terms: the members shall be continuing members of this commission by virtue of their elected office. The moderator of the commission shall be the Synod Stated Clerk.

4. Committee on Representation

- a. Members. The Synod shall elect a Committee on Representation, consisting of three persons, adhering to the categories mandated in the Book of Order at G-3.0103 and F-1.0403.
- b. Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Committee on Representation shall be those enumerated in the Book of Order at G-3.0103.
- c. Classes and Terms. Classes and terms of election and service shall be as that provided for members of the Synod Nominating Committee in these Bylaws. Nominations shall be made by the Synod Nominating Committee, but nominations from the floor of Synod shall not be precluded.
- d. Vacancies. Vacancies shall be filled by the Moderator of Synod until the next meeting of Synod.

5. Additional Commissions, Committees and Task Forces

- a. General. Additional commissions, committees, and task forces to handle specific functions within the life of the Synod may be established by the Synod at any time. In the establishment of each commission, committee or task force the Synod shall specify the membership, the term of service, the specific responsibilities and authority of the commission, committee or task force, the body to which the commission, committee or task force shall report and provide for the financing of the work of the commission, committee, or task force.
- b. Commissions. A commission is elected by the Synod and is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to by the Synod pursuant to G-3.0109.
- c. Standing committees. A standing committee is appointed by the Moderator of the Synod, subject to ratification by the Synod, either to study and recommend appropriate actions or to carry out decisions already made by the Synod. Standing committees report directly to Synod and their recommendations require action by Synod, except when action of the Synod has authorized a standing committee to act on behalf of the Synod. The standing committees of the Synod shall be Committee on Strategic Service and Witness (SSW), Transforming Communities: Vital Leadership Committee (TCVL), Personnel Committee, Finance Committee, Communications Committee, and the Committee on Racial Equity Ministries. The Synod shall also have a Steering Committee, consisting of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, and chairs of the Standing Committees. The Synod staff will be ex-officio members including: the Synod Executive, the Director of Finance, the Director of Leadership Development, and the Stated Clerk.
- d. Other committees. Other committees shall be those created from time-to-time by the Synod to perform specific functions. At-large members of these committees may be elected by the Synod upon nomination by the Synod Nominating Committee. The program committees shall report to the Synod through an appropriate standing committee. As far as possible, composition of all Synod committees will include similar numbers of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and congregational members and be racially diverse.

- e. Subcommittees. Subcommittees are appointed by committees from among their members to perform an ongoing responsibility for the committee. They are responsible to and reporting to the committee.
  - f. Task Forces. Task forces may be appointed by the Synod or by any ongoing Synod unit to accomplish a specific task. In addition to those items referred to in “a” above, the action creating a task force shall include a timeline for completion of its function. The membership of a task force is not limited to members of the initiating body, but are usually chosen for their expertise to deal with a specific task. A task force will not ordinarily have authority to act on behalf of the initiating body, except to carry out a specific action. A task force is dissolved when the function is completed and should report to each meeting of the initiating body if its term extends beyond the next meeting of the initiating body.
6. Administrative Commissions. The Synod shall have authority to elect administrative commissions from time-to-time in accordance with the provisions of the Form of Government.

#### **ARTICLE IV: OTHER MATTERS**

- 1. Staff
  - a. Head of Staff. The Synod Executive supervises and coordinates all Synod staff and office operations to provide administrative support to all units of the Synod, implementing the Synod’s decisions and policies; directs assignments of support staff, and with the Synod Moderator, assures appropriate representation of Synod in relation to other denominational, ecumenical or mission partner groups.
  - b. Synod Staff. Synod staff relationships and employment within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall be in accordance with the applicable sections of the Form of Government and as expressed in the Synod’s Personnel Policies and Administrative Procedures.
- 2. Other Corporate Bodies
  - a. Origin. The Synod may, from time-to-time, erect additional corporations subject to its authority for specific religious, charitable, or educational purposes, or it may enter into relationships with existing corporations for purposes of cooperation and/or support; for a period of time determined by the Synod.
  - b. Reports. Such corporations shall report annually to Synod, and their articles of incorporation and bylaws shall be available through the Synod office.
  - c. Amendments. Amendments to articles of incorporation and bylaws of such corporations shall require approval of Synod.
- 3. General Assembly Relationships

Representatives of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies serving on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and committees/commissions may consult with and report to the corresponding units within the Synod.
- 4. Finances
  - a. Per Capita Apportionment. An annual per capita apportionment shall be made upon the presbyteries sufficient to underwrite that part of the Synod Budget, which has been approved for per capita support. This per capita apportionment shall be due March 1 of each year.

- b. Expenses. The necessary and eligible expenses incident to meetings of Synod, incurred by officers, commissioners, and moderators of any Synod commissions or special committees, when their presence at Synod is deemed necessary by the Synod, shall be paid from Synod funds. At the discretion of the Synod, Synod may pay the expenses of others whose presence at Synod may be requested. Travel expenses for Synod meetings and task forces, committees and commissions shall be paid from Synod funds on a basis determined annually by the Synod.
- c. Audits. The constituent presbyteries and those institutions and agencies participating in Synod financial support shall file a copy of their annual audit with the Director of Finance of Synod.

## 5. Miscellany

- a. General Rules. The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except in those cases where the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides otherwise, and these Bylaws of Synod shall be the rules for the transaction of business where applicable within the Synod unless otherwise ordered by the Synod.
- b. Minutes of Synod. The Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Synod Officers and the Synod Executive, shall provide for the preparation of the Minutes of Synod. The Stated Clerk shall have the responsibility to prepare and the authority to edit the Minutes as necessary provided that the Stated Clerk shall not amend the wording so as to alter the meaning.

The Minutes of the Synod will be sent electronically to the following: one copy to each Presbytery Office in the Synod through the presbytery's Stated Clerk; the requisite number requested by the Office of the General Assembly; The Department of History of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and any libraries which have filed a standing order for the Synod Minutes.

Annually, the Stated Clerk, via Synod publications (printed and/or electronic) and/or website, shall give public notice of the availability, upon request of the Minutes of the Synod. The Synod Stated Clerk shall send the Minutes of the Synod to all who have requested a copy by the time specified in the notice. Any request for the Minutes of the Synod following the deadline will be honored, as supply is available, or in electronic format, if available.

Except for copies required in a particular format by the Office of the General Assembly or the Department of History, the Minutes provided to others may be in any format or on any form of media that is, in the judgment of the Stated Clerk, generally recognized by society (e.g., paper, Compact Disk (CD), DVD (Digital Video Disk), or other electronic media). The Stated Clerk will maintain at least one copy in the Synod records on acid-free paper.

- c. Presbytery Reports. The Stated Clerk of each presbytery shall annually submit to the Synod Stated Clerk a copy of its list of churches and ministers and their addresses and classifications; ministers deceased, dismissed, received, ordained, removed or restored to the roll; churches organized, dissolved, merged, dismissed or received; number of pastoral installations and dissolutions; number of candidates for the ministry under care and Commissioned Ruling Elders (copies of the reports to General Assembly reporting the above information shall fulfill the foregoing requirement.)

- d. Resignations and Replacements.
  - i. Resignations. Resignations from any Synod elected position shall be submitted in writing to the Synod Stated Clerk who shall refer the resignation to the Synod Moderator and the Moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee. These two shall act on the resignation and report their action to the Synod.
  - ii. Replacements. It is the responsibility of all units of the Synod to which elections or appointments are made to encourage and enable full participation of its members. A non-functioning member of any unit of the Synod (except the Permanent Judicial Commission) may be replaced by another member elected by the Synod or appointed by the Moderator of Synod upon request of the respective unit. Such request shall detail the non-participation, together with efforts of the unit to enable and encourage full participation. Any such requests made to the Synod Stated Clerk in writing by any unit of Synod shall be referred by the Synod Stated Clerk to the Synod Moderator and the Moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee. These two shall act upon such request from a unit of Synod and shall report their action to Synod.
- e. Suspension of Bylaws. These bylaws may be suspended at any meeting of the Synod by a two-thirds vote of the members present. Nothing herein shall be construed to suspend the laws of the State of Minnesota regarding the amendment of corporation bylaws of a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Minnesota nor the requirements of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and its successors covering the rules for its councils nor the Form of Government and Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order.
- f. Amendments of Bylaws
  - i. These bylaws may be amended at any meeting by a simple majority of the members present so voting, provided copies of the proposed change(s) shall have been distributed to members at least ten days prior to the meeting. These bylaws may be amended at a special meeting called for this purpose provided that proposed change(s) is specified in the call of the meeting and the motion to amend is sustained by a majority of members present so voting.
  - ii. The Stated Clerk shall report annually to Synod all known and foreseeable changes required to keep the bylaws current.
- g. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Synod shall be the same as the calendar year.
- h. Seal. The Synod shall have no corporate seal.

Amended 10/15/1996, page 459, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 9/29/2002, pages 1576-1587, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 10/1/2003, pages 1751-1763, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 1/16/2006, pages 2267-2268, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 4/30/2006, pages 2324-2325, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 9/30/2008, page 2730, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 1/18/2009, page 2778, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 5/3/2011, page 3003, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 5/2/2017, page X, Minutes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Amended 9/30/2018

Amended 9/29/2019

Amended 5/3/2021, added CREM as standing committee

Amended 10/3/2022 updating Financial policies

Amended 5/1/2023 updating Synod Executive

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SYNOD MEETINGS**

- I. **THE COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS:** The Steering Committee of Synod shall be the Committee on Arrangements.
- II. **WORSHIP:** The Steering Committee of Synod may appoint a Committee on Worship, which shall report to and consult with the Steering Committee. The celebration of Holy Communion will take place at the annual meeting of the Synod.
- III. **ENROLLMENT OF COMMISSIONERS:** The Stated Clerk of Synod shall be the Committee on Commissioners. The Stated Clerk will ensure that all the required documentation is in order prior to being seated as a commissioner (includes but not limited to provision of emergency contacts, acknowledgement of signed agreement to uphold and abide by sexual misconduct and protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adult policies). Any decisions made by the Stated Clerk in this capacity may be appealed to the Synod.
- IV. **STANDING COMMITTEE PERSONNEL**
  - A. Standing Committee Moderators: The Synod Moderator shall, from among the commissioners to Synod, annually appoint a moderator for each standing committee, which are to be confirmed by the Synod.
  - B. Staff and Resource Persons: The Synod Moderator shall annually appoint staff and resource persons to the various standing committees, having received nominations from the Synod Executive regarding the deployment of Synod and Presbytery Staff as staff and resource persons to the various standing committees.
  - C. Members of the Standing Committees: Prior to the annual meeting of the Synod, commissioners shall be given an opportunity to indicate their preferences for service on Standing Committees. At the annual meeting of the Synod, the moderator shall make appointments to the Standing Committees, which are to be confirmed by the Synod.
- V. **GUIDELINES FOR SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEES:** The following shall be the guidelines for Synod Standing Committees:
  - A. **Meetings of Synod Standing Committees:** The agenda for each Synod meeting may include time for Standing Committee meetings, excluding the Steering Committee. If further meeting time is required, a committee may request to be excused from the session of the synod; such a request shall be submitted to the Synod for action. The business of the committees shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, newest edition, with the following specific provisions:
    1. Meetings of synod committees shall be open to the public, provided that any committee may sit in executive session with only commissioner members, staff, resource persons, and ex-officio members of Synod at any time the committee judges that it should do so. The Personnel Committee may also meet in private session with only commissioner members present at any time in which it needs.
    2. Commissioner members on the committee may speak and may vote in the committee. on the committee may speak and may vote in the committee.
    3. Secretaries, staff, and other persons officially assigned to committees may speak.

4. Other persons may be given “privilege of the floor” only by majority vote of the Standing Committee.

B. Reports of Standing Committees: The reports of Synod Standing Committees shall clearly identify the recommendations to be submitted to Synod, and where necessary, a brief statement of the committee’s reasons for such recommendations. If the report of a Standing Committee proposes an action affecting the interests of another Standing Committee, or a permanent committee, or a particular presbytery, it shall be the responsibility of that Standing Committee to confer with the responsible representatives of the other body before proposing such actions to the Synod.

**VI. PRESENTATION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:** In the presentation of the reports of the Standing Committees no printed material which is in the hands of the commissioners shall be read aloud, except the recommendations.

**VII. LIMITATION ON SPEAKERS:** In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner, or non-voting member, shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard.

**VIII. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS:** Leave of absence requests, including the reasons for the request, shall be filed with the Stated Clerk who is assigned the responsibility of acting on any requests for leave of absence.

**IX. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS AT THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY:** New business items are to be presented to the floor of the Synod in the form of a motion, and if seconded, the mover may speak very briefly (for information) to the issue of placing this concern on the agenda. The Synod will then vote, without debate, on whether to place the item on the agenda. If approved, the new business shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to a standing committee. No item of new business shall be entered after the Standing Committees go into committee meetings, except upon a two-thirds vote of the Synod. The person(s) submitting an item of new business which is placed on the agenda shall provide written or printed resources on the issue or item of new business.

**X. NOMINATIONS FOR SYNOD MODERATOR AND VICE MODERATOR:** The Moderator of the Synod may, no later than the spring meeting of the Synod, appoint a special committee of commissioners who shall at the same meeting of the Synod present nominations for the offices of Synod Moderator and Vice Moderator. When there is a contest, the election shall be by ballot.

**XI. CORRESPONDING MEMBERS AND PERSONS GRANTED PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:** Corresponding members and persons granted privilege of the floor shall be entitled to speak in sessions of the Synod and standing committees on matters related to the work of the body represented but may not vote.

**XII. DISTRIBUTION OF PAPERS:** Authorization for the distribution of any papers, except standing or other committee reports, at the Synod meeting shall be obtained from the Stated Clerk.

**XIII. CONTRABAND AND FACILITY RULES AND REGULATIONS:** The possession or use of alcohol by an under-age participant and the possession or use of firearms, fireworks and/or illegal drugs by any participant, after consultation, may result in the individual’s being requested to return home immediately at his/her own expense. All persons attending meetings of the Synod shall be expected to abide by the rules and regulations of the hosting facility. A violation of such policies and procedures shall be the cause for being requested to return home immediately as stated above.



**XIV. SUSPENSION OF POLICIES, RULES, AND PROCEDURES:** These policies and procedures are continuing rules of the Synod. They may be set aside by a two-thirds vote of the commissioners present and voting. Such action shall state the specific rule(s), policy (ies) or procedure(s), and the duration of the action.

## **SYNOD MEETING NORMS**

1. Commissioners are asked to download and read documents for the meeting prior to arrival.
2. Please limit use of internet to business purposes during the meeting due to limited bandwidth at the Retreat Center.
3. Please silence or turn off cell phones and other devices during meetings of the Synod and its committees. If one chooses to answer a call, please leave the room (committee meetings) or building (meeting) to ensure that the call cannot be heard in the meeting so that others are not disturbed.
4. Committee reports will not be read by presenters during the meeting. Parts are highlighted when relevant to discussion or decision-making. Please read in advance.
5. Commissioners arrive promptly for working sessions and remain to their conclusion unless excused.
6. Parliamentary procedures are used enough to keep work moving along, but not in ways that prohibit participation in discussion.
7. Acronyms are explained when used for the first time or upon request. In written reports enter full name with the acronym in parentheses.
8. We work to create and maintain an atmosphere for discussion that is civil, caring, and positive. Speakers are heard with courtesy. When disagreements occur, we argue about issues, but do not attack people. This style includes acknowledging our mistakes.
9. We encourage changing seating arrangements periodically to foster meeting different people.
10. The agenda is flexible and provides some “free time” periods throughout the meetings for socializing and recreation.
11. All comments should be addressed to the moderator and the moderator recognizes each person before that person speaks. Please introduce yourself after the moderator recognizes you.

## **ADDITIONAL NORMS FOR ZOOM MEETINGS**

1. Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking; It is easy to be distracted by typing or background noises or even coughs.
2. Please have your first and last name and presbytery of membership identified/labelled on your zoom screen.
3. Identify yourself when speaking.
4. The chat feature will be used for questions. An assigned person will monitor the incoming questions and pass them on or call on the person who has the question.
5. In order to speak, use the raise your hand icon/button/zoom feature and wait to be called upon.
6. We will vote using Zoom's polling feature.
7. Breaks are built into the agenda. Do not leave the Zoom meeting during the break. Just mute yourself.
8. If you join the meeting by a non-smart phone, instead of by computer or smart device,
9. Please determine in advance if you can mute yourself on your phone.
10. Those who are on phones that are not smart phones will need to unmute and speak their vote.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **CHAPTER 1. AUTHORITY OF STANDING COMMITTEES & AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT SYNOD BUSINESS**

- A. The Synod has authority over all standing committees.
- B. Each committee has policies and administrative procedures they will follow in their work. These policies and procedures should be reviewed by the committee periodically and any recommended changes presented to the Synod for action.
- C. Each committee is responsible for overseeing their portion of the Synod's annual budget and submitting items for the budget as requested.
- D. Each committee will elect a chair, vice-chair and clerk.
- E. A quorum of a committee is 50% plus one.
- F. When meeting in conjunction with the Annual or a Stated or Special meeting of the Synod, committee actions shall be recommendations to the Synod and shall become effective if and when the Synod shall approve such recommendations.
- G. When it is clear that actions of the Synod are necessary and proper between meetings of the Synod, and it is not appropriate or practical for the action to be delayed until the next meeting of the Synod, Standing Committees are authorized to meet, either in person, by conference call, or other means to consider action(s). Committee actions shall then be submitted to the Steering Committee which may concur or reject (but not modify) such action, and it shall then be approved as if it were approved at a meeting of the Synod.
- H. This policy shall have no effect on the prior approval of the Synod (Action 12-45, page 249, Twenty-fifth meeting of the Synod, October 15-17, 1995) which is hereby affirmed by inclusion in this policy:

12-45 Authorization to Conduct Synod Business: That Synod authorize the Finance Committee to conduct the business of the Synod between Synod meetings with the full authority of the Synod. Such authority shall be limited to approval of loans (Synod and/or General Assembly), acquisition, disposal, or maintenance of Synod property, approval of contracts, actions dealing with subsidiary corporations, and such other actions that the Synod Executive, Synod Moderator, and the Chair of the Finance Committee agree is properly assigned to the Finance Committee and is of an urgent nature such that it is impractical to delay action until the next meeting of the Synod. Actions approved under this authority will have the same authority as if approved by the full Synod Assembly.

Actions approved under this authority will be conducted at meetings of the Finance Committee, either in person, by conference call or other means, with the participation of at least one half of the Synod Commissioners assigned to the Finance Committee, plus all of the Youth Advisory Delegates that are able to participate. Actions approved under this authority will be reported immediately to the Synod Executive, the Synod Moderator, and the Synod Stated Clerk and reported to the Synod at the next meeting of the Synod.

Rationale: The business of the Synod continues between meetings. With two meetings of the Synod annually, many actions are of an urgent nature that make it impractical to delay action until the next scheduled meeting of the full Synod. This Action would give the Finance Committee the authority to conduct routine business of the Synod between meetings. It limits actions to those of a specific nature and those which the Synod Executive and Synod Moderator agree would be properly assigned to this Committee and should not wait for the next Synod meeting.

- I. Actions approved under this policy shall be reported by the originating committee to the next Stated Meeting of the Synod for inclusion in the Minutes.
- J. No action will be approved under this policy that is restricted from being assigned to a committee under the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (e.g. real property matters). Also, no changes to the Bylaws or Articles of Incorporation or any of the policies adopted by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall be approved by this method. In addition, no action originating in the Steering Committee shall be approved by this method.

## **CHAPTER 2. COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC SERVICE AND WITNESS (SSW)**

**Purpose:** The Committee on Strategic Service and Witness will lead the Synod in partnering with our presbyteries to be the hands and feet of Presbyterian Church (USA) mission strategy (Strategic Plan Priority A).

This will include:

- A. Building communities of faith that advocate for equity for all people and God's creation, including but not limited to:
  - 1. Providing financial resources for American Indian and Peoples of Color to have opportunities to obtain leadership experience or education.
  - 2. Sharing information to empower congregations and presbyteries to work to change laws that perpetuate economic exploitation of people and natural resources.
- B. Building communities of hope that take risks to demonstrate God's new creation by:
  - 1. Providing resources to presbyteries for innovative approaches to dismantle poverty in their area;
  - 2. Witnessing to the resurrection of diversity in our structures of community and ministry; and
  - 3. Advocating for access to mental-health resources for all people in all areas.
- C. Building communities of love that seek reconciliation and actively tear down walls that separate God's children from each other by:
  - 1. Providing resources to presbyteries that work in specific ways to dismantle white privilege and systemic racism;
  - 2. Affirming our Native American roots by encouraging a portion of each sale of building/land within the Synod be set aside for American Indian ministry;
  - 3. Building and strengthening those who are estranged, marginalized or strangers and eliminating barriers to the communities of love; and
  - 4. Participating in and advocating for interfaith cooperation and partnerships.

- D. Building communities of service and witness that point beyond self to the Good News of God's grace by:
  - 1. Creating awareness of and eliminating systems, beliefs and practices that underlie discrimination, poverty, homelessness, criminal injustice systems, and other areas of oppression;
  - 2. Strengthening Presbyterian camp and conference ministries as well as Presbyterian collegiate ministries throughout the Synod; and
  - 3. Encouraging presbyteries and their congregations to become Matthew 25 entities.
- E. Work in coordination with other Synod committees to support the Synod Strategic Plan and Priorities

**Membership:** There will be nine to eleven Synod Commissioners appointed to this Committee.

**Short Term Goals:** The SSW will annually review its purpose and establish goals for the given year that will illumine how the Synod is embodying this priority and moving closer to the overall mission laid out in it. These goals will be reported to the Synod annually.

**Other committees of the Synod that report to the SSW:**

**SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE COMMITTEE (SDOP)**

- A. Members. The Synod shall elect a Self-Development of People Committee, consisting of a minimum of nine members and a maximum of twelve members. A majority of the members shall be racial ethnic minority persons and three-fourths of the members shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Two persons from among the current commissioners to Synod shall be appointed by the Moderator to serve on this committee, subject to confirmation by the Synod.
- B. Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Self-Development of People Committee shall be to assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in carrying out its global commitment to work toward the self-development of economically poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, who own, control, and benefit directly from projects that promote long-term change in their lives and communities. The Committee will focus on projects within its bounds and work in cooperation with the Synod's presbytery and General Assembly Committees.
- C. Classes and Terms. At-large members are usually elected to a three-year term. They can serve up to six years consecutively. Commissioners may serve for the duration of their term as a commissioner.
- D. Vacancies. Vacancies shall be filled by the Moderator of Synod until the next meeting of Synod.
- E. Reporting: The Self-Development of People Committee is accountable to the Synod through the Committee on Strategic Service and Witness.

**Agency Relations:** The SSW maintains the Synod's primary connections with:

- 1. Presbyterian Clearwater Forest. The Synod and the presbyteries of Minnesota Valleys, Northern Plains, Northern Waters, and Twin Cities Area are co-owners of this camp and conference center in Deerwood, Minnesota.
- 2. Synod Covenant Partners.

## **Policy for Covenant Relationships within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies has had a long relationship with Presbyterian colleges and universities and other church-related institutions within the bounds of the Synod. This covenant policy sets forth the understandings that inform those relationships. The agreements printed in this statement describe the essential basis of what can and should be a dynamic relationship between the church and individual church-related institutions. These relationships are often defined through covenants.

While individual covenants may expand on these essentials, the elements described within this policy should be reflected in all institutional covenants in which the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enters. It is not desirable that a uniform code of relationships be established, nor become unalterably fixed.

This policy points the direction for acknowledged responsibilities and commitments on the part of both the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and church-related institution.

### **A. Responsibilities of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies**

1. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies regards appropriate church-related institutions as independent corporate institutions which aid in extending the outreach of the church, supporting the mission of the church throughout the world. It is understood the church-related institutions in which the Synod joins in covenant are not under the control of the Synod.
2. As it relates to colleges, universities and seminaries, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies encourages each institution of higher education to serve as a center of learning committed to providing maximal opportunities for the responsible exercise of academic freedom.
3. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies encourages all church-related institutions to function within the appropriate best-practices defined within their scope of defined service to society.
4. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, to the extent permitted by its resources and priorities, will strengthen the work of the other church-related institutions through active concern, through certain services, and through sharing leadership.
5. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, to the extent permitted by its resources and priorities, will encourage its presbyteries and congregations to support those institutions in covenant with the Synod.

### **B. Responsibilities of Institutions in covenant with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies**

1. Church-related institutions will make appropriate services, regardless of service type, available without respect to race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender.
2. As it relates to colleges, universities and seminaries, church-related institutions of higher education will provide opportunities for those who teach and those who learn to attain their highest possible level of achievement and by instruction in and by emphasis on human values, encouraging each person to seek and reach a significant commitment to service to individuals and society.
3. Church-related institutions will make available to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, to the extent permitted by its resources, the knowledge and expertise of its staff.
4. Church-related institutions will be members of the appropriate national association related with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

5. Church-related institutions will be accredited, when appropriate, by the accrediting agency of their particular service area. This accreditation and re-accreditations must be reported to the Synod.
- C. Joint Responsibilities of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and church-related institutions in covenant
1. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and church-related institutions commit themselves to share in promoting the work of each that informs and reinforces their service to society.
  2. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and church-related institutions commit themselves to the active inclusion of all, regardless of race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender.
  3. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and church-related institutions commit themselves to accept the responsibilities included in all covenants as central to their declared and continuing

### **CHAPTER 3. FINANCE COMMITTEE (FIN)**

The Finance, Personnel and Communications Committees will collaboratively lead the Synod in partnering with presbyteries by providing resources and services that can best be done together.

**Purpose:** The Finance Committee, working with Financial Services staff, will

- A. Develop optional financial services that include but are not limited to:
  1. bookkeeping,
  2. payroll,
  3. investments,
- B. training of financial officers.
  - 1.. Provide financial resources to support the mission of the Synod in a variety of ways from loan relief services to re-deployment of Synod investments.
  2. Oversee the financial reports and records of the Synod. The treasurer's financial reports are reviewed prior to presentation to the Synod. The committee also reviews the financial reports and audit reports for subsidiary organizations.
  3. Be responsible for Synod property, both real and personal, including insurance coverage. The primary property of the Synod is the Synod office building, located at 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, Minnesota.
  4. Manage the Synod's annual operating budget. The budget is developed by the Steering Committee to ensure that the budget is prepared in response to the Synod's mission and program. After the budget is approved by the Synod, the Finance Committee is responsible for its management.
  5. Administer of the Synod's loan fund. The Committee reviews all loan policies and requests.
  6. Establish the annual contract with the Synod Attorney as well as building use contracts.
  7. Ensure policies and procedures in the Finances section of Administrative Policies Manual are followed.
  8. Other as helps the Synod achieve the priorities set in the Strategic Plan.



9. Works in coordination with other Synod committees to support the Synod Strategic Plan and Priorities.

**Membership:** There will be four to five Synod Commissioners appointed to this Committee.

**Short Term goals:** The Finance Committee will annually review its purpose and establish goals for the given year that will illumine how the Synod is embodying this priority and moving closer to the overall mission laid out in it. These goals will be reported to the Synod annually.

#### **CHAPTER 4: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (PER)**

**Purpose:** The Personnel Committee is accountable to the Synod for its work with Synod and presbytery staff and these elements of the Strategic Plan:

- A. Providing support for presbytery leaders through such processes as:
  1. leadership forums,
  2. support for presbyteries in transition and presbytery leader search processes,
  3. training and support for presbytery personnel committees, and
  4. advocating for equitable pay/benefits.
- B. Providing and supporting Synod staff who will partner well with presbyteries to advance this strategic plan by:
  1. Aligning position descriptions with the strategic plan.
  2. Providing clear, consistent policies and procedures for staff.
  3. Ensuring equity and inclusion in policies and practices.
  4. Ensuring the staffing design meets the vision and mission of the Synod.
- C. Works in coordination with other Synod committees to support the Synod Strategic Plan and Priorities

**Membership:** There will be five Synod Commissioners appointed to this Committee.

**Short Term goals:** The Personnel Committee will annually review its purpose and establish goals for the given year that will illumine how the Synod is embodying this priority and moving closer to the overall mission laid out in it. These goals will be reported to the Synod annually.

#### **Additional Responsibilities:**

- A. Reports: Each year the committee makes two reports to the Synod:
  1. A staffing rationale and design for the year, showing all the persons working for the Synod and their duties.
  2. Staff salaries and staff salary ranges for the succeeding year, for both Synod staff and presbytery executive staff.
- B. Annual Reviews: Members of the Personnel Committee participate in the annual and comprehensive performance reviews of the Synod staff.
- C. Presbytery leadership assistance: The Synod provides a process and assistance to presbyteries in their search for presbytery executive leaders. Through staff, the committee

participates in the annual and comprehensive reviews of presbytery executive leaders (or designee).

- D. Additional policies: See Personnel section of Administrative Policies Manual for additional policies and procedures.
- E. Other as helps the Synod achieve the priorities set in the Strategic Plan.

## **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (COMM)**

**Purpose:** The Communications Committee, working with Synod Staff will:

- A. Provide optional communications services that champion this region and our ministries, including but not limited to:
  - 1. Consulting and strategizing with PNCs about how to market their unique congregation/vision;
  - 2. Sharing access to recording services to help market each presbytery for prospective ministers;
  - 3. Making sure the Synod website clearly identifies resources for pastors who are part of the Synod;
  - 4. Sharing best practices and resources for developing a web presence for presbyteries and their congregations (such as How do we use social media in the 21st century? How can we use it to target people? How to do online Bible studies, pastoring, etc., live stream sermons?);
  - 5. Providing resources and possible funding for graphic design for events and presbyteries;
  - 6. Cultivating lists of resources to aid in video production, graphic design, social media planning, etc.;
  - 7. Helping to tell the stories of communities of faith, love, hope and witness throughout the Synod in a variety of ways (video clips that could be used in worship, periodic newsletters, etc.);
  - 8. Explaining the role of the Synod and its resources; and
  - 9. Sharing best practices across the presbyteries.
- B. Synod Communications: The Committee will create brand and messaging to effectively communicate the mission and ministries of the Synod. They will ensure Synod communications (website, newsletters, social media, print media, etc.) offer consistency and relevance, and the committee will assess the effectiveness of Synod communications and messaging.
- C. Other as helps the Synod achieve the priorities set forth in the Strategic Plan.
- D. Works in coordination with other Synod committees to support the Synod Strategic Plan and Priorities

**Membership:** There will be five Synod Commissioners appointed to this Committee.

**Short Term goals:** The Communications Committee will annually review its purpose and establish goals for the given year that will illumine how the Synod is embodying this priority and

moving closer to the overall mission laid out in it. These goals will be reported to the Synod annually.

## **CHAPTER 6: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES: VITAL LEADERS COMMITTEE (TCVL)**

**Purpose:** The TCVL will lead the Synod in partnering with presbyteries as they attract, support and retain high quality leadership for their communities of faith, hope, love, and service.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies will do this by:

- A. Providing continuing education opportunities through Synod School and the Leadership Summit as well as in collaboration with the Board of Pensions and other entities (transitional ministry training, planning for retirement, financial wellness).
- B. Developing a Synod-based coaching program to serve pastoral leaders, particularly those in their first call. by identifying interested people and providing training and support.
- C. Developing a Synod-wide mentoring program to address the sense of isolation many feel by:
  - 1. Developing list of people willing to serve as mentors and their particular area of focus;
  - 2. Providing them access to Zoom as well as a small stipend for their work; and
  - 3. Gathering data from mentors and users to evaluate the program's effectiveness.
- D. Developing cultural competence by offering training to create expertise.
- E. Promoting congregational vitality and transformation by:
  - 1. Providing and/or developing an instrument to assess congregational readiness for vitality and transformation.
  - 2. Offering an annual congregational vitality and transformation training for pastors and their church's leaders.
  - 3. Providing financial incentives for those engaged in the vitality and transformation program who actively and joyfully engage with their community and world in new ways.
  - 4. Challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith.
  - 5. Providing information about resources that promote congregational health and vitality for congregational leaders to use in their congregations.
- F. Encouraging educational debt assistance in each presbytery.
- G. Offering a shared Commissioned Pastor training program (the Academy) to ensure that all commissioned pastors can faithfully serve where they may be called.
- H. Helping seminaries become more acquainted with our Synod by
  - 1. Engaging seminary professors by inviting them to teach/lead events so they can become more acquainted with our Synod and share the good news about the Synod with those who are seeking calls.
  - 2. Including seminaries in marketing about the Synod.
- I. Encouraging presbyteries to develop, recruit and sustain more diverse leadership.
- J. Works in coordination with other Synod committees to support the Synod Strategic Plan and Priorities.

**Membership:** There will be nine to eleven Synod Commissioners appointed to this Committee.

**Short Term goals:** The TCVL Committee will annually review its purpose and establish goals for the given year that will illumine how the Synod is embodying this priority and moving closer to the overall mission laid out in it. These goals will be reported to the Synod annually.

**Other committees of the Synod that report to the TCVL committee:**

**SYNOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

- A. Members: The Synod School Committee consists of ten members, one of whom shall be a Synod Commissioner. At large members are nominated by the Synod Nominating Committee and elected by the Synod. Up to two members of the committee do not need to be members of the Synod (reside in the bounds of the Synod and/or be Presbyterian). The Synod Commissioners are appointed by the Synod Moderator.
- B. Responsibilities: The Synod School Committee is responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of each annual Synod School.
- C. Terms: Members are usually elected to a three-year term. They can serve up to six years consecutively.
- D. Reporting: The Synod School Committee is accountable to the Synod through Transforming Congregations: Vital Leaders Committee.

**Agency Relations:**

- A. The TCVL maintains the Synod's primary connections with ministry development centers. The Synod contracts with two ministry development centers: LeaderWise, New Brighton, Minnesota; and Midwest Ministry Development Service, with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.
- B. Resource center. The Synod is a founding member of The Ministry Lab, formerly known as The Resource Center for Churches, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**CHAPTER 7: COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUITY MINISTRY (CREM)**

**Purpose** The Committee on Racial Equity Ministry pursues opportunities to uplift and empower historical communities of color, racial ethnic Presbyterian leaders, immigrant communities, multicultural congregations and others underrepresented in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) including but not limited to:

- 1. The composition of CREM reflects the diversity of people in the Synod. Two Synod commissioners are assigned at-large with elected members to serve on CREM. At least five members are selected from racial ethnic groups in the Synod
- 2. CREM serves to Resource and support fundamental areas of racial ethnic ministry development through scholarships, recruitment activities and cultural competency. The committee has used its budget to finance a student scholarship program for racial ethnic students
  - a. In addition to the student scholarship program CREM provides institutional awards to tribal colleges in our region
  - b. Increase knowledge of the comparative statistics of the demographics within presbyteries, congregations, and communities and to develop effective strategies for advocacy and monitoring based on the data
  - a. Collaborate with presbytery and community anti-racism initiatives

- d. Provide assessment models for determining personal and organizational barriers that deter or exclude racial ethnic ministry
  - e. Work in partnership with the Committees on Representation and Committees on Ministry to address issues of equitable access and diversity
  - f. Encourage the church to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of racial ethnic communities
3. CREM members keep informed of potential development by communication with churches and individuals working to ensure a more inclusive church and greater connection to communities in the midst of significant transformation. CREM has supported synod school courses and peacemaking plans, partnered with colleges and seminaries, hosted a racial justice conference, and provided student intern possibilities. The committee seeks ways the church can assemble its strengths into new partnerships, structures, sources of income and reconciliation.

**Membership:** Nine members, of whom two shall be current Synod commissioners and are appointed by the Synod Moderator. Seven shall be at-large members nominated by the Synod Nominating Committee and elected by the Synod. At least five members of the committee shall be selected from among the racial ethnic groups (no less than one from each) in the Synod (i.e., Presbyterians of African, Hispanic, and Asian descent and Native Americans). At large members shall be recruited to bring particular talents, gifts, and experience to the committee consistent with its assigned purpose and tasks.

## **CHAPTER 8: THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Purpose:** The Steering Committee serves as the Executive Committee of the Synod. Its responsibilities include:

- A. establishing time and place of Synod Meetings,
- B. serving as the Committee on Arrangements for Synod meetings,
- C. developing and recommending an agenda for Synod meetings,
- D. appointing a special committee to nominate commissioners for Moderator and Vice Moderator,
- E. acting on behalf of the Synod when actions are necessary and proper between meetings and it is not appropriate or practical for the action to be delayed until the next meeting of the Synod,
- F. being the committee to which employees may appeal a decision of the Personnel Committee,
- G. collaborating with Personnel Committee to recognize those who retire,
- H. reviewing policies on a regular basis (Social Media Guidelines are to be reviewed by Steering Committee every two years), and
- I. developing a balanced proposed budget for the Synod annually that addresses the strategic priorities of the Synod. While the Synod maintains a unified budget (meaning programmatic and ecclesiastical work are funded from a single pool of funds), projected income comes from both mission dollars given by congregations and allocated by presbyteries and from a per capita apportionment. Each Synod committee is asked to make a budget request which is submitted to and reviewed by Steering Committee; An annual timeline for the budget development process is approved by the committee and reported to Synod at its fall meeting.

**Membership of the Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee shall consist of the Synod Moderator, Synod Vice Moderator, Chairs of the Strategic Service and Witness, Transforming Congregations: Vital Leaders, Personnel, Finance and Communications Committees. Synod staff will serve as ex-officio members including the Synod Executive, the Director of Financial Services, the Director of Leadership Development, and the Stated Clerk. The Moderator of the Synod shall serve as the Moderator of the Steering Committee.

**Meetings:** The Steering Committee meets approximately six -eight weeks prior to each Synod meeting and daily during each meeting.

# COMMUNICATION POLICIES

## CHAPTER 1: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

### A. Rationale

The Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed to facilitate the work and mission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies during a critical incident.

The purpose of this action plan is to guide decision making and to implement appropriate procedures through the prevention, preparation, response, and recovery phases of crisis.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan is designed to assist the Synod staff in managing risk and enable sensitive and timely responses to people and systems – support staff, expanded staff (presbytery leaders and stated clerks), commissioners, committee members, subsidiary and affiliate corporations and the wider Presbyterian community. As a partner in ministry, the Synod stands ready to assist presbyteries and subsidiary and affiliate corporations in responding to a crisis in their settings.

### B. Objectives

The Synod will promptly and accurately respond in a coordinated manner to those impacted by a crisis and to the media as needed.

Throughout the crisis the Synod will seek to maintain the integrity of the church and the effectiveness of the Synod's ministry, using the situation as an opportunity to witness as the church whenever possible.

### C. Critical Incidents

The possible emergencies that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies could encounter are categorized here to remove the element of surprise and to provide more complete preparation and risk reduction. The examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

1. Natural disasters: flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, pandemic disease
2. Criminal or legal action: criminal charges against staff or volunteer; sexual harassment lawsuit or wrongful termination action brought against Synod
3. Violent acts, demonstrations, death, or violent injuries: hostage situation, demonstration against a Synod action, staff injured or killed while traveling
4. Personnel crises: staff member hospitalized or diagnosed with serious illness
5. Positive crises: over-registration for a Synod event, causing housing and parking problems; Synod receiving large, unrestricted bequest
6. Perceived crises: misunderstanding of a Synod position or action
7. Total systems failures or crashes: office technology system crashes

Financial crises: embezzlement, bank failure, sudden loss of Synod income

### D. Crisis Team/Chain of Command

The Synod executive will review policies and update procedures as new information emerges.

The expectation is that the Synod office will be in a ready administrative and financial position to execute the response and recovery phase of the plan when necessary.

In order to provide greater flexibility to adjust the plan due to pending circumstances, a Crisis Team will be organized, consisting of the Synod executive, the Director of Leadership

Development, the Director of Finance, the Stated Clerk and the Synod's attorney. Either the Synod Executive, or the Stated Clerk can convene the Crisis Team.

In the event that a particular crisis involves the Synod executive or the Stated Clerk, or any of the program staff may convene the Crisis Team, which shall then consist of at least two Synod executive staff members and/or the Synod's attorney.

#### E. Communication Strategy

When the Synod faces a crisis, the following communication strategy will be employed, at the direction of the Crisis Team, so as to implement a coordinated response.

##### INFORM:

- include emergency alert/receive and send
  - command communication plan
  - identify and report persons on site (head count/accountability)
  - evacuation or shelter
  - assets on and off site
  - coordinate with community emergency service providers
1. The Crisis Team will convene immediately upon learning of the crisis
  2. The Crisis Team will gather facts about the crisis and immediately analyze the situation, drawing upon other resources as necessary to complete the analysis. The situation analysis includes, but is not limited to, the scope of the situation, any legal implications, the public's perception, and other related events (past and future).
  3. Within the first two hours, the Crisis Team will develop the key message(s) to be conveyed during the crisis. The key messages allow the Synod to present its particular viewpoint on the information that is released. To the extent possible, the key message(s) will downplay the negative while proactively promoting the positive.
  4. The Crisis Team will assign staff to carry out specific duties, as necessary. Duties might include, but are not limited to, gathering information, notifying families and others involved, dealing with emergency officials, and communicating with volunteers and staff
  5. The Crisis Team will appoint 1) a crisis coordinator, 2) a spokesperson for the Synod and 3) a media guide. Ordinarily the Synod Executive will serve as crisis coordinator; alternatively, the Stated Clerk may fill that role. Ordinarily the Synod Executive will serve as the spokesperson, unless the nature of the crisis warrants another serving as spokesperson. Ordinarily the director of communications will serve as the media guide.
  6. Using the media guidelines, the Crisis Team will determine the means and frequency of communication with internal and external audiences, including the media. The notification process will then commence.
    - a. The internal audiences include Synod staff; presbytery staff; Synod commissioners, Synod Presbyterian Women Moderator; those from the Synod serving on General Assembly committees, councils, and corporations; leadership of subsidiary and affiliate



corporations; and the clergy, elders, and other church members of the congregations in the Synod.

- b. The external audiences include: the staff of other Synods, the Stated Clerk of the PC(U.S.A.), the PCUSA agencies, the Presbyterian News Service, ecumenical leaders within the Synod's bounds and general media.
7. The Crisis Team will convene and brief the Synod staff as soon as practical. The Crisis Team will also see that appropriate communications are made with the other internal audiences as soon as possible.
8. Using the media guidelines, the spokesperson will be the primary speaker on the Synod's behalf. This allows the Synod's point of view to be heard clearly and unambiguously. There will be situations where others might be asked to speak publicly to certain aspects of a crisis. When appropriate, the spokesperson, in consultation with the Crisis Team, will select these people. Those additional people speaking on behalf of the Synod will communicate fully with the Crisis Team before and after acting in this role.
9. To maintain readiness for communication with internal audiences, the Office Coordinator will keep current the internal rosters identified in F.
10. To maintain readiness for communication with external audiences, director of communications will, at all times, keep current the external rosters identified in F. A list of general media contacts in the largest media markets within the Synod will be maintained by the director of communications for use in such crises.
11. The Crisis Team will draft and make available upon request an official statement regarding the crisis.
12. The Crisis Team will identify office space, either within the Synod office or elsewhere, to be used to carry out the crisis communication strategy.
13. The Crisis Team will continue to follow this strategy throughout the life of the crisis. The Crisis Team will conclude when the crisis is over. The Crisis Team will carry out a post-crisis evaluation.
14. The following documents will be prepared for emergency retrieval and kept in a clearly identified notebook in the Synod library.
  - a. Emergency Preparedness Plan
  - b. Facility and floor plans
  - c. Emergency contact numbers
  - d. Evacuation routes (streets not just building exits)
  - e. Lock down (safety vulnerability, financial and computer security systems)
  - f. Shelter in place (storms, epidemic, etc.)
  - g. Emergency utility shut-off locations
  - h. Command flow charts
  - i. Offsite positions for emergency responses

## F. Media Guidelines

The following media guidelines will be followed so that the crisis communication plan can be effectively implemented.

1. The director of communications will maintain a biography and photo of all Synod staff members. The director of communications will also maintain a lexicon of church terminology and appropriate fact sheets that may be provided to the general media, when necessary.
2. During a crisis, the director of communications will ordinarily serve as media guide, functioning as a constant media contact. The guide is a facilitator, monitoring the media for errors, taking requests for information and comments, providing the media with logistical support, double checking information before releasing it, etc.
3. The director of communications will maintain a media log throughout the course of the crisis. The log will include a listing of all media calls received, the issues being raised by the media and actual media coverage given the crisis.
4. Copies of all documents prepared and distributed to internal and external audiences throughout the course of the crisis will be kept.
5. Depending upon the particular crisis and time constraints, the Crisis Team will make use of all of these communication tools, as appropriate: e-mail, fax, letter sent by regular mail, newsletter, telephone, and Web site.
6. All communications with both internal and external audiences must contain the key message(s) identified by the Crisis Team.
7. The spokesperson will follow media best practices.

## G. Authority to declare meet electronically

When a State of Emergency, health pandemic, and concerns for the safety of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and any of its committees, commissions, or other entities, is declared in effect, the Synod is authorized to meet by electronic or virtual means when determined it is no longer feasible to have a regularly stated meeting and its members present at the regular meeting locations of the Synod assembly.

## H. Training

The Crisis Team and Synod staff will be provided with appropriate training annually to enable them to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them in this crisis communication plan.

## I. Practice

While all crises include an element of surprise and it is hard to anticipate the range of potential crises that might occur, regular review and rehearsal of this crisis communication plan will ensure greater ease and efficiency of operation when an actual crisis occurs. Therefore, the Synod will rehearse the crisis communication plan through a mock drill at least once each year.

## J. Post Crisis Recovery

A post-crisis recovery plan should be part of the emergency preparedness plan after the Crisis Team concludes that the emergency is declared over.

## **Chapter 2: COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEEDURES**

### **A. Rationale**

1. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies communicates within the Synod, across the presbyteries that make up the Synod, and throughout the broader Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) using a variety of platforms, including written notices or news releases, printed and digital communications, and through a variety of social media.
2. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies supports the presbyteries, and other institutional and ecumenical organizations, within the bounds of the Synod. The Synod, in its communication efforts, attempts to promote resources and events deemed helpful to its presbyteries and their church members, to offer opportunities to share information, to present opportunities to foster discussion of topics relative to the church and its mission, and to enhance the delivery of information to members across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **B. General Guidelines**

1. These policies and procedures, while not a legal standard, are a suggestion for best practices in communication of the Synod in its ministry. As such, these policies and procedures are important to the Synod's mission as a part of the broader church and the body of Christ.
2. In practice, the communication efforts of the Synod, across all platforms, will announce and report on issues and events associated within all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and especially those deemed important for Presbyterian leaders within the Synod.
3. The Synod will disseminate information that provides evidence of the Christ-led ministry of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and such information that takes place within the Synod will be of primary importance in Synod communications.
4. Information prepared and disseminated by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, unless specifically designated, will not carry copyright protection. The rationale for this policy is the broad desire to share the news of ministry and mission within the Synod on the broadest level without concern for credit or remuneration.
5. While the logo of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies remains the property of the Synod, the logo, for the same reasons expressed above, may be used without permission. The use of the Synod logo by entities other than the Synod should not be interpreted as endorsement or support.
6. Because of legal, ethical, and theological concerns, information that promotes businesses or profit-making enterprises of individuals or groups will not be promoted through those platforms directly controlled by the Synod.
7. Regarding privacy, individual street addresses, phone numbers, or personal e-mail addresses will not be published or distributed by the Synod without permission. Inclusion of a street address or an e-mail address in material submitted for publication will imply consent. Submission of a street address, or other postal address information, and e-mail address submitted by Synod commissioners and Synod committee members will be implied consent for publication within certain Synod communications, including but not limited to the Synod directory.

### **CHAPTER 3: MEETING COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**

Regarding the meetings of the Synod and its associated bodies, we note, in concert with policies adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the work of the church is strengthened when it is done in a spirit of openness and trust. Church members have a basic right to know about the work done and the decisions made by entities within the church. Church leaders have a basic responsibility to honor that right by conducting their business with a spirit of openness and vulnerability to public scrutiny. Therefore, open meetings will be the norm for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

1. Closed Meetings: In certain circumstances, when the confidentiality of the subject matter is impeding the open work of the group, its meetings may be closed.
2. Subjects dealt with must be limited to property negotiations, security, personnel, civil and criminal litigation, including cases under the Rules of Discipline as outlined in the current edition of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. Closed meetings may be authorized only after serious consideration and by a majority vote of the members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to matters in Section III.A.1. above. In closed meetings, only voting members and other persons invited by the group to serve it are to be present.
4. The reason or reasons for closing must be announced before closure and also must be recorded in the minutes.
5. The decisions reached shall be recorded in the minutes, and shall be made public as soon as possible following the end of the closed meeting.

#### **CHAPTER 4: PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING POLICIES**

- A. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies recognizes and appreciates that many people wish to record portions of its meetings and related events, particularly Synod School, including video, audio, and photographic format. The word, recording, hereinafter refers to both audio and video recording. Taking photographs and recording Synod meetings or events is permitted under this policy.
- B. The distribution and use of photographs or video and audio recordings will be governed by the Communication Policies and Procedures.
- C. As noted in the Communication Policies and Procedures, photography and recording is permitted at Synod meetings as long as:
  - 1. Participants in the meeting are treated with courtesy and respect;
  - 2. The photographer does not stand between official participants and the presenter;
  - 3. Camera flashes or other lights do not interfere with participants or proceedings.
- D. Photography and recording is permitted during worship services and prayer at Synod meetings, events, and Synod School as long as photographs are made with the use of existing light and taken unobtrusively, and do not disrupt either the service itself or individual worshipers.
- E. All photographs of children, those under the age of 18, in public settings must not include any identifying information, such as a name on a name tag, or any other identifiable method, when published via any method, both print, digital, electronic, or through any other medium.

## EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, under the authority of scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), commits itself to welcoming, supporting, and affirming diversity. As Christians, we accept the commission of Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all persons. This requires that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and its member presbyteries and congregations, work toward increasing diversity within its boundaries and building an inclusive environment that respects the uniqueness of every individual created in God's image. Within its own life, the Synod will encourage the fullest participation and contributions of people from different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and culture in worship, policy formation, government, and the mission of the Church.

Scripture upholds that all people shall have opportunity to worship and serve God. "Let all the people praise God" (Romans 15:11) and "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another in accordance with Jesus Christ, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6). This harmony and togetherness, while embracing diversity, is the future we seek with God's help.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, its member presbyteries and congregations shall strive to create governance and practice in which differences are valued. God is present in the lives and experiences of persons often disregarded by the dominant culture. It is the belief of the Synod that we can be most faithful to Christ by valuing the differences in people, respecting the uniqueness of individuals, and encouraging the contributions of all. We can learn much about God from each other.

Therefore, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies commits itself, and commends to its member presbyteries and congregations, to disallow racism and demonstrate our commitment to diversity as we:

- A. Eliminate barriers to full and diverse participation caused by lack of trust, fear, or risk; lack of familiarity about people and their culture, language, and schedules; limited time to build community and reliance on traditional decision-making processes.
- B. Recognize and call upon the existing strengths of the Synod that support diversity, including organizational motivation, connectionism, and time-honored relationships; declared standards of inclusivity; theological incentives and common ground; ecumenical and interfaith relationships; and presumptions of honor and civility toward each other.
- C. Celebrate and respect historic and emerging diversity as it reveals the variety of culture, worldview, values, leadership styles, and thinking processes.
- D. Increase our efforts to identify, encourage and utilize the gifts of all God's people however different we may appear.
- E. Actively identify and recruit persons of diverse backgrounds to serve on Synod entities and staff, as their presence and participation will shape the current and future priorities and operations of the Synod.
- F. Recognize and utilize organizational structures, leadership styles, and decision making processes that are at work among diverse cultures.
- G. Build mutual respect into all our relationships, valuing the differences of others as well as our own; requiring mutual adjustment and understanding; and sharing responsibility for achieving diversity goals.

- H. Consistently express the intent of diversity in all places, communication, publications, and programs belonging to the Synod.
- I. Schedule times, dates, and places of Synod business to encourage diverse participation.
- J. Pursue additional resources, such as financial, human, and informational, specifically targeted at strengthening diversity in the Synod.

Although we acknowledge the challenge inherent in bringing together individuals who are different from each other, we remain unwavering in our commitment to both diversity and community in the context of fulfilling our mission in Christ. We call upon all who are involved in the life and work of the Synod to uphold this policy in all practices, programs, decisions, and communications. Let us witness “the truth that we and our neighbors are no longer strangers and aliens, but...are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:11-22)

## **ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is committed to a program of Synod-wide ecumenism, including its own self-education and ecumenical consciousness raising.

The Synod will encourage and support the presbyteries in their ecumenical efforts.

The Synod's mode of relating to sister and brother communions and other ecumenical bodies shall be one of a partnership of equals, marked by patience, courtesy and trust.

All Synod actions will be governed by the guidelines provided us in the Book of Order concerning Ecumenical Commitment (G-5.01). Those guidelines are:

- A. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks to manifest more visibly the unity of the body of Christ and will be open to opportunities for conversation, cooperation, and action with other ecclesiastical groups. It will seek to initiate, maintain, and strengthen relations with other Reformed and Christian entities.
- B. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks new opportunities for conversation and understanding with non-Christian religious entities.
- C. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels seeks to initiate and respond to approaches for conversation and common action with secular organizations and agencies where such approaches show promise of serving the mission of the Church in the world.



# **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

## **CHAPTER 1: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY**

### **A. INCOME, EXPENDITURES, AND CONTROLS**

- I. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall have a unified annual Budget that shall be called THE SYNOD BUDGET. This Budget shall describe its expenses by using a Descriptive Framework Classification. The Director of Financial Services is directed to establish accounts in accordance with The Synod Budget and is authorized to establish such more detailed accounts as the Director of Financial Services shall determine is necessary for proper management of the Synod activities.
2. The Synod Budget is funded from the following sources:
  - a. A per capita Apportionment established annually by the Synod to support the essential ecclesiastical function of the Synod.
  - b. A grant from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to be negotiated periodically.
  - c. Income from restricted and unrestricted invested funds as allowed based on any restrictions placed upon those funds and accepted by the Synod.
  - d. Service charges made to presbyteries, to agencies, and to trust funds, administered by the Synod for accounting and other services rendered.
  - e. Honoraria received by Synod Staff persons when on Synod assignment.
  - f. Mission pledges made by the sessions of local congregations (through their presbyteries).
  - g. Income as allowed from designated gifts received by the Synod or assets transferred to the Synod.
  - h. Grants from and/or contracts with General Assembly and other Presbyterian agencies, as negotiated.
  - i. Income from invested reserve funds which are restricted as to investment and/or use.
  - k. Special offerings.
  - l. Miscellaneous receipts.
3. Unexpended balances from the Synod Budget at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward in the Synod Fund balance, except where an agreement with a General Assembly Agency or other grantor requires the return of salvage from any grant at the end of the year.
  - a. The Synod, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, shall establish the minimum level of the Fund Balance that is necessary for the orderly conduct of Synod business.
  - b. The Finance Committee shall review the established minimum level of the Fund Balance at least every two years and shall recommend any necessary revisions to the Synod.
4. In order to clarify the budgeting and handling of potential annual surpluses and deficits in Section III, the Finance Committee will establish minimum levels of Fund Balances based on purpose-specific tranches within the overall pool of undesignated Synod cash and investment assets.
  - a. Operating Funds: Levels should be adequate to cover the highest expected amount by which the Synod's cumulative monthly operating costs might exceed cumulative monthly operating receipts, plus an amount adequate to cover the largest month of payroll and bill payment

disbursements made on the behalf of the Synod's financial services clients. Composition: Bank balances.

- b. Operating Reserves: Levels at the outset of any year should be adequate to weather the potential for unexpected and sustained adverse changes in operating cash flows -- e.g., dramatic falloff in monthly revenues, significant drop in investment earnings pursuant to a decline in market values, significant increases in monthly expenses. Generally, this should be adequate to offset a 30% decline in normal monthly income for 9 - 12 months (until significant adjustments can be made) and can be estimated at between four or six months of average operating costs. Composition: Combination of bank account balances, PIPL certificate balances, and/or liquid, low-volatility investment instruments.
  - c. Designated Funds: Levels should be adequate to cover larger projects or spending outlays (e.g., fixed asset replacements) that would either be earmarked within any year's budget as well as funds adequate to cover designated net asset accounts linked to programs and external commitments<sup>1</sup>. Composition: Combination of bank account balances, PIPL certificates, and/or moderately liquid, low-volatility investment instruments.
  - d. Longer-term Reserves: Levels should be adequate to cover significant longer-term outlays that might be needed in a time horizon greater than three years. These reserves should be invested in order to generate income needed to support current operations and approved programs, while achieving value appreciation adequate to offset the costs of annual inflation. Composition: Investment instruments or managed equity portfolios whose principal would not be expected to be drawn within a 3-year horizon.
- 5. All donor restricted funds and trusts received by the Synod shall be administered strictly in accordance with the stipulations of the restrictions and provisions of the trusts. A reasonable service fee may be charged against such funds. This fee shall be set by the Synod upon recommendation from the Finance Committee.
  - 6. All funds designated by General Assembly agencies for programs within The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall be transmitted to The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and in turn disbursed to the designated mission program of the Synod. Where the Synod has approved Comprehensive Presbytery Mission Support (CPMS) the funds shall be disbursed to the Presbytery(ies) or other mission units.
  - 7. The Synod Budget shall be expended in accordance with the Budget adopted by the Synod. The Synod shall have authority to adjust the Budget as necessary during the year in consultation with committees and/or persons involved in any of the proposed adjustments.
  - 8. The Director of Financial Services of the Synod shall have authority to establish control accounts for non-budgeted funds received, with expenditures to be authorized according to written agreements up to the limit of the income received.
  - 9. All funds for Synod programs shall be received and expended by the Director of Financial Services and Treasurer of the Synod. No committee or persons shall hold funds for Synod programs or establish bank accounts for such funds without written approval from the Director of

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., designated gifts and earnings distributions from endowments and trust, grant pools, and loan repayments available to be re-lent.

Financial Services and documented communication of such accounts to the Treasurer and Finance Committee.

10. Where the Synod participates in the financial support of any agency, the agency shall provide the Synod with an audit or full financial review report annually.
11. The Director of Financial Services and Treasurer and any other persons handling funds or assets of the Synod, shall be bonded at the expense of the Synod in amounts to be determined by the Synod upon recommendation of the Finance Committee.
12. All funds received from special offerings and all income distributions received from restricted gifts shall be expended in accordance with the intent of the donor and subject to guidelines established for the expenditure of such funds.

## **B. BUDGET MAKING**

Each year in advance of the Fall Synod Meeting, it will be the responsibility of the Finance Committee to provide all Standing Committees with a request for preliminary input to the subsequent year's Synod Budget. This request will be organized by income sources and spending purposes and will be accompanied by a year-to-date update on results within the current-year Budget and a preliminary projection for rest-of-year income and spending across all budgeted income, expense, and balance sheet categories.

1. Each unit, committee, or council participating in the budget shall be responsible for submitting a request to the Synod, through the Finance Committee for recommendation by the Steering Committee and approval by the Synod.
2. The Steering Committee shall make budget recommendations to the Synod with priority recommendations that have been made in the light of priorities recommended and approved by the Synod. Upon approval of the Budget by the Synod, the responsibility for recommending modifications and revisions to that Budget shall rest in the Finance Committee. Between Synod meetings, the Finance Committee shall have authority to make changes in the current year budget. Any changes made will be promptly communicated to the responsible committee as well as to the Synod at its next meeting.
3. The responsibility for establishing criteria for setting priorities in the Mission Program of the Synod shall rest in the Synod Assembly. It may delegate to a committee the responsibility for bringing recommendations to the Synod concerning criteria for establishing priorities in Mission Program.
4. The Synod may designate a portion of the Synod Budget for contingency purposes to cover emerging needs and issues. The Finance Committee shall recommend allocating amounts for emerging needs and issues to specific needs and issues.
5. The Synod shall be responsible for setting priorities in Mission Program of the Synod.
6. The Synod shall be responsible for establishing guidelines for the receipt and expenditure of special offerings.

7. The Synod, upon recommendation of the Steering Committee, may choose to authorize the Finance Committee to balance the Budget by using some or all of that portion of the Fund Balance in excess of the minimum Fund Balance or to approve a budget with a deficit balance as long as the budgeted deficit does not exceed that portion of the Fund Balance in excess of the amount held as an Operating Reserve established pursuant to Section I, Paragraph C 1 of this Policy, or 2% of the undesignated net financial assets of the organization.

## **C. BUDGET ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. Monetary Transactions**

- a. All Synod checks shall normally be written in the principal office of the Synod except as explicitly authorized by the Director of Financial Services with communication to the Treasurer and Finance Committee.
- b. The Synod shall determine who shall be authorized to sign checks through recommendation from the Finance Committee.
- c. The Synod shall maintain documented policies and procedures for the payment, transfer, or withdrawal of any financial assets. These policies and procedures shall be posted in a visible physical place within the Synod Offices and shall be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee. All such policies will contain proper separation of duties, so no one person has control of the check-writing or check deposit process from start to finish (i.e., from the opening and logging of invoices and receipts to their approval or acceptance, to the preparation and delivery of payment or deposit transactions, to the financial recording and filing of transactions and their associated documentation). Current Synod policies are outlined at the end of this chapter.

### **2. Budget Changes and Adjustments**

- a. No committee, no administrative unit, and no Synod controlled mission unit shall expend more money than is provided for it in the approved budget except by action of the Synod.
- b. Request for expenditures beyond the budgeted amount must be accompanied by a statement of proposed funding for the additional expenditures.
- c. The Finance Committee shall receive all requests for budget adjustments and shall make recommendations for action to the Synod.
- d. The Synod shall have responsibility to hear and act on requests for budget increases or additional budget items through its Finance Committee.
- e. Between Synod meetings, the Finance Committee shall have authority to make changes in the current year budget. Any changes made will be promptly communicated to the responsible committee as well as to the Synod at its next meeting.

### **3. Budget Surpluses and Deficits**

In the event of a surplus or deficit in the budget of the past year(s), the Program Coordination Committee shall develop a recommendation for action of the Synod, with the following guidelines:

- a. In most cases, deficits will be offset by prior year accumulated surpluses held in Operating Funds and Operating Reserves in excess of the amount determined pursuant to Section I, Paragraph C 1 of this policy. In the event the accumulated surplus is insufficient, subsequent

year surpluses will be used to offset the deficit or replenish targeted Operating Fund and Operating Reserve levels before used pursuant to Section III, Paragraph C 2 following.

- b. Consistent with the intention of donors of unrestricted receipts, surpluses in excess of the amount determined pursuant to Section I, Paragraph C 1 of this policy shall ordinarily be used for the mission purposes of the Synod in the next fiscal year or future needs as might be specifically defined and designated against.
- c. Other Standing Committees, Synod Units, Commissioners, and Staff are encouraged to have input into the process of development of the recommendation(s).

#### **D. GENERAL BUSINESS PRACTICE**

##### **1. Purchases**

- a. Capital expenditures in excess of \$500.00 must have prior approval by the Director of Financial Services, with communication to the Treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee.
- b. Capital expenditures in excess of \$5,000.00 must have prior approval of the Synod upon recommendation of the Finance Committee.
- c. Contracts for services in excess of \$5,000.00 must have prior approval of Synod upon recommendation of the Finance Committee. All contracts for services in excess of \$1,000.00 must be signed by the Director of Financial Services and contracts in excess of \$5,000.00 must be signed by both the Synod Executive and the Director of Financial Services and communicated with the Treasurer. Contracts not exceeding \$1,000.00 may be signed by program staff persons.

##### **2. Financial Statements**

- a. The Director of Financial Services and Treasurer shall prepare and submit to the Synod and the Synod Staff a statement of expenses as compared to the budget for the period at each meeting of the Synod, and at other times as requested by the Synod Executive and/or Moderator.
- b. Except for approved prepayments or the approved placement of funds for future expenditures into operating payables accounts, expenses will be recognized in the year in which the expense was incurred.
- c. A full external financial review shall be submitted to the Synod each year at a Synod meeting, showing the operations for the prior year, and the status of all the accounts as of the end of the fiscal year. The Finance Committee will assume the responsibilities of ensuring this is done.
- d. The accounting books and records of the Synod shall, at all times, be kept in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as required by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and other applicable agencies or boards–
  - i. except as Statement of Position 94-3 of the AICPA applies in regard to consolidation of financial statements.
  - ii. except as GAAP applies to the recognition of capital gains in relation to the sale of Synod real property located at 8012 Old Cedar Avenue South, Bloomington, Minnesota. The gains relative to this sale will be amortized over the depreciable life of the

replacement property located at 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, Minnesota after deduction for all closing costs on both properties and for the cost of the lease-back arrangement on the Bloomington property.

- iii. except as the use of accrual accounting for loans might require the recognition of income on accrued, but to be yet received loan payments. Loan income will generally be recognized on a cash basis at the time the income is collected.
  - iv. The Director of Financial Services of the Synod is directed to adhere to such standards and to consult with the Finance Committee regarding any exception to this practice and receive approval from the Finance Committee before deviating from this policy. The Director of Financial Services is authorized and empowered to make such changes to the accounting books and records of the Synod as are necessary to conform to this policy.
3. Service Agreements

The Synod Executive is authorized to negotiate a contract with a Presbytery/General Assembly unit or agency, regarding shared office and/or personnel, as to the proportionate share of expenses for services and/or supplies. Terms and procedure of payment will be a part of the contract. Synod has authorized any two officers of the Synod, in consultation with the chair of the Finance Committee, to contract with any of the constituent presbyteries of The Synod of Lakes and Prairies whereby the Synod will provide services for the benefit of one or more presbyteries either with or without fee. Such services may include, but not be limited to accounting, bookkeeping, communication, graphic design, payroll, search committee, and office services. Any such contracts including a fee approved by the officers shall be reported to the Synod at its next meeting.

4. Disposal of Assets

The Treasurer and Director of Financial Services, in consultation with the Synod Executive, are authorized to dispose of unneeded assets having both a net book value and an estimated market value not exceeding \$1,000.00. With approval from the chair of the Finance Committee of Synod, this authorization shall apply to unneeded assets having both a net book value and an estimated market value not exceeding \$2,500.00.

## **E. INVESTMENT POLICIES**

1. Synod shall establish an Investment Policy. The Finance Committee will, at least every two years, review and make recommendations regarding the Investment Policy.
2. The Finance Committee shall periodically review all other assets of the Synod, including gifts and bequests received, to determine if they are suitably held and to recommend to the Synod any appropriate disposition.
3. The Synod shall make every effort to follow the policies of the General Assembly regarding social responsibilities in regard to investments.

## **VI. CAPITAL LOAN FUND**

Net Earnings – Synod will utilize the earnings of the Capital Loan Fund (net of any costs including provision charges as needed for loan loss reserves) to support the operating budget of the Synod.

## Synod Check Approval Process

Approved by Staff October 12, 2021

The following procedures for initiating, approving, executing, and recording payment requests involve the following staff positions/members of the Synod:

SE -- Synod Exec. (Street-Stewart): Can sign checks or approve requests; not both on same item.

LD -- Leadership Director (DeMeester): Can approve requests but cannot sign checks.

OC-- Office Coordinator (Milloy): Can approve requests but cannot sign checks.

SC -- Stated Clerk (Prouty): Can approve requests but cannot sign checks.

PAM -- Payroll and Accounting Manager (Hartman): Prepares/records payments; cannot sign checks or approve.

T -- Treasurer (Koon): Signs checks but cannot approve requests.

Procedures are outlined for each of the following six categories of payments.

- A. Budgeted monthly or quarterly payments for CPS, CPMS, The Ministry Lab, and LeaderWise, as well as annual or quarterly pledged amounts approved within the SSW Committee Annual Budget:
  1. Approval not required for processing.
  2. List of paid transactions reviewed by Synod Executive after month-end.
- B. Payments generated within normal payroll processes (including those below):
  1. Fidelity (ACH that is initiated by Amy based upon the previous month's payroll deductions)
  2. Garnishment payments (based upon payroll deductions; must be paid within 3 days of payroll)
  3. Board of Pensions payments for the Synod and 13 payroll clients (automatic ACH by the BOP)
  4. Payroll dollars, service fees, and taxes (automatic ACH by payroll company).
  5. Approval not required for processing.
  6. List of paid transactions reviewed by Synod Executive after month-end.
- C. Monthly VISA card payments:
  1. Approval not required for processing payment of balance.
  2. Individual statements are signed by account holder and provided to the Financial Associate by month-end with notation of purpose and financial accounts to be charged. Copies of receipts for charges \$50.00 or greater may be requested from time to time by the Treasurer or Synod Executive.
  3. Review/Sign-off by Synod Exec after each month-end.
- D. Recurring payments less than \$2,000 (or other limit if specified) to vendors on the attached list:
  1. Invoice review and approval by SE, LD, BA, or SC required for processing.

2. Paid transactions, invoices, approvals, and check stubs reviewed by SE at month-end.
- E. All other payments less than \$1,000 per month in aggregate per payee:
1. Check request prepared and signed by SE, LD, BA, SC, or T.
  2. Approval of requests by SE, LD, BA, SC.
  3. Paid transactions, invoices, approvals, and check stubs reviewed by SE after month-end.
- F. All other payments \$1,000 or greater:
1. Check request prepared and signed by LD, BA, SC, or T.
  2. Approval of requests by SE required for processing.
  3. Bank statements and Sage-generated checking reconciliations reviewed by T and SE at month-end.



## CHAPTER 2: INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND SPENDING POLICIES

### I. Financial Assets

- A. Cash and investable financial assets of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies will be managed in accordance with the set of policies and guidelines outlined below. Assets covered by these policies and guidelines include both unrestricted, donor restricted, designated, and undesignated assets. Balances on loans outstanding to the Synod and assets representing the future revenue streams from endowment accounts for which the Synod is a beneficiary are outside the scope of these policies.
- B. Restricted Assets will be managed and/or distributed in accordance with their respective restrictions and managed in accordance with guidelines of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (“UPMIFA”), where applicable.
  - 1. Restricted assets within the scope of these policies currently include:
  - 2. Perry Trust Fund (earnings of which are designated to support the Presbyterian House).
  - 3. Donor-restricted endowment accounts.
  - 4. Investment proceeds or distributions from restricted assets will be placed in designated payables accounts (unless such proceeds are unrestricted) and will be managed and distributed as appropriate by assigned standing committees of the Synod.
- C. Unrestricted Assets will be maintained and used to support the Synod’s operations and overall mission, in accordance with the dollars needed to meet the purposes and objectives outlined below for Operating Funds, Operating Reserves, Designated Funds, and Longer-term Reserves.

- 1. Operating funds should be kept in transactional accounts.

These funds should be adequate to accommodate monthly timing gaps that might occur between the receipt and the expenditure of operating funds, 30 days turnover of monthly payroll receivables.

- 2.. Operating Reserves should be available in federally insured deposits. These funds should be adequate to cover the following, in combination:
  - a. Modest fixed asset replacement or repair needs that might be expected to arise in any particular year in excess of normal budgeted maintenance and replacement; and
  - b. An amount available to allow time for the organization to adjustment as might be necessary to sustain sudden changes in ongoing operational needs – e.g., where costs rise dramatically on an ongoing basis or receipts falloff unexpectedly (generally a dollar amount equal to 4 to 6 months average monthly operating expenses).
  - c. Designated Funds should be invested in federally insured deposits or low-volatility investments (e.g., fixed income or balanced growth funds).

Designated Funds include principal amounts and undistributed investment earnings associated with donor-directed gifts and funds designated by Synod approval for use in certain missions, ministries, or programs. Designated Funds should be held or invested in insured deposits or low-volatility investments (e.g., balanced growth funds or fixed income funds). At 9/30/2021, Designated Funds totaled \$899,652:

<b>Designated Accounts</b>		<b>Available 9/30/2021</b>	<b>Covered by Dedicated Investments</b>	<b>For Coverage by Low-Volatility Investments</b>
2566	Pine Ridge Disaster	\$7,158		\$7,158
2087	Dakota Access Pipeline Funds	\$14,901		\$14,901
3212	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-EmerRelief	\$39,766		\$39,766
3213	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-ShrdGrants	\$13,139		\$13,139
3220	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-Syn School	\$48,711		\$48,711
3241	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-Syn School	\$15,964		\$15,964
3261	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-Westminste	\$1,587,024	\$1,197,761	\$389,263
3272	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-ChExt&Loan	\$149,881	\$129,400	\$20,481
3273	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-MissEndowm	\$302,410	\$265,535	\$36,875
3277	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-NAmerSchol	\$172,736	\$137,859	\$34,877
3281	Unrestrict/BrdDesig-ChrchDevel	\$299,475	\$69,445	\$230,029
3402	Temp Rest Stanfield Scholarship	\$14,850		\$14,850
3409	Temp Restricted-Peacemaking	\$23,086		\$23,086
3411	Temp Restricted-RacialJusticEv	\$2,530		\$2,530
3425	Temp Restricted-CREM	\$33,141		\$33,141
3431	Temp Restricted-Just.Good.Food	\$2,875		\$2,875
3441	Temp Restricted-SS Scholarship	\$13,989		\$13,989
3530a	Academy-Leadership Dev. Prog.	\$14,018		\$14,018
var q	Quad Accounts	\$36,894		\$36,894
3412	Temp Rest. - Restore Afro Am.	\$184,248	\$184,130	\$119
3413	Temp Rest. - Restore Indigenous	\$214,906	\$214,766	\$140
3770	Perm Restricted-Perry Trust	\$617,935	\$617,935	\$0
3771	Perm Restricted-JamesBlackFund	\$372,664	\$427,555	-\$54,891
3772	Perm Restricted-WmRiningerFund	\$10,953	\$13,569	-\$2,617
3773	Perm Restricted-M&HE Rininger	\$4,442	\$4,093	\$349
3777	Perm Restricted-Culver Fund	\$1,257	\$1,446	-\$189
3778	Perm Restricted-Drury Fund	\$3,069	\$3,531	-\$462
3779	Perm Restricted-Willcox Fund	\$54,587	\$62,795	-\$8,208
3781	Perm Restricted-Moderator Fund	\$2,818	\$2,504	\$314
3782	Perm Restricted-Leaders' Fund	\$6,227	\$6,123	\$104
3783	Perm Restricted-LouiseCox Fund	\$12,895	\$12,838	\$57
3784	Perm Restricted-Salisbury Fund	\$154,231	\$177,421	-\$23,191
3558	Temp Restricted - Hendrickson	\$159,349	\$163,773	-\$4,424
		<b>\$4,592,132</b>	<b>\$3,692,479</b>	<b>\$899,652</b>

- C. Longer-term Reserves should be invested in funds or portfolios expected to achieve superior rates of return in the marketplace relative to the achieve market returns.

Dollars that the organization expects not to draw upon over the succeeding four or more years should be invested in ways that are expected to achieve a higher than market-average ratio of return (income and appreciation) relative to risk (downward fluctuation) over a minimum horizon of 5 years.

Appropriate investment instruments would include proven equity funds or actively managed portfolios of equity and other securities.

**III. Spending Policy:** That the Synod of Lakes and Prairies establish a Spending Policy as follows:

- A. Income and capital appreciation associated with unrestricted mid-term and longer-term investments may be used to support the operating and ministry needs of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.
  - 1. Investment portfolios associated with these funds should be managed in a manner that allows them to maintain and/or grow their portfolio values on a real basis (inflation adjusted) while concurrently providing annual sources of income for the Synod. For this reason, the amount of earnings made available to the Synod from year to year should be limited to rate (percentage of portfolio value) that is less than the expected average annual rate of return, net of average annual inflation.
  - 2. The level of investment income available for the Synod to place in its annual budget will be called the Spending Rate. This rate should be recommended each year by the Finance Committee and approved by the Synod Assembly during each year's budgeting process.<sup>2</sup>
- B. In the event that operating funds and near-term reserve levels at the Synod remain adequate without the actual transfer of assets to operating accounts, budgeted investment earnings will be moved from the Designated Reserve into the Operating Fund in the Synod's financial statements but may remain invested and needn't be moved into operating or near-term reserve accounts.
- C. In the event that the budgeted amount of investment income creates or adds to an operating surplus in the Operating Fund by the end of the financial year, only that amount necessary to balance revenue and expenses will be transferred between the Designated Reserve and Operating Fund on the Synod's books.

**IV. Authority to Invest:**

- A. The Director of Financial Services, in consultation with the Finance Committee and the Synod Executive, may invest up to one-half of each of the restricted funds listed in #1, Westminster Fund, R. P. Perry Fund and the Endowment for Native American Scholarships in any of a list of mutual funds approved by the Finance Committee. Any movement of funds out of the New Covenant Funds to another mutual fund will be reported to the Synod Assembly at the next stated meeting of the Synod. Upon the approval of the Finance Committee, the Director of Financial Services may invest unrestricted funds in #1, Westminster Fund and Endowment in Native American Scholarships in a loan to the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation, Madison, WI.
- B. The Director of Financial Services, in consultation with the Synod Executive and Chair of the Finance Committee, may invest cash assets in excess of those needed for current and projected disbursements in national and state banks whose deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the spending rate approved supporting the 2022 Synod budget was 4.5% of the portfolio value. Comparatively, at the time that the 2022 Synod budget was prepared, the annualized rate of return over the 3.25 years since investing with the New Covenant Trust Company (80%/20% equities composition) has been 11.8% net of fees. Net of 2.20% annualized inflation over the same period, the historic real return has exceeded this spending rate by 460 basis points per year.

Insurance Corporation (FDIC), savings and loan associations whose deposits are insured by the Saving Association Insurance Fund (SAIF), government (U.S. and/or state and municipal) securities, government agencies, high grade government securities based mutual funds, repurchase agreements (collateralized with US government securities) with national banks, commercial paper (rated A-1 by Standard and Poor's and/or P-1 by Moody's), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the New Covenant Funds of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

- C. The Synod may delegate management and investment decisions to one or more external agents, such as a bank, investment advisor, investment manager or custodian, except where prohibited by the terms of a gift instrument. The Synod will act in good faith and with the care an ordinarily prudent person in like position would exercise in its (i) selection, continuance, or termination of any external agent (including assessing the agent's independence and any conflicts of interest such agent has or may have<sup>3</sup>; (ii) establishment of the scope and terms of delegation, including compensation; and (iii) monitoring of the agent's performance and compliance with the scope and terms of the delegation.
- D. Any external agents shall provide the Director of Financial Services / Treasurer with reports on investment performance on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, and more frequently if so requested. The Finance Committee will assess at least annually the performance and independence of any external agent, including any conflicts of interest it may have. Any actual or potential conflicts of interest involving a member of the Synod or Synod Staff with respect to the external agent must be disclosed and resolved before making decisions to employ or continue to employ such agent.
- E. The Synod shall make every effort to follow the policies of the General Assembly regarding social responsibilities and ensure that investments are aligned with the policies of the Mission Responsibility Through Investments (MRTI) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and support the broader MRTI mission. To this end:
  - 1. Portfolios should be comprised of ownership in firms whose products, services, investments, and practices align with MRTI guidelines (adhere to General Assembly Divestment/Proscription Lists);
  - 2. Wherever practical, investment selection should employ "positive" screens that seek out companies for investment based on their approach to environmental responsibility, fair-hiring practices and efforts to support international human rights standards; and
  - 3. Wherever practical, investment funds or portfolio management accountabilities should be placed within fiduciary agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in order that MRTI corporate engagement and shareholder advocacy efforts can be strengthened to encourage companies to protect the most vulnerable, care for creation, and promote peace.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the Synod should consider whether any director, officer or key employee has any business or personal relationships with the external agent that the Board might reasonably expect to interfere with its ability to properly monitor or assess the external agent's performance or receive uncompromised investment advice from the external agent.

4. Any movement of funds out of the New Covenant Funds or New Covenant Trust Company managed portfolios to other mutual funds or investment managers should be based on comparative 5-year and 10-year annualized returns experienced in funds or portfolios that are similarly aligned with MRTI guidelines. Such changes will be reported to the Synod Assembly at the next stated meeting of the Synod.
- F. Policy Review: That the Finance Committee shall review this policy at least every two years, including the re-assessment of operating fund, operating reserve, designated account coverage, and the performance of longer-term investments in relation to risk and return goals.

### **Chapter 3: LOAN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

#### **I. Synod Loan Fund**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“Synod”) has established a loan fund known as the Capital Loan Fund.

#### **II. Purpose**

The purpose of the Capital Loan Fund is to be used as a secondary alternative to the loan programs offered by the PC(USA)’s Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program in assisting eligible borrowers to acquire or improve real property. This includes acquisition of real estate for building sites for church uses, construction of new buildings, renovation and improvement of existing structures and mortgage assistance for certain eligible staff. The Capital Loan Fund ordinarily shall not be used for institutional programs or operating expenses.

The primary consideration for loan approval is the borrower’s ability to repay the loan. It is not being kind to the borrower to approve a loan that has a poor chance of full repayment. This is not the only consideration for loan approval, however. The Synod believes that churches that request assistance (in the form of loans) from the denomination should also be generous supporters of Presbyterian mission. The funds available for loans are made possible by the generosity of Presbyterians in past generations. The Synod believes it is only fitting that we honor their gifts by making loans available to churches that participate in the connectedness that is one of the basic tenets of being Presbyterian. The Synod does not have any hard-and-fast requirements for mission giving but will look on each case individually.

#### **III. Eligible Borrowers**

Preference is given in the following order, based upon availability and/or projected availability of funds:

- A. Presbyterian churches and presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod for the acquisition of sites, the construction, maintenance, and renovation of church buildings, educational units, and dwellings owned by churches to house ministers. Priority will be given to churches that are unable to secure commercial loans and depending on the importance of the project to presbytery mission.
- B. Property owned, in whole or in part, by the Synod.
- C. Subsidiary and affiliated entities of the Synod or presbyteries, provided that there is adequate oversight and that the parent body assumes liability and responsibility for the loan.

- D. Regular Synod executive, administrative, and program staff, executives of presbyteries of the Synod and other persons called to positions by a presbytery of the Synod who are required to relocate their residence for the benefit of the Synod or presbytery. Loans to persons called to positions by a presbytery will be made upon request of the presbytery and certification that presbytery funds are not available for this purpose. Interim and temporary staff are not eligible.
- E. Called pastors or associate pastors of churches within the Synod who are required to relocate their residence for the benefit of the church, upon request of the Executive/General Presbyter and/or the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry or its equivalent, including verification that the Presbytery does not have funds for this purpose. Interim and temporary positions are not eligible.

#### **IV. Limitations**

- A. Documentation of the ability of the borrower to repay the loan is required.
- B. The Finance Committee is authorized to set limitations on the maximum loan to any one entity so long as the maximum is no more than 5% of the total fund balance in the Loan Fund.
- C. In the event a property is sold, or the congregation dissolved, or the property ceases to be used for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission purposes, the loan is immediately due and payable in full.

#### **V. Terms**

- A. Interest rate: The interest rate shall be determined from time to time by the Synod. Synod may choose to establish a lower interest rate for loans of a term less than the maximum allowed under this policy. The interest rate for any particular loan shall be set at the time of loan approval and shall ordinarily remain in effect for the term of the loan or ten (10) years, whichever is less. Renegotiation of the interest rate and other terms will be considered by Synod if requested by the borrower. Renegotiation of the interest rate will not be approved more than once every ten (10) years. If a lower interest rate is granted, ordinarily the monthly payment will remain the same, and the Synod will reserve the right to raise the interest rate to not more than the rate in the mortgage notes if the Synod raises interest rates to new borrowers.
- B. Term: The maximum term for an interest rate shall ordinarily be ten years. Terms longer than ten years may be approved with an interest rate adjustment due at the end of ten years. In such cases, the Synod will extend the loan for a similar term at the interest rate in effect at that time, if the borrower has made payments in agreement with the terms of the loan during the first ten years.
- C. Amortization: All loans shall normally be amortized on a monthly basis, except as otherwise provided. Ordinarily, amortization periods will not be longer than 20 years.
- D. Security: Ordinarily, loans exceeding \$100,000.00, except Bridge Loans as authorized in this policy, shall be secured by a mortgage/deed of trust on premises owned by the borrower, unless authorized by Synod as a specific exception to this policy. The Synod may require a guarantor or other security in specific cases.
- E. Priority: The Synod's mortgage/deed of trust shall be a first lien on the borrower's property, except that the Synod will take a subordinate position to commercial, General Assembly, and/or Investment and Loan Program loans.
- F. The Synod may add such other terms and conditions, as it deems advisable on specific loans.

- G. Prepayment: All loans may be prepaid in full or in part without penalty. Partial prepayments will be applied first to outstanding interest and the balance to principal. As a result, the payment period will be shortened, but no payments may be delayed or skipped. This is referred to as applying partial prepayments in inverse order of maturity.
- H. Construction Guidelines: Plans for new church buildings and/or major renovations to existing church buildings must be in substantial accord with the guidelines set forth by the General Assembly Church Loan Program for construction guidelines, energy conservation, and handicap accessibility.

## **VI. Application Process**

### **A. Loan Application Forms**

- 1. Potential borrowers shall submit applications for loans on the appropriate application form. The forms are to be obtained from the office of the Executive Presbyter or from the Synod Director of Financial Services.
- 2. The Finance Committee of Synod may require such additional documentation, as it deems advisable.

### **B. Presbytery Approval**

- 1. Church Loans. The session, the congregation, and the presbytery shall approve applications for church loans. The presbytery shall forward the application to Synod's Director of Financial Services.
- 2. Presbytery Loans. Applications for presbytery projects/entities shall be approved by the presbytery and be forwarded to Synod's Director of Financial Services.

## **VII. Church Development Loans: (Site acquisition)**

- A. The Synod will not loan more than \$250,000 for any one church development site acquisition loan.
- B. Ordinarily, Synod will participate up to 45% of a site acquisition loan provided General Assembly will participate with at least an equal amount, and that presbytery's participation be a 10% minimum of the site acquisition cost for new church development and that either the presbytery or the church will have a minimum 10% participation in the site acquisition for a church redevelopment.
- C. A site acquisition loan for a new church development will be for a period up to 25 years. No principal payment is required for the first five years. The loan will be amortized over the last 20 years. Interest will be at 1% per annum for years one through five; interest will be 2% per annum for years six through ten; interest will be 3% for years eleven through fifteen; interest will be 4 % per annum for years sixteen through twenty; and interest will be 5% per annum for years twenty-one through twenty-five. At no time will the interest rate exceed the amount that would be charged on general construction loans.
- D. A site acquisition loan for a church that has been designated by its presbytery as a redevelopment project will be for a period of up to 25 years. The payment terms and interest rate will be determined on a case-by-case basis, giving consideration to the financial condition of the church and the ability of the presbytery to assist.

## **VIII. Disbursement of Loan Funds**

### **A. Evidence of Title (required of secured loans)**

1. Abstract of Title/Registered Property Report. The borrower shall provide an up-to-date Abstract of Title/Registered Property Report for the subject premises, containing current searches for taxes, assessments, judgments, bankruptcies and tax liens.
2. Title Insurance. In the alternative, the borrower may provide a commitment for a mortgagee's policy of title insurance in the amount of the loan.
3. The borrower must have good and marketable title to its property, such that the mortgage/deed of trust will be a valid lien on the premises.

### **B. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws**

The borrower shall provide a copy of the entity's current Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The borrower must comply with all provisions of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws relating to the encumbering of its real property.

### **C. Insurance**

The borrower shall provide proof of coverage of adequate hazard and liability insurance, naming the Synod as an additional insured.

### **D. Documents**

1. Note The borrower shall execute a note in favor of the Synod containing the terms of the loan in a form satisfactory to the Synod.
2. Mortgage/Deed of Trust Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the borrower shall provide security for the loan in the form of a mortgage or deed of trust in favor of the Synod in a form satisfactory to the Synod.
3. Other The borrower shall provide such other documents as required by the Synod, such as sworn construction statement, mechanic's lien waivers, evidence of the action of the borrower authorizing the loan and encumbrance in recordable form, evidence of the authority of authorized signers, etc., as are required by the Synod.

### **E. Congregational/Presbytery Approval**

The borrower shall provide verification in the form of certified copies of minutes, or affidavits of appropriate officers, as required by Synod, that the members of a congregation have duly approved pursuant to proper notice the loan and encumbrance of real property showing compliance with state law, the Book of Order, and its own Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Presbytery approval is to be obtained prior to Synod action.

### **F. Execution of Documents**

The loan documents (note and mortgage/deed of trust) shall be executed by duly authorized officers of the borrower. This will normally be a President/Moderator and Secretary/Clerk. The borrower must duly authorize execution of loan documents by other persons.



#### G. Other Requirements

In specific cases, the Synod may require a survey of the subject premises, showing that there are no encroachments, builder's risk insurance, proof of workers' compensation coverage, verification of other loan approvals, building plans and specifications, mission strategy, capital fund campaign, or such other and further requirements that a prudent lender would require under similar circumstances.

#### H. Disbursement of Loan Proceeds

Loan proceeds will not be disbursed until all of the above requirements have been satisfied and the loan documents duly executed. The Synod may disburse the loan proceeds directly to the borrower, to an escrow or disbursing agent, or to a lien holder to satisfy prior encumbrances. Disbursement of loan proceeds must be made within twelve months of Synod approval; otherwise, approval will be reconsidered by Synod before disbursement and the interest rate reset at the rate then in effect.

#### I. Repayment Procedure

The borrower will make payments directly to the Synod at its office unless otherwise directed by the Synod. Payments are due by the date stated in the loan documents. The Synod will furnish an amortization schedule to the borrower.

#### J. Loan Costs

The borrower is responsible for the payment of the costs incurred in completing and perfecting the loan. This includes abstracting and/or title insurance premiums, filing fees, mortgage registration or other taxes, if any, escrow fees, insurance, attorney fees incurred by the Synod, and such other costs as are reasonably required to make the loan.

## **IX. Guidelines for Staff Equity Type Loans**

- A. The purpose of this policy is to provide satisfactory housing to elected Synod and presbytery staff (this type of loan is available only to Synod or presbytery staff) when previous circumstances did not permit an accumulation of funds necessary to meet the purchase of a home.

The Synod will invest in the staff's residence by providing a loan with no periodic repayment of principal or interest. The loan will come due within six months after the dissolution of the staff's relationship, upon sale or transfer of the property by the staff person, upon the staff person's no longer using the property as his or her principal place of residence, or at the end of five years (subject to renewal), whichever comes first. The provision that the loan will come due after dissolution of the staff's relationship shall not be effective, if s/he remains an eligible individual in the new position. Likewise, the loan will not come due, in the case of a New Church Development organizing pastor when the church is chartered if s/he becomes the called pastor of the same church.

- B. The staff person is responsible for full payment of taxes, insurance, property maintenance, and all other encumbrances. The Synod makes no representation regarding the tax implications to that staff person that may arise from this type of loan.
- C. The staff person will consult with, and secure approval from, the Finance Committee of Synod for any capital improvements. Documentation shall be presented for the purpose of negotiating the value such that improvements may add to the property and how that affects the Synod's interest in the premises. If this consultation and approval are not secured prior to the making of capital improvements, the Synod may choose to ignore such improvements in determining its interest in the premises at the time of the repayment of the loan.
- D. The Synod shall be named as an additional insured on the fire and extended coverage insurance policy on the premises.
- E. The terms of the Synod's loan shall clearly require payment of the pro rata share of the net proceeds defined as gross sale price less commission and reasonable and customary closing costs to seller. In no event shall the return to the Synod exceed the amount allowed by law. If the borrower decides to fully or partially finance a sale of the property, the Synod's loan must be repaid in full. If the borrower wants to make a partial or total prepayment of this loan (before the date in paragraph A), the current value of the property will be determined by averaging two or three professional appraisals of the property, less the average sales commission charged by realtors in the area. The cost of the appraisals will be shared equally between the borrower and the Synod.
- F. Memorandum of Understanding and Terms
  1. A Memorandum of Understanding, accompanying the mortgage loan, will itemize major repairs, upkeep and other terms and conditions that may be negotiated and be the responsibility of the borrower purchasing the home.
  2. The terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding are to be approved by the Synod Executive and the Director of Finance. The loan shall be secured by note, mortgage and other documentation as required.
  3. The maximum amount of any loan will be \$50,000.00 but may not exceed 25% of the purchase price. The staff person will pay all legal fees and other costs.

- G. This type of assistance will not be provided when the staff person has adequate net worth to obtain conventional financing of his/her residential housing purchase. Persons requesting this type of loan assistance will be required to submit a personal financial statement, disclosing all assets and liabilities. Synod may determine, at its sole discretion, whether or not a loan under the terms of these guidelines shall be granted. This policy is subject to the loan being valid under the laws of the state in which it is to be placed.

#### **X. Guidelines for Other Loans to Individuals (Section III, paragraphs D & E)**

- A. Maximum loan will be \$125,000. Depending upon circumstances and the recommendation of the Executive/General Presbyter, the maximum loan granted may be less.
- B. Terms: Ordinarily, the terms will be the same as in Section V of this policy and the interest rate will be the same as a loan available to churches.
- C. The loan will come due within six months after the dissolution of the staff relationship, upon sale or transfer of the property by the staff person, upon the staff person's no longer using the property as his or her principal place of residence, whichever comes first. The provision that the loan will come due after dissolution of the staff relationship shall not be effective, if s/he remains an eligible individual in the new position.
- D. The staff person is responsible for full payment of taxes, insurance, property maintenance, and all other encumbrances. The Synod makes no representation regarding the tax implications to that staff person that may arise from the loan.
- E. The Synod shall be named as an additional insured on the fire and extended coverage insurance policy on the premises.
- F. A loan will not be provided when the staff person has adequate net worth to obtain conventional financing of his/her residential housing purchase. Persons requesting loan assistance will be required to submit a personal financial statement, disclosing all assets and liabilities, updated annually. Synod may determine, at its sole discretion, whether or not a loan under the terms of these guidelines shall be granted. This policy is subject to the loan being valid under the laws of the state in which it is to be placed.

#### **XI. Bridge Loans**

At the sole discretion of the Synod, Bridge Loans may be approved by Synod. A Bridge Loan is defined as temporary financing for an eligible borrower until permanent financing can be obtained. A Bridge Loan may be secured or unsecured at the option of the Synod.

##### **A. Term**

The Bridge Loan will be for a period not to exceed the earlier of 30 days following the receipt of permanent loan proceeds or one year. This period may be extended by action of Synod. All other terms, including lending limits but excluding security, will be the same as other loans in this policy.

**B. Bridge Loans for Eligible Staff**

Bridge Loans for Eligible Staff will be for the purpose of assisting a staff member when his/her previous home cannot reasonably be sold in time to allow the equity in the unsold home to be used in the new location. The maximum amount of this type of loan is the lesser of \$250,000 or the equity in the unsold home. The due date is the earlier of 30 days following the closing of the sale of the old home or one year, unless extended by action of Synod.

**XII. Administration**

- A. The Synod Director of Financial Services shall be the primary contact for borrowers and potential borrowers and shall provide information regarding other Presbyterian loan programs.
- B. Approvals – All loans that are approved shall be reported to the Synod and recorded in the Minutes of the Synod.
  - 1. Ordinarily, loan applications received within 30 days before a Synod meeting shall be approved by the Synod upon recommendation from the Finance Committee.
  - 2. For Synod Loans in amounts not to exceed \$50,000.00, approval between meetings may be authorized by approval of the Synod Treasurer and any one member of the Finance Committee. This approval shall also extend to any application for loan(s) from General Assembly connected with the Synod loan.
  - 3. For loans in excess of \$50,000.00, approval between meetings may be authorized by majority agreement of the Finance Committee.
  - 4. For loan applications that require Synod approval but do not request a loan from the Synod (e.g., General Assembly loans) approval between meetings may be authorized by approval of the Synod Director of Financial Services and any one member of the Finance Committee.
- C. Loan Participation - Upon request by the borrower and approval of the Director of Financial Services and any one member of the Synod Finance Committee, the Synod may purchase a participation in a loan made by the Church Loan Program of the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment & Loan Program, Inc. in an amount not more than the amount approved by the Synod as prescribed by this policy.
- D. The Finance Committee shall also have the authority to act on behalf of the Synod in any manner that is consistent with these loan policies and guidelines. All actions taken between Synod meetings will be reported to the next Synod meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. The Synod Finance Committee shall have complete authority to interpret this policy and the applicability of this policy to any loan request. Any interpretation of this policy may be appealed to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Synod.

**XIII. Effective Date**

This policy is effective for all loans approved on or after May 3, 2017.

**Chapter 4: LOAN DELINQUENCY, AND RECAPTURE**

- I. Purpose: Loan Accounts that are past due represent the single biggest risk to the Synod Loan Service. Even slightly past due accounts must be taken seriously, and substantially past due or nonperforming accounts jeopardize the loan service's financial health, our relationship with the Synod's Bank and with our auditors, and our ability to fund new loans.

Congregation, Presbytery, and Synod approvals must be done with the clear understanding that no matter how urgent and worthy a need, a poorly performing loan jeopardizes the Synod's ability to fund all other loans, many of which will be just as urgent and worthy. All approvers must be mindful that all loan security provisions will be enforced, including requiring payments by guarantors and foreclosures.

Strict enforcement of collection procedures is seen as a service to a church and its Presbytery. Every attempt will be made to help a borrower identify and address any financial problems before they are insurmountable, preventing further delinquencies that may require more drastic action.

Any exceptions to this procedure, such as a loan modification request, must be submitted to the Finance Committee via formal request from the borrower; staff will not accept any verbal/informal requests.

## **II. Loan Information:**

The Director of Finance will:

- A. Quarterly: Provide Loan Aging report to all Presbytery Executives/Stated Clerk
- B. Bi-annually: Review status of Past Due Accounts at every Finance Committee Meeting
- C. Annually: Review status of all accounts for possible adjustment to "Write Off for Bad debt" each year with the Finance Committee so they can take appropriate action.
- D. Annually: Request, collect and review Annual Financial Statements of all loans with balance over \$1,000,000 or with more than one past due payment during the previous calendar year and report to Finance Committee.

## **IV. 30 Days Past Due**

Carbon copy Loan Statement, marked Past Due, to Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk for information and action.

## **V. 30 Days Past Due Repeatedly**

- A. Send letter of concern with loan statement, copied to Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk and Synod Director of Financial Services
- B. Annual review of financial statements of delinquent party

## **VI. 60 Days Past Due**

- A. All of above, plus...
- B. Letter of concern to Clerk of Session, copied to Pastor, Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk, Synod Executive, Synod Director of Financial Services, and Finance Committee Chair
- C. Phone contact with presbytery regarding resolution of past due status
- D. Begin charging interest on past due interest table, preventing further delinquencies that may require more drastic action.

## **VII. 90 DAYS PAST DUE**

- A. All of above, plus...
- B. Phone contact directly with Church Representative regarding non-payment status

- C. Demand Letter to Clerk of Session, with copies to Pastor, Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk, Synod Executive, and Finance Committee Chair
- D. Monthly review of financial statements

### **VIII. 120 Days Past Due**

- A. All of above, plus...
- B. Written request to Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk and Church for consultation within 30 days. Negotiate the following possibilities (not limited to) depending upon the loan type and situation:
- C. Formulate official request to Finance Committee for specific forbearance. Forgiveness of principal should be considered in conjunction with direction and any agreed upon participation from individual presbyteries.
- D. Presbytery to assume payments
- E. Alternative funding to cover debt
- F. Sale of Assets

## **Chapter 5: GRANTS/LOANS: Synod Emergency Fund Between Synod Meetings**

### **I. Procedure**

- A. All requests for grants or loans from the Synod Emergency Fund between Synod meetings will be handled as follows:
- B. All requests shall be cleared by the Office of the Executive/General Presbyter affected by the emergency.
- C. All requests shall be considered and approved or rejected by action of the Synod Finance Committee in consultation with the Synod Executive and the Executive/General Presbyter of the affected presbytery.
- D. All grants or loans from this fund shall be reported by the Moderator of the Finance Committee immediately to the officers of Synod and reported to the next meeting of the Synod following the grant or loan for its review and ratification.

### **II. Guidelines**

- A. Criteria for Grants: The Finance Committee of the Synod, in consultation with the Synod Executive and the Executive/General Presbyter of the affected presbytery, shall determine at the time of the approval of the request for the emergency funds whether or not the payment will be a grant or a loan.
  - 1. If the payment is to be a grant, disbursement is to be made out of the Synod Emergency Fund without expectation of repayment.
  - 2. If payment is to be in the form of a loan, it shall be made out of the Synod Emergency Fund and the Finance Committee of the Synod, in consultation with the Synod Executive and the Executive/General Presbyter of the affected presbytery, shall determine the terms and conditions of repayment of the emergency loan.

### **III. Definition of Emergency**

An emergency is defined as any unexpected or unforeseen event, happening or circumstance requiring immediate action and payment of funds to alleviate it.

## **Chapter 6: PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT**

RESOLVED, that all presbyteries within The Synod of Lakes and Prairies be encouraged to pay the entire Per Capita Apportionment for each year by March 1 of that year. It is recognized, however, that this can create hardships for presbyteries. Therefore, it is the policy of The Synod of Lakes and Prairies that the following schedule be established for payment of the Per Capita Apportionment:

At least 25% of the Annual Per Capita not later than March 1

At least 50% of the Annual Per Capita not later than May 1

At least 75% of the Annual Per Capita not later than July 1

Payment in full is due not later than September 1

However, in no event shall a presbytery pay a smaller percentage by these dates than the presbytery has received from its constituent churches.

## **Chapter 7: ATTORNEY SERVICES AGREEMENT**

The Synod may from time to time seek to utilize the services of an attorney to provide regular or special services. The following is the language that has been approved for inclusion in service agreements in such instances.

WHEREAS Synod desires to utilize the services of an attorney to provide regular and special services to it; and

WHEREAS Synod is a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Minnesota, conducting business in the States of Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS Attorney is duly licensed to practice law in the State of Minnesota, and is familiar with the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements herein contained, the parties hereto do hereby agree as follows:

- 1.. The Synod has and does hereby employ and retain Attorney as its legal counsel for and during a period commencing at the conclusion of the Synod Annual Meeting and ending at such time as either party hereto cancels this Agreement as provided in paragraph 10.
2. The Attorney agrees to render and perform all legal services necessary and proper for the protection of the interest and property of the Synod whenever and to the extent requested and required by the Synod and for the transaction of the business of the Synod, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. To attend meetings as requested by the Synod Executive and/or the Synod Treasurer (hereinafter referred to as the Executive), whether face-to-face or conference calls. To give advice on all legal matters at said meetings;
  - b. To consult with the Synod Executive as either of them shall from time-to-time request;
  - c. To consult with such other persons, officers, or employees of the Synod as authorized by the Executive;
  - d. To review gifts by transfers, bequests, or otherwise and advise in the proper disposition of the same;

- e. To recommend the appointment of persons to serve as registered agents for the Synod;
  - f. To assist as requested with loan processes and documents;
  - g. To serve as liaison with counsel employed by the Synod's insurer involved in any litigation where the insurance company is determined to have a duty to defend the Synod;
  - h. To assist to the extent feasible, with consideration of the experience and expertise of the Attorney, with any other litigation involving the Synod;
  - i. At the request of the Synod Executive, to assist with any other legal matters of the Synod that is consistent with the experience and expertise of the Attorney;
  - j. To do any legal research necessary to properly counsel in the above matters.
3. Legal services performed on behalf of Synod shall be charged to Synod at an agreed upon rate. The Synod shall pay all out-of-pocket costs and expenses necessarily incurred by Attorney in the conduct of the Synod's business, including abstracting fees, recording fees, taxes, transportation, lodging, unusual copy requirements, long distance telephone tolls, and all other costs and disbursements.
  4. Services to be provided need not be provided personally by the Attorney. The Attorney will provide for other counsel with appropriate experience and expertise to be available when the Attorney is not available.
  5. In the event it is necessary or desirable to employ outside counsel for particular matters, the determination of which shall be made by Attorney. Attorney shall consult with the Executive regarding the employment of outside counsel.  
  
Employment of outside counsel is subject to approval of the Synod Executive. Attorney shall serve as liaison with such outside counsel and all communications shall be through Attorney.
  6. The Attorney is not authorized to perform services on behalf of the Synod unless such services are authorized, in advance, by the Synod Executive. Requests for legal services on behalf of the Synod by persons other than the Executive shall be referred to the Executive for approval before work commences.
  7. In those instances when the Synod lends money to a congregation, presbytery or individual, Synod's legal fees shall be charged to the borrower by Attorney pursuant to the Synod's loan policies.
  8. Attorney must at all times carry malpractice insurance in an amount not less than \$100,000/\$300,000 and will provide a certificate of existence of such insurance to the Synod.
  9. The Finance Committee of the Synod will annually review this Agreement and shall recommend any modifications to the Synod.
  10. If the Attorney's privilege to practice law is suspended or restricted within any state in which the Synod conducts its business, this agreement shall be immediately terminated. This Memorandum of Understanding may be canceled by either party on thirty (30) days' notice, in writing, to the other.
  11. It is understood by both parties hereto that Attorney is engaged in the general practice of law and this Agreement is not intended to limit his performing legal services for or on behalf of other



clients. Attorney may accept as clients any entity or person. However, at no time will Attorney perform legal services for another client that is in conflict with the business of the Synod.

12. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed to limit the Synod from consulting and/or contracting with any other attorney. Synod does agree to inform Attorney of such other contacts with attorneys when and if, in the opinion of the Synod Executive, it is appropriate.
13. If and when this agreement is terminated or not renewed, all documents relating to business performed under this agreement or any preceding agreement between the Synod and Attorney shall be promptly delivered to the Synod and shall be the property of the Synod.

## **Chapter 8: FULL FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Annual Full Financial Review: The commissioners shall cause a full and complete financial review of its financial statements and procedures to be performed annually by independent auditors in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

- A. The reviewer(s) shall be employed on written contract.
- B. The commissioners shall include in the Synod's annual budget all necessary expenses for carrying out the provisions of this section.
- C. The Finance Committee shall manage the annual financial review on behalf of the commissioners of the Synod, review and accept the completed audit, and present to the commissioners at its next stated meeting.
- D. The Stated Clerk shall retain on file the audit approved by the commissioners.

# **FUNDS AND FUND ADMINISTRATION**

## **Chapter 1: ENDOWMENT FOR NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIPS**

### **I. Objective:**

The objective of the Bicentennial Fund project is to provide scholarship funds for American Indian/Alaska Native students, from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Priority consideration will be given for students attending a seminary or a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) related college with the intent of pursuing full-time ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **II. Initial Funds:**

This endowment is established from undesignated Bicentennial Fund receipts in the amount of \$100,000.00 in April 1997.

### **III Investment of the Endowment:**

- A. At all times the endowment will be invested pursuant to the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, as revised from time-to-time. At the current time, principal of the Endowment for Native American Scholarships is invested in loan funding for the Synod's loan to Presbyterian House on the University of Wisconsin Madison campus. This loan currently pays a 4.60% interest return.
- B. That income and capital appreciation of the Endowment for Native American Scholarships shall be invested in the New Covenant Growth Fund of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.
- C. That the same spending policy as described in the Fiscal Accountability Policy (2.2) be applied to the earnings (income and capital appreciation) of the Endowment for Native American Scholarships, except that the proceeds be used as pursuant to the enabling Synod Action (12-133, April 7-9, 1997, page 555).

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation.

Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution in the form of scholarships will be administered by the Synod Committee on Racial Equity Ministries, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 2: JAMES BLACK ENDOWMENT**

### **I. History:**

Received from the former Synod of Iowa, this fund was established in 1919 and "is to be used for expenses of Christian Education in the state of Iowa to provide support for a Counsellor in Christian Education in the State of Iowa who devotes at least half-time in counselling churches who received salary aid from the Board of National Missions." (As per legal counsel, March 27, 1974) Mr. Black

was from Waterloo, IA and gave a number of contributions to this Fund while he was living. This purpose has been adjusted to work that supports a worker in the field of Christian Education in Iowa or “work for the children.”

## **II. Objective:**

Support Christian education in Iowa

## **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

## **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

## **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Transforming Communities; Vital Leaders Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 3: WILLIAM E. RININGER ENDOWMENT**

### **I. History:**

In 1983 \$25,000 was given as an endowment memorial to William E Rininger by Maude Rininger of Storm Lake, IA. 75% of the income is to go to national missions and 25% of the income was originally designated to go to the Westminster Foundation which was merged into the Synod of Iowa. The assets were transferred to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

### **II. Objective:**

To be used for campus ministry programs in the state of Iowa.

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 4: MAUDE & HE RININGER ENDOWMENT**

### **I. History:**

In 1983 an endowment memorial to Maude and HE Rininger was established upon the death of Maude Rininger of Storm Lake, IA. 75% of the income is to go to national missions and 25% of the income was originally designated to go to the Westminster Foundation which was merged into the Synod of Iowa. The assets were transferred to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

### **II. Objective:**

To be used for campus ministry programs in the state of Iowa.

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 5: LOUISE S. COX MEMORIAL FUND**

### **I. History:**

In 1977 Louise S. Cox of Wausau, WI gave \$500 to the United Presbyterian Foundation to permanently hold, invest and reinvest said gift for high income with safety as the Foundation shall determine at its sole discretion and to reinvest the net income paid on such investment during the lifetime of the donor. Following receipt of notice of the death of the donor, the Foundation shall pay the net income from such investment in quarterly payments to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies for its use as the said Synod shall decide. Louise Cox served as the Stated Clerk for the organizing meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

### **II. Objective:**

Unknown

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for

spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

**V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Synod Finance Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

**Chapter 6: EDWARD M. AND AVOLYN P. CULVER MEMORIAL FUND**

**I. History:**

In November 1993 Mr. and Mrs. Keith Daniels made a \$500 gift to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to establish a permanent restricted fund with the income designated to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This fund was established in honor of Mary Avolyn Daniels' parents.

**II. Objective:**

The Synod shall use the income "as it sees fit to celebrate an ecumenical ministry or event of a Presbyterian Church which is in partnership with another communion, with priority given to the United Methodist Church. The Synod may delegate this responsibility to a Presbytery within the bounds of the Synod. Should the Synod cease to have an active mission function, the net income shall be paid every other year to the presbytery in which Eau Claire, WI is located to administer according to the terms of this agreement.

**III. Investment of the Endowment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

**IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

**V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

**Chapter 7: CLIFFORD M. & MIRIAM L. DRURY FUND**

**I. History:**

In July 1975 Clifford M. Drury and Miriam L. Drury, who lived in Pasadena, CA, invested 100 shares of common stock of Tenneco, Inc., with the United Presbyterian Foundation. Clifford and Miriam received the income from the investment until their respective deaths. Beginning after their deaths the net income is distributed to the Synod of Southern California (1/3), the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (1/3) and San Francisco Theological Seminary (1/3).

## **II. Objective:**

To be used in its Christian higher education work within the bounds of the Synod.

## **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

Initially in the Pooled Income Fund. The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

## **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

## **Chapter 8: ORVILLE AND LORA WILCOX MEMORIAL FUND**

### **I. History:**

Established by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation effective September 30, 1986 with a final distribution from Orville's estate received in March 1988. "30% to the Synod Mission Causes of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies". Mr. Willcox placed no restrictions on how these funds were to be used by the Synod.

### **II. Objective:**

To be used as needed

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

Invested in Presbyterian Foundation. The Synod receives 30% of the quarterly income from the permanently invested fund. "After fifty (50) years from the establishment of the Orville and Lora Willcox Memorial Fund, the trustees of the Foundation, in their discretion, may dissolve this memorial and the trustees of the Foundation may use the principal of said memorial as directed by them."

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Synod Finance Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 9: WARD AND MADOLENE SALISBURY FUND**

### **I. History:**

This fund was established 12/20/1963 by Ward and Madolene Salisbury from Glidden, IA. Madolene died 2/3/89 and Ward died 10/25/07. The Synod receives 75% of the net income, the initial share being \$133,098.57 in 2008.

### **II. Objective:**

No restrictions on how the Synod uses these funds.

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

Presbyterian Foundation permanent endowment fund

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Synod Finance Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 10: R. P. PERRY ESTATE FUND**

### **I. History:**

This perpetual trust, was established in 1954 by the estate of Ralph P. Perry in memory of his wife, Helen Neely Perry, for the support and maintenance of the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation and University Presbyterian Church in Madison, WI “as long as there is a minister of said Presbyterian church whose belief conforms to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. as set forth in the confession of faith and constitution of said Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. If there is not such a minister, then the funds shall be used for Wisconsin Home Missions (interpreted legally to mean a mission that actually occurs in Wisconsin). In 1970 the funds were redirected to the Synod of Wisconsin for Home Missions upon the dissolution of the University Presbyterian Church. The Madison (ecumenical) Campus Ministry was created in 1970 and became a recipient of these funds. In May 1973 \$751.77 in cash was transferred to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies with the note that it “is principal and should be earning income” as well as a number of stocks upon the dissolution of the Synod of Wisconsin. Additional funds from the Vaughn-Marquis Estate Fund were transferred to the Perry Fund in September 1972. An additional \$20,000 was added from the estate of Mildred R. Perry (daughter of Ralph and Helen) in 1980.

## **II. Objective:**

The income from the fund is used to provide support for Christian work among the University of Wisconsin students at Madison in the Presbyterian (Reformed) tradition or local mission in Wisconsin (i.e., a Presbyterian campus minister). If there is no Presbyterian campus minister in Madison, then it is to be used for local mission in Wisconsin. (legal counsel September 17, 1976)

## **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

That the Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall maintain its current investments in the New Covenant Balanced Growth Fund or in a managed portfolio with an approximate allocation of 70% equities and 30% cash and fixed income securities through of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for the following restricted fund: R.P. Perry Estate Fund. Currently, funds are invested in a managed portfolio with Associated Bank at a 68% equities composition.

## **IV. Spending Policy:**

That the same spending policy as described in the Fiscal Accountability Policy (2.2) be applied to the earnings (income and capital appreciation) of the liquid assets of the R.P. Perry Estate Fund except that the proceeds be used as provided in the instruments creating the R.P. Perry Estate Fund. Since 2017, earnings have been reinvested within the portfolio of assets and an annual distribution equaling 4.25% of the prior-year-end balance of the Permanent Restricted Perry Estate Fund has been made to Presbyterian House on the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin.

Funds for annual distributions are debited monthly from the Permanent Restricted Perry Fund (dedicated net asset) and set aside in a dedicated payables account until distributions are made. Portfolio earnings and unrealized appreciation in portfolio values are recognized quarterly and allocated on a pro-rata basis to the Permanently Restricted Perry Fund and to Synod operations based on the ratio of Permanently Restricted Perry Estate Fund (net asset balances) and the total investment assets in the assets in the Perry Portfolio.

## **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution each year will be budgeted with Synod Assembly approval and administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 11: WESTMINSTER FUND**

### **I. History:**

In 1946 the Westminster Foundation was created as a non-profit corporation by the former Synod of Minnesota to carry out campus ministry on the campuses of the University of Minnesota. In conjunction with the establishment of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies in 1973, the new regional Synod assumed oversight of UMHE throughout the region. The assets and liabilities of the Westminster Foundation became part of the Synod, and the commissioners of the Synod became the voting members of the foundation. The Synod, at its fall 1999 meeting, received the recommendations of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and requested the board of directors of the Westminster Foundation to merge the corporation into the Synod. This plan of merger was approved on November 8, 1999 and the final meeting of the Westminster Foundation occurred on January 18, 2000. The Synod also authorized the sale of the building on the Minneapolis campus. The Synod also created a Synod designated endowment fund for post-secondary education ministry, and the proceeds



from the sale of the building, along with the assets of Westminster Foundation, are to be invested in this fund.

## **II. Objective:**

The Synod created a Synod designated endowment fund for post-secondary education ministry.

## **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

Begun in December 1977 with a deposit of \$183,000, the December 31, 1999 market value was \$731,369.89.

That the cash assets of the Westminster Fund be invested in the New Covenant Balanced Growth Fund, in a managed portfolio of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, or otherwise invested, except for funds needed for operating purposes. Net assets attributed to the Westminster Fund are currently invested as funding for the Synod's loan to Presbyterian House at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Interest income from the Synod's Presbyterian House loan is allocated proportionately for distribution according to the purpose of the individual funding sources. That portion of annual interest associated with funding provided by the Westminster Fund is set aside in a dedicated payables account for distribution to serve post-secondary educational ministries, at the direction of the committee for Strategic Service and Witness.

## **IV. Spending Policy:**

That the same spending policy as described in the Fiscal Accountability Policy (2.2) be applied to the earnings (income and capital appreciation) of the liquid assets of the Westminster Fund, except that the proceeds be used as designated by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

## **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution each year will be budgeted with Synod Assembly approval and administered Strategic Service and Witness, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 12. SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES MODERATOR'S MISSION FUND**

### **I. History:**

In December 1989 the Synod transferred \$450 to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to create a permanent fund. It was hoped that Synod Moderators would contribute to this fund.

### **II. Objective:**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall use the said income from the fund to support the mission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies as its Synod Steering Committee shall determine.

### **III. Investment of the Endowment:**

Gift is invested in a fund chosen by the Synod that places emphasis on reasonable long-term growth of capital and income by investing in all forms of securities with a substantial portion in common stocks as the Foundation shall determine in its sole discretion and to reinvest said income back into the principal of said gift until the principal reaches \$10,000. At such time the Foundation will pay the net income therefrom quarterly.

#### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

#### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Synod Steering Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

### **Chapter 13. SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES LEADER'S MISSION FUND**

#### **I. History:**

In December 1989 the Synod transferred \$450 to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to create a permanent fund. It was hoped that leaders who have served Synod over the years would like to contribute to the continued mission of the Synod.

#### **II. Objective:**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall use the said income from the fund to support the mission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies as its Synod Steering Committee shall determine.

#### **III. Investment:**

Gift is invested in a fund chosen by the Synod that places emphasis on reasonable long-term growth of capital and income by investing in all forms of securities with a substantial portion in common stocks as the Foundation shall determine in its sole discretion and to reinvest said income back into the principal of said gift until the principal reaches \$10,000. At such time the Foundation will pay the net income there quarterly.

#### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

#### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Synod Steering Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

### **Chapter 14. JOHN SINCLAIR MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT FUND**

#### **I. History:**

Fund was established in 1955.

## **II. Objective:**

Interest from the Fund is to be used for mission projects in the Cedar Rapids Area (as per letter dated September 20, 1977 from the Presbytery of East Iowa).

## **III. Investment:**

Funds are owned by the John Sinclair Memorial Endowment Fund at the Presbyterian Foundation. The Synod receives quarterly distributions as beneficiary from the Presbyterian Foundation. Distributions are set aside in a dedicated payables account associated with the Sinclair Memorial Fund.

## **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

## **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 15. BRUCE HENDRICKSON FUND**

### **I. History:**

Fund was established in 1955. Mrs. Hendrickson's established this Permanent Fund with the Foundation. The current distribution from Permanent Funds is 4.25%. The Synod is not directly the beneficiary of this permanent fund but serves as a financial pass-through. In 2017, when the gift was received by the Foundation, the Synod was asked to facilitate the administrator of the gifts.

### **II. Objective:**

Awardees are supposed to be candidates from Nebraska or the Synod. It is intended that the full amount of the distributions from the fund would be awarded each year.

### **III. Investment:**

The principal is held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the income is transmitted to the Synod.

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

The endowment will be guided by the Investment Policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This policy is intended to provide adequate funds for the mission envisioned while allowing for fluctuations in market prices and growth of the endowment to at least offset the effects of inflation. Funds available for spending which are not expended in any calendar year shall be available for spending in a subsequent period at the discretion of the body granted the authority for administrative oversight and distribution of funds. If the funds remain unspent for a period of three years or more, the Synod shall consider whether to disregard this authority and direct the funds to the principal.

## **V. Administration of Distributions:**

The funds available for distribution will be administered by the Strategic Service and Witness Committee, or as directed by action of the Synod Assembly.

Funds are owned by the Bruce Hendrickson Fund endowment at the Presbyterian Foundation. The Synod receives quarterly distributions as beneficiary from the Presbyterian Foundation. Distributions are set aside in a dedicated payables account until distributed at committee direction.

## **Chapter 16. RESTORATIVE ACTIONS FUND FOR AFRO-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

### **I. History:**

Fund was established in 2020 by a vote of the Synod Assembly. The purpose of the fund is to hold and invest dollars approved for surrender to Restorative Actions upon the establishment of a trust that will be managed at the discretion of trustees assigned from leadership within the Afro-American community.

### **II. Objective:**

To provide a source of principal and income generation for furthering the progress and flourishing of Afro-American communities and individuals in the region and nation.

### **III. Investment:**

Until the time that the fund's principal and accrued earnings are transferred to the trust account that is currently being established, funds will be invested in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion fund that has been created by the New Covenant Trust Company.

### **IV. Spending Policy:**

Until transferred to the trust that is currently being established, all earnings and appreciation will remain in this dedicated account and reinvested.

### **V. Administration of Distributions:**

Transfer of principal and accrued earnings in the fund will be made according to approval by the Synod Assembly.

## **Chapter 17. RESTORATIVE ACTIONS FUND FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

### **I. History:**

Fund was established in 2020 by a vote of the Synod Assembly. The purpose of the fund is to hold and invest dollars approved for surrender to Restorative Actions upon the establishment of a trust that will be managed at the discretion of trustees assigned from leadership within the indigenous community.

### **II. Objective:**

To provide a source of principal and income generation for furthering the progress and flourishing of Indigenous communities and individuals in the region and nation.

### **III. Investment:**

Until the time that the fund's principal and accrued earnings are transferred to the trust account that is currently being established, funds will be invested in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion fund that has been created by the New Covenant Trust Company.

**IV. Spending Policy:**

Until transferred to the trust that is currently being established, all earnings and appreciation will remain in this dedicated account and reinvested.

**V. Administration of Distributions:**

Transfer of principal and accrued earnings in the fund will be made according to approval by the Synod Assembly.

## **BUDGETED FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY SYNOD COMMITTEES**

### **Chapter 1: EMERGING MISSION FUND**

- A. Fund Purpose: The Emerging Mission Fund is a discretionary fund under the oversight of the Transforming Communities; Vital Leaders Committee intended for supporting emerging mission within the bounds of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.
- B. Source of Funds: Funds can be contributed from individuals and organizations. Additionally, the Synod makes contributions each year from its operating budget as appropriate to maintain targeted annual levels in the fund. All funds will be set aside in a dedicated payables account until distributed in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.
- C. Fund Name: This fund shall be known and administered as the “Emerging Mission Fund”
- D. Fund Award Guidelines
  - 1. Emerging Mission Priorities:
    - a. Priority is given to proposals that support leadership development, congregational vitality and/or mission, communication or fosters greater racial/ethnic equity and inclusion.
    - b. Top priority is given to efforts that further partnerships with the Synod or with other presbyteries in the bounds of the Synod.
  - 2. Emerging Mission Criteria:
    - a. Synod projects: Have at least three presbyteries/entities partnering with each other and committed to financially supporting the ministry
    - b. Presbytery projects: Have at least three congregations partnering with each other and committed to financially supporting the ministry
    - c. Congregational and community-based projects: This funding will allow a start to a project with evidence that it will be able to become self-funding.
    - d. Events/Training: There needs to be a plan as to how the event/training will address the needs of Presbyterian mission after the event/training.
    - e. In each case the emerging mission objective can be accomplished with the requested funding.
    - f. Funding can be requested for a maximum of three years, but the amount will be determined on an annual basis based on number of requests and evaluation of annual report.
  - 3. Dates: The deadline for submission is April 15 or September 15 in order for applications to be reviewed at the next scheduled Synod meeting.
  - 4. Approval: Approval of funding shall depend upon the application meeting fund award guidelines and the availability of funds with prudent consideration of the need for fund reserves for other funding requests.
- E. Fund Administration
  - 1. The Transforming Communities; Vital Leaders Committee shall appoint 3 or 4 of its members who shall serve as the Emerging Mission Fund Sub- Committee.

2. The Emerging Mission Fund Sub-Committee has the authority to review and determine all applications for an award from this Fund in accordance with this Fund's Award Guidelines and available funds.
3. The Emerging Mission Fund Sub-Committee shall be staffed by the Synod office and reports to the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee.
4. The Emerging Mission Sub-Committee will report its actions to the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee.
5. The Emerging Mission Sub-Committee can choose to seek the input and/or action of the Transforming Communities; Vital Leaders Committee if it so desires.

E. Fund Award Process and Evaluation

1. Applications must be submitted on the application form.
2. Applicant must provide evidence of compliance with the guidelines of this fund.
3. Applicant must agree to provide a report on the funds and the status of the mission by September 15 annually.
4. Application must be submitted to the Synod office at 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, MN 55022.
5. Applicant will be notified of the Emerging Mission Fund Sub-Committee decision by the Synod office.
6. Distribution of funding for approved applications shall be facilitated by the Synod office.

F. Fund Balance Carryover Guidelines: Unexpended funds will expire at the end of each fiscal year.

## **Chapter 2: SHARED GRANT/EMERGENCY FUND**

- A. Fund Purpose: The Shared Grant/Emergency Fund is a discretionary fund under the oversight of the Transforming Communities; Vital Leaders Committee intended for supporting emergency needs within the bounds of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.
- B. Fund Name: This fund shall be known and administered as the "Shared Grant/Emergency Fund"
- C. Source of Funds: Funds can be contributed from individuals and organizations. Additionally, the Synod makes contributions each year from its operating budget as appropriate to maintain targeted annual levels in the fund. All funds will be set aside in a dedicated payables account until distributed in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.
- D. Fund Award Guidelines
  1. Shared Grant/Emergency Criteria:
    - a. Priority is given to proposals that support one-time emergency needs such as significant medical bills or acts of nature. This does not include dental procedures or uncomplicated pregnancy/deliveries.
    - b. Top priority is given to people/councils with few, if any, other sources of funding to support the need.

2. Shared Grant/Emergency Process:

- a. Generally shared grants include two councils in addition to the Board of Pensions. The Synod expects that the congregation and presbytery will be the two participating councils. When that is not possible, then the following process will be followed:
  - i. The Stated Clerk or Executive Presbyter will contact the Director of Leadership Development to see if there are Synod Funds available.
    - 1) If funds are available, the Shared Grant application will be submitted to Director of Leadership Development.
    - 2) If funds are not available or the criteria/priorities are not met, the Synod will be unable to partner in the Shared Grant and the Director of Leadership Development will notify the Board of Pensions and Presbytery accordingly.
  - ii. Under no circumstances should a Shared Grant application be submitted to the Board of Pensions with the Synod as an expected partner prior to receiving approval from the Synod.
  - iii. The Synod reserves the right to respond to the presbytery with a recommendation that the shared amount or request of the Synod be adjusted.
3. Approval: Approval of funding shall depend upon the application meeting fund award guidelines and the availability of funds with prudent consideration of the need for fund reserves for other funding requests.

E. Fund Administration

1. If a request clearly meets the criteria, the Director of Leadership Development will have the authority to approve on behalf of the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee.
2. If there is a question about whether it meets the criteria, the Director of Leadership Development will convene a conference call with an elected sub-committee of the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee to discuss the application and make a decision.
3. The Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee shall appoint 3 or 4 of its members who shall serve as the Shared Grant/Emergency Sub- Committee.
4. Due to the confidential nature of most requests, applications will not be emailed to the sub-committee, but the information will be shared by phone when needed.
5. The Shared Grant/Emergency Sub-Committee shall be staffed by the Director of Leadership Development and reports to the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee.
6. The Director of Leadership Development will communicate approvals made to the Shared Grant/Emergency Sub-Committee in a timely fashion so that they are aware of the status of the fund.
7. The Shared Grant/Emergency Sub-Committee and Director of Leadership Development will report its actions to the Program Coordination Committee to be included in the committee's report to the Synod with personal information redacted to protect confidentiality.
8. The Shared Grant/Emergency Sub-Committee can choose to seek the input and/or action of the Transforming Communities: Vital Leaders Committee if it so desires.



- F. Fund Balance Carryover Guidelines: Unexpended funds will carry over at the end of each fiscal year and available for use in the coming years as needed.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

### CHAPTER 1: PERSONNEL POLICIES

- I. INTRODUCTION: These policies do not constitute a contract. Their terms are implemented in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* including its provisions for Administrative Staff (G-3.0110). The intent of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is to be in compliance with the most current federal and state laws as applied to these policies.

These policies may be altered, amended, withdrawn, or changed at any time and without notice by action of the Synod upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee. A decision of the Synod on the interpretation or application of these policies shall be final and binding on all employees. All previous policies and procedures, to the extent that they are inconsistent with this document, are hereby revoked.

Employees may resign their employment at any time and for any reason, and the Synod may discontinue an individual's employment in accordance with the Synod's policies and procedures.

- II. THEOLOGY OF EMPLOYMENT: The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a community of faith called into being by God's grace in Jesus Christ, "...known by its convictions as well as by its actions." (F-2.01)

The work of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies is to be understood as being defined within the context of the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, which consists of the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*, and within the definition of its own mission.

The Synod's personnel system is designed to reflect the continuing mission concerns of the Synod, including program and budgetary decisions.

- III. SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE PERSONNEL POLICIES: The personnel policies are established by the Synod with regard to all staff which it employs. The Synod commends these policies to its presbyteries and its subsidiary and affiliated agencies. It is the intent of these policies to conform, where required, to applicable state laws. In the event that these policies conflict with applicable state law, state law shall prevail.

IV. DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

The Synod is responsible to provide for:

- A. Equal Employment Opportunity: To provide for a plan to implement equal opportunity employment consistent with the principles of inclusiveness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- B. Compensation: To develop and administer a process of job classification and compensation.
- C. Reimbursement of expenses: To develop and administer a process for the reimbursement of employee related expenses.
- D. Continuing education: To develop and administer a process of continuing education consonant with the needs of the Synod, and the career goals of the employee.
- E. Benefits: To provide employee benefits consonant with the goals and financial capacity of the Synod.
- F. Employee concerns and problems: To establish and administer a procedure for resolving job related problems.

- G. Military Leave: To establish and administer a process for military reserve to serve active duty.
- H. Distribution: To provide each employee a copy of the Synod's personnel policies and administrative procedures.

V. BASIC POLICIES

- A. Inclusiveness: The Synod is an equal opportunity employer.
- B. Drug and Alcohol Dependency: The Synod recognizes that alcoholism and other drug dependencies are a significant problem with a potential for causing severe effects to the Synod's work force. Employees are expected to perform their jobs efficiently, safely and in a professional businesslike manner. Therefore, it is the Synod's intent to provide a drug-free, healthful, safe, and secure work environment. (*MN Sec. 363A.03*)
- C. Sexual Harassment:
  - 1. The Synod strongly condemns discrimination based upon sex including sexual harassment. Such conduct will not be tolerated in any form, by any person.
  - 2. All sexual harassing conduct in the workplace, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is prohibited. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:
    - a. Making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, a condition of an employee's obtaining employment, or their continuing said employment; or
    - b. Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for employment decisions affecting the employee, or
    - c. Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment by such conduct. This prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual flirtations; advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic verbal comments about an individual's body; sexually degrading words; and the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
  - 3. Employees who believe that they have been the subjects of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to the Synod Executive. If they do not feel comfortable talking to that individual, they may speak with the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee.
  - 4. Any supervisor, agent, or other employee who has been found by the Synod, after appropriate investigation, to have sexually harassed another employee, will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, from a warning in his or her personnel file up to and including termination.
- D. Other Types of Harassment:
  - 1. The Synod prohibits harassment in any form by its employees based on factors of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability.
  - 2. Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct, which is insulting or intimidating, has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

3. It shall be the responsibility of each employee to maintain an environment which is free from such harassment and to report incidents of conduct which he or she believes to constitute such harassment.
4. Employees who believe they have been the subjects of harassment described in these policies should report the alleged act immediately to the Synod Executive. If they do not feel comfortable talking to that individual, they may speak with the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee.
5. Any supervisor, agent, or other employee who has been found by the Synod, after appropriate investigation, to have harassed another employee, will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending upon the circumstances, from a warning in his or her personnel file up to and including termination.

#### E. Conflict of Interest

1. No employee shall accept any gift, gratuity, grant, service, or any special favor from any person or persons or businesses which provide or receive goods and services, or which seek to provide or receive goods and services from the Synod. However, minor courtesies such as luncheons, dinners, or similar arrangements in connection with business discussions may be received.
2. In addition, if an employee is called upon to participate in a decision in which the interests of the Synod conflict with his or her personal interests, the employee must recuse him/herself, and disclose the actual conflict to the Synod Executive.
3. Employees who hold other paid positions should ensure that such outside employment will not interfere with their performance of their duties or produce a conflict of interest in the pursuit of those duties. Any question regarding this should be reviewed with the Synod Executive.
4. All employees shall avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest, special interest, or any other inappropriate conduct. If an employee discovers that he or she may be in a position of conflict, he or she shall immediately report this conflict to the Synod Executive.

#### F. Nepotism

No person may be employed in a position that is under the direct supervision of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, parent-in-law, child, grandchild, brother, sister, grandparent) or a member of the same household or where the family or household member, by virtue of the position held in the Synod, has authority to influence the employee's salary, promotion, or other aspects of employment. This applies both to original employment and changes in employment by promotion, demotion, transfer, or reorganization.

#### G. Solicitation or Distribution:

1. It is the policy of the Synod to ensure productive work environments where employees and program operations may function without disruption.
2. Employees may not advertise services, solicit another employee, or collect from another employee while either employee is on work time. "Work time" is defined as all time on the job other than before and after work, at meal periods, and during break times.

#### H. Confidentiality and Security of Synod Records:

1. It is the policy of the Synod that employees are required to protect organizational records entrusted to them or accessible to them against unauthorized access, loss, or destruction. These records include all written and/or computerized information produced by or for the Synod.
2. Employees may be assigned records or computer accounts identified by their personal names; however, the documents and information produced or stored in these, and all records and accounts remain the property of the Synod.
3. It is the responsibility of all employees to respect and protect information of a confidential nature.

#### VI. EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES AND TERMS

- A. Synod Executive, Treasurer and Stated Clerk: The Synod Executive, Treasurer and Stated Clerk are recommended by a search committee and elected by the Synod for a definite or indefinite term in accordance with provisions of the *Form of Government* (G-3.0104, G-3.0110) and in accordance with bylaws adopted by the Synod. In addition to an annual personnel review there shall be a comprehensive review at least every five years.
- B. Program Staff: Program staff are recommended by a search committee and elected by the Synod and hired for an indefinite term. In addition to an annual personnel review there shall be a comprehensive review at least every five years.
- C. Support Staff: Support staff are hired for an indefinite term by the Synod Executive when authorized to fill the position by the Chair of the Personnel Committee. There shall be an annual personnel review.
- D. Employees hired on a part-time basis (less than 40 hours per week) will be subject to the same general conditions and expectations as full-time employees. Length of service benefits will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. Holidays will apply in accordance with their regular work schedule.
- E. Interim Employment
  1. It is the policy of the Synod to provide continuity of administrative and/or program services when a vacancy occurs in a validated position by appointing an interim person, if necessary and appropriate, to serve until the position is filled or abolished. This policy is applicable to all validated positions whether full or part-time.
  2. Interim employees temporarily filling the Synod Executive, Stated Clerk or Program positions are not eligible to apply for, or be considered for, filling the position on a regular basis, except by a two-thirds vote of the Synod, provided the original search process was conducted in full compliance with the provisions of (G-3.0103 and G-3.0110). Interim employees temporarily filling support positions may apply for, and be considered for, filling the position on a regular basis.

## VII. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

All positions will be described in a position description, which shall be reviewed at annual reviews.

## VIII. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- A. The Synod seeks to promote persons from within.
- B. Synod positions shall be considered “validated” if they are approved through the procedures consistent with the *Form of Government* requirements for consultation with other governing bodies.
- C. The call of a Minister to a Synod staff position shall be reported to the person’s presbytery for approval.

## IX. INITIAL EVALUATION PERIOD

- A. Executive, administrative, program and support staff shall be employed for an initial evaluation period of six months. During this period the employee may be terminated if it is determined by the supervisor that work performance or the relationship between the employee and the employer will not develop satisfactorily.
- B. Upon satisfactory completion of this period, the supervisor shall notify the employee in writing and place a copy within their personnel file.

## X. YEARS OF SERVICE

For the Synod of Lakes and Prairies an employee’s total years of service for the purposes of the implementation of personnel policies shall include service on the staff of any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) council (or its predecessor), or service with a denomination with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence, or an ecumenical body if that service is authorized by an agency or council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or in a comparable secular position. Such crediting of service will be irrespective of any break of service with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) councils (or their predecessors). However, for purposes of salary administration, the employment anniversary date is the date of their transfer to, promotion from within, or employment by the Synod. Such determination would be made by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the employee and the Synod Executive.

## XI. WORKING HOURS

The Synod observes a forty (40) hour work week for nine months (not including lunch periods) with shortened summer hours from the Friday after Memorial Day to the Friday before Labor Day. The shortened summer hours constitute a 4-day work week from Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday. The 40-hour work week is calculated between 12:01 am Sunday and 12:00 midnight Saturday.

## XII. SALARY ADMINISTRATION

- A. Salaries for executive and program staff positions will be determined on the basis of current salary ranges. Initial placement within a salary range should reflect a judgment of the qualifications and experience of the person relative to the position requirements. An employee will normally start at a salary no higher than the mid-point of the range for which he or she is employed.

- B. Wages for support positions will be determined on the basis of a classification system that is consistent with systems used in the geographical area where the person is employed.
- C. Salary ranges and wage scales will be reviewed annually in light of changes in the cost of living.
- D. Ordinarily, any salary adjustments will be effective January 1st of each year. Changes in the terms of call for a Minister must be reported to his or her presbytery.
- E. The Synod seeks to equalize, as nearly as possible, the compensation of ordained clergy and non-ordained executive, administrative or program staff necessitated by the provision in tax law that exempts housing allowances from the taxable income of clergy. For each eligible staff person, the Synod shall purchase a non-forfeitable annuity, using an amount comparable to the tax saving represented by the housing allowance modified by the social security payments made on behalf of non-ordained employees.
- F. All honoraria received having to do directly with the work of the Synod shall be turned in to the Synod. Honoraria received for services not related to the position description may be retained by the staff person.

### XIII. BENEFITS

- A. Social Security: The employee's share is withheld from the wages of non-clergy staff. Ministers of Word and Sacrament are considered self-employed for social security purposes and are responsible for the payment of their self-employment contributions.
- B. Pension: All eligible employees will be enrolled in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as of their starting date. Dues shall be paid by the Synod at the required percentage. Questions regarding eligibility, benefit levels, or other issues shall be determined solely by reference to the provisions of the Benefits Plan. Exception to this mandatory participation can be made only after consultation with the Synod Executive, or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee, and the filing of a written waiver with the Board of Pensions.
- C. Health Insurance and Disability and Death in Service Benefits: Major medical coverage, disability and death in service benefits are provided to eligible employees by the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Questions regarding eligibility, benefit levels, or other issues shall be determined solely by reference to the provisions of the Benefits Plan.
- D. Workers' Compensation Insurance is provided to all employees according to the provisions of the appropriate State's law.
- E. On the Job Travel Accident Insurance: All employees on Synod business are covered with travel accident insurance (accidental death & dismemberment). Questions regarding eligibility, benefit levels, or other issues shall be determined solely by the provisions of the insurance policy.
- F. Unemployment Insurance: Synod employees are excluded from unemployment compensation insurance pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- G. Moving expenses: Employees who have been designated as eligible for moving expenses shall be reimbursed on the following basis:
  - 1. Moving expenses will be negotiated at the time of employment. The Synod will establish a maximum amount or agree to cover all reasonable expenses.

2. House hunting expenses will be paid to the transfer site for the employee and spouse for one round-trip covering a period not to exceed three days, in addition to travel, lodging and meals. In unusual circumstances, additional time may be made available upon authorization by the Synod Executive, or by the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee.
  3. Until the employee is established in his or her new residence, actual and reasonable living expenses of the employee at the new location will be paid, but not to exceed in the aggregate a sum equal to two-thirds of one month's salary.
- H. Housing Loans: Executive, administrative and program staff may be given assistance in the purchase of a home through a Synod loan in accordance with guidelines established by the Synod.
- I. Holidays
1. There shall be eleven paid holidays per year: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and two other days to be designated by the Synod Executive at the beginning of each year.
  2. When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it will be observed as a holiday on the nearest Friday or Monday respectively. When a holiday occurs during a Synod meeting the Synod Executive shall designate a substitute day.

#### XIV. VACATION WITH PAY

- A. A vacation with pay is provided for all regular employees. Vacations are not cumulative; earned vacation days not used in the calendar year can be held over to February 28 and then will be forfeited, except when special provision has been made by the Synod Executive, or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee for the Synod Executive, the Stated Clerk or Treasurer.
- B. Full-time executive, administrative and program staff are entitled to one full month (22 working days) vacation per calendar year. Full-time support staff, following their initial evaluation period, are entitled to an annual vacation computed according to the following:

Employment less than one year	10 working days, pro-rated
Beginning the first full year through the fourth year	10 working days per year
Beginning the fifth year through the ninth year	15 working days per year
Beginning the tenth year through the twenty-fifth year	22 working days per year

In the twenty-sixth year of credited service (Section IX) and annually thereafter, all staff will be granted twenty-seven working days of annual vacation. Unless otherwise stated in the position description, part-time employees shall receive proportional vacation time pro-rated at the percentage of full-time equivalent.

- C. Specific vacation dates shall be determined in advance in consultation with the employee's supervisor.

#### XV. LEAVE WITH PAY

- A. Military Leave: Time off for Military Reserve duty as required by law shall be allowed. The Synod shall provide a procedure for military leave for active duty.



- B. Marriage: Up to three days shall be granted to an employee who has been employed by the Synod for at least one year.
- C. Jury Duty: Time off for jury service shall be allowed. For up to a maximum of two weeks per year the Synod will pay the difference between the individual's normal and customary pay less whatever the individual receives for jury duty. In exceptional cases the Synod Executive or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee may grant additional time off with pay.
- D. Parental Leave:
1. Parental leave should normally be requested of the supervisor, and approved by the Synod Executive or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee, by the employee at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child. The request should specify the amount of leave time desired, which may include time before or after the expected birth or adoption of the child. If both parents are on the Synod payroll, only one parental leave may be granted. However, leave may be shared by the two parents.
  2. The employee will be compensated at the rate of 60% of his or her monthly pay rate according to the following schedule:

Employment less than one year	no paid leave
Beginning the first year	one month
Beginning the second year	two months
Beginning the third year and thereafter	three months

Any approved leave beyond the time indicated in the above schedule will be leave without pay. Benefit coverage (except vacation and sick leave accrual) and credited service will continue during the entire leave with the cost of benefits being paid by the Synod. Any salary increase action for which the employee may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective upon return to employment.
  3. Upon completion of parental leave, the employee will be entitled to return to his or her position if not eliminated due to a reduction in force, in which case the provisions of Section XVI-would apply. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.
  4. Health and Medical Leave: Employees are entitled to up to ten working days of sick leave each calendar year, cumulative up to ninety days. At the time of termination of employment (either voluntary or involuntary) an employee shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.
  5. Emergency Leave: A maximum of five days per year shall be allowed for emergency leave arising out of the death of an immediate member of the family. In the event of serious illness or other emergency related to an immediate member of the family, such leave may be allowed by the Synod Executive or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee.

#### XVI. LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Employees may be granted leave without pay. Benefits defined in Section 9 may be continued at the employee's own expense, but paid leave benefits e.g., vacation, sick leave or holidays will not accrue during this period. The leave is subject to the approval of the Personnel Committee upon recommendation of the Synod Executive.

## XVII. CONTINUING EDUCATION

- 13.1 Continuing education is intended to benefit the employee and the Synod. The benefit(s) should be described and included within continuing education proposals, submitted to their supervisor in advance. Such leave is solely at the discretion of the Synod *Executive*.
- 13.2 Annual continuing education leave with pay and assistance for expenses for continuing education may be granted by the Synod Executive for executive and program staff, up to two weeks annually; for support staff, up to one week annually. With the approval of the Synod Executive, continuing education leave and funds may be accumulated up to six weeks over a three-year period for executive, administrative, and program staff, and up to two weeks for a two-year period for support staff. In the case of the Synod Executive and Stated Clerk *or* Treasurer, approval shall be by the Personnel Committee. If a person leaves a position voluntarily within six months, the costs of the study leave shall be refunded.

## XVIII. SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

After five years of continuous employment by the Synod, executive, administrative, and program staff may apply to their supervisor and the Personnel Committee for a sabbatical leave with full pay for up to a three-month period. A sabbatical leave is time away for study, reflection and/or spiritual growth. Such application will include a detailed written plan with clearly identified goals. If granted, the leave may be combined with earned vacation within a particular year.

The plan should include provisions for leadership in the employee's absence and establishing the philosophy behind the sabbatical.

The applicant for leave must agree to return to his/her present position for a period of at least one year following the completion of the leave. If the applicant chooses to leave his/her position voluntarily within the period of one year following the Sabbatical, the salary attributable to the Sabbatical shall be refunded by the employee. After completion of one sabbatical leave, the individual shall not be eligible for another leave until a period of at least five years shall have elapsed.

Both full-time and part-time employees may apply for sabbatical leave.

## XIX. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS

The Synod provides a procedure for attempting to resolve job related problems.

## XX. UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION

- A. Minnesota is an employment-at-will state. Therefore, an employer may generally terminate an employment relationship at any time and for any reasons unless a collective bargaining agreement, employment contract, existing law, or recognized public policy provides otherwise.

Occasionally, an employee's behavior or work performance is unsatisfactory. When this arises, normally the employee's supervisor will meet with the employee in an effort to improve the unsatisfactory behavior or performance. However, the Synod reserves the sole right to determine whether disciplinary action should occur and the nature and extent of the discipline to be imposed. This process may include verbal warning(s), written warning(s), suspension or termination, all in the sole discretion of the Synod. In this connection, the Synod reserves the right to bypass one or more of the options set forth above. While it is not possible to list every type of behavior that might be deemed a problem, the following list includes examples of behavior which may result in discipline up to and including termination:

Unsatisfactory performance, insubordination, neglect in the care and use of Synod property and funds, unexcused absence and/or repeated tardiness, moral turpitude, inappropriate use of the internet and e-mail, violation of Synod personnel policies, falsification of timekeeping records, reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, threatening violence in the workplace, sexual or other unlawful harassment, possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace.

The examples cited above are for illustration only and shall not be considered as comprehensive or limiting the Synod's right to administer discipline in its sole discretion.

- B. A written statement expressing affirmations, concerns, or grievances either from, or regarding, Synod staff shall be sent directly to the Personnel Committee chair. The chair's address and contact information can be found on the Synod website. Communications shall be signed, and details clearly stated, including circumstances, dates, times, and individuals involved. The chair shall share the communication, respecting confidentiality, with the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will develop a planned response and will communicate that response in writing to all relevant parties. Following resolution of any concern or issue, appropriate notation will be entered into the personnel files according to the Synod's confidentiality and security procedures.
- C. In the event of involuntary separation, the Synod Executive, in consultation with and upon approval of the Personnel Committee, will terminate any program or support staff employee. Notification of termination will be thirty calendar days for program staff and fourteen calendar days for support staff. Pay in lieu of notice may be given.
- D. In the event of the involuntary separation of the executive or administrative staff of the Synod the implementation of these procedures will lodge with the Personnel Committee. Notification of termination will be ninety calendar days, or until other employment is secured, whichever is shorter. The Personnel Committee may place executive or administrative staff on administrative leave until hearing procedures are completed. Pay in lieu of notice may be given by the Personnel Committee.
- E. Regarding the involuntary separation of the Synod Executive, Stated Clerk or Treasurer the provisions of XIX.C shall apply.
- F. In the event of involuntary separation for reasons other than those listed under the second paragraph of section XVIII above, three-months' notice will be provided, and severance compensation will be given in accordance with Section XIX.C under reduction in force.

## **XX. REDUCTION IN FORCE**

- A. Reduction in force, because of the discontinuance of a project or retrenchment in budget or for other circumstances arising out of no fault of the employee, is at the sole discretion of the Synod. While installed positions are created and abolished by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Moderator, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Synod Executive, is authorized to determine when a reduction in force is required. The Synod moderator, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Synod Executive is authorized to determine when such notice shall occur (see paragraphs 17.2 and 17.3). Written notice will come from the Synod Moderator. Any reduction in force will be reported to the Synod at the next stated meeting with a recommendation for appropriate Synod action. (Also, see Section 9.6 of these policies.)

- B. At least six-months-notice shall be given. Should reemployment take place before the expiration of the notice period, salary payment will continue, offset by any pay received by the employee during this period. Severance allowance will be paid if the employee works for the Synod the entire notice period. Any allowance paid shall be in addition to any unused vacation time due. No payment will be made for unused continuing education time or funds. Severance allowance will be given in relation to length of service with the Synod as follows:

Less than one year of service	two weeks
One year but less than four	four weeks
Four years but less than five	six weeks
Five or more years	eight weeks plus a week's salary for each year over five years to a maximum of twelve weeks

- C. Pay in lieu of six months' notice may be given if so determined by the Synod Moderator, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and the Synod Executive. Any amount paid in lieu of notice shall be in addition to any unused vacation time due. No payment will be made for unused continuing education time or funds. Severance allowance will not be granted to an employee who receives pay in lieu of the six-month notice. Vacation time accrued shall be honored with time or pay at the time of severance.

## **XXI. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

- A. Employees wishing to terminate their employment with the Synod should submit a written resignation to their supervisor, indicating the reason for terminating employment as well as the last day he or she expects to work.
- B. A minimum of thirty calendar days' notice is requested of executive, administrative and program staff, and fourteen calendar days' notice of support staff.
- C. The supervisor, upon receipt of a resignation and in consultation with the Synod Executive, should arrange for an exit interview with the employee, and shall place the resignation letter and a summary of the exit interview in that person's personnel file.
- D. In the instance of the resignation of the Synod Executive, the resignation letter shall be submitted to the Synod Moderator, with a copy to the Chair of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Synod Moderator, is responsible for the exit interview.
- E. Pay will be granted for accrued vacation if notice is given.

## **Chapter 2: Continuing Education Administrative Guidelines**

### **A. Application for Continuing Education Leave**

Staff persons interested in pursuing annual or extended continuing education shall submit, through their immediate supervisor, a written request at least 30 days prior to the anticipated leave. This request shall clearly state the intended plan for study, its duration, and any requested funding. It will indicate how it will be of mutual benefit to the applicant and to the Synod, noting specific relationships to the responsibilities enumerated within the applicant's position description. Enhancing the incumbent's ability to function in their assigned areas of responsibility is the primary benefit to the Synod. The Synod Executive and Stated Clerk shall submit his/her request to the Personnel Committee. Approval is solely at the discretion of the Synod Executive, or for the Synod Executive and Stated Clerk, the Personnel Committee.

B. Funding

The Personnel Committee annually shall designate a specific dollar amount for each staff person's potential usage for travel, housing, and other related costs. This amount shall be pro-rated for part-time employees.

C. Reporting

The employee shall report on their continuing education experience to the Synod Executive. A record of approval and the leave taken shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

D. Accrual of Benefits

In the event that available leave is not utilized within a calendar year, staff persons may, by December 15<sup>th</sup>, request that unused time and funds be accumulated *up to three years* in accordance with the Personnel Policies #21, Section 13. If no request is made and approved, the continuing education time and funds will lapse.

### **Chapter 3: Sabbatical Leave Administrative Guidelines**

After five years of continuous employment by Synod, executive, administrative, and program staff may apply to their supervisor and the Personnel Committee for a sabbatical leave with full pay for up to a three-month period. A sabbatical leave is time away for study, reflection and/or spiritual growth. Such application will include a detailed written plan with clearly identified goals. If granted, the leave may be combined with earned vacation within a particular year.

The plan should include:

- A. provisions for leadership in your absence
- B. establishing the philosophy behind the sabbatical

The applicant for leave must agree to return to his/her present position for a period of at least one year following the completion of the leave. If the applicant chooses to leave their position voluntarily within the period of one year following the Sabbatical, the salary attributable to the Sabbatical shall be refunded. After completion of one sabbatical leave, the individual shall not be eligible for another leave until a period of at least five years shall have elapsed.

Both full-time and part-time employees may apply for sabbatical leave.

### **Chapter 4: Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity**

A. Policy

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, in accord with the policy of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) set forth in "Toward Inclusiveness in Employment--A Church Wide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action", hereby affirms its policy to develop and establish the following equality in employment opportunity to ensure non-discrimination in its own employment practices:

1. The Synod will recruit, hire, call, train, and promote persons within all job classifications without regard to racial ethnic groups, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity or marital status.

2. The Synod will ensure that all other personnel policies and practices such as compensation, benefits, transfers, leaves of absence, performance evaluation, reductions in force and return to services, educational opportunities, tuition assistance, and termination are administered in accord with equal employment opportunity policies.
3. The Synod will annually collect employment data and periodically conduct analyses of all personnel policies and practices, reporting its findings to the General Assembly Council and the Synod's Committee on Representation and make such corrective changes as are necessary under their equal employment opportunity commitments.

**B. Responsibility**

The Synod Executive shall be responsible for the Synod's implementation and administration of equal employment opportunity under the guidance and supervision of the Personnel Committee of the Synod. Neglect of these responsibilities shall be grounds for dismissal.

**C. Dissemination**

1. The Synod shall give a copy of its equal employment opportunity policy to each present and prospective employee and include a non-discriminatory clause in all recruitment notifications.
2. The Synod shall distribute copies of its plan to its presbyteries.

**D. Implementation Steps**

1. The Synod Executive, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, shall ensure that all personnel guidelines, policies, procedures and practices are developed and implemented in accordance with the Synod's policy on equal employment opportunity.
2. Each position description shall be examined carefully to determine what functional and personal qualifications as to educational attainment, skills, experience, knowledge, characteristics, etc., are actually required by the position so that qualification factors which discriminate against racial ethnic persons, various age groups, women, persons with disabilities, or a person's marital condition are eliminated.
3. Each administrative position opening shall be filled in accordance with the principle of participation and representation found in G-9.0104 and (G-9.0704). Implementation steps for filling the position opening shall be developed by the Synod Executive in consultation with the Personnel Committee.
4. The Synod Executive in consultation with the Personnel Committee shall initiate action required to correct patterns of discrimination on the basis of "race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, geography, or theological conviction (F-1.0403).
5. The Synod Executive shall be responsible to establish a process to ensure that the Synod, as purchaser, shall notify all sub-contractors, vendors and suppliers of goods and services of the Synod's equal employment opportunity policy requesting them to share a copy of their equal employment opportunity policy with the Synod.

**E. Hiring Procedures**

The search for and recruitment of persons from racial ethnic groups, persons of all ages, persons with disabilities, women, and persons of all marital conditions is critical to the implementation of an effective equal employment opportunity program. The Synod's program of search and recruitment shall ordinarily include at least the following:

1. Involvement of persons from the identified groups in the search and recruitment process.
2. Identification and use of resources related to the identified groups such as newspaper, networks, caucuses, and employing divisions.
3. Utilization of internal employment and referral resources of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

F. Monitoring, review, and evaluation

1. The equal employment opportunity program and personnel policies of the Synod shall be available to the Synod Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Council.
2. The Synod Executive, in consultation with the Synod Personnel Committee, shall periodically conduct an analysis of its workforce to determine whether or not it is implementing the church's commitment to inclusiveness in employment.
3. Reports shall be submitted to the Synod Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Council for their review and comment.
4. The Personnel Committee shall include in its annual review of the Synod Executive the Synod's inclusiveness in employment.

## **Chapter 5: Addressing Employee Concerns and Appealing a Termination – Administrative Guidelines**

In order to deal promptly and fairly with employee concerns, and to provide a fair process for an employee to appeal a termination decision under Personnel Policies the employee may take the following steps:

A. Procedure for addressing employee concerns other than a decision to terminate the employee

1. The employee will first discuss his/her problem with the Synod Executive.
2. If not satisfied with the Synod Executive's action, the employee will contact the Chair of the Personnel Committee, who will seek to resolve the issue in consultation with the parties involved. Ordinarily a decision will be reached within ten days.

B. Formal procedure for review of a decision to terminate an employee

1. A formal process may be initiated by submitting a written statement to the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee with a copy to the Synod Executive.
2. The Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee shall call a meeting of the Synod Personnel Committee which shall discuss the statement with all parties concerned, and provide an opportunity for the Synod Executive to explain his/her action. The Personnel Committee shall make a decision concerning appropriate action. For support staff, the decision of the Synod Personnel Committee is final.
3. If an executive, administrative or program employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the Synod Personnel Committee, the person may appeal within 15 days to the Synod Steering Committee through the Stated Clerk. The Steering Committee, after consultation with the employee and the Synod Executive, shall make a written recommendation to the Synod. The Synod shall make the final determination.

C. Right of Advocacy

It is understood that the employee may arrange to have an advocate with him/her at all steps in the formal process, at no expense to the Synod.

D. Written records

A written record of all decisions arrived at in all meetings shall be kept. The final determination of the Synod shall contain provision for the employee to indicate his/her acceptance or rejection of the decision.

**Chapter 6: Annual and Comprehensive Staff Review – Administrative Guidelines**

A. Process for annual performance reviews of executive, administrative and program staff

1. Each staff member will be asked to prepare a written assessment.
2. Each staff member is asked to give the names of up to six people who will comment on their work during the past year.
3. The responses from those references will be compiled for the Executive by Administrative staff.
4. Members of the Personnel Committee and the Synod Executive will meet with each staff member for approximately one hour to review the self-assessment and the responses. A summary of all responses, without names or other identifying marks, will be given to each staff member as part of the review.
5. All reviews will be summarized in writing with a copy being placed in the incumbent's personnel file and a copy for the chair of the Synod Personnel Committee.
6. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will bring to the attention of the Committee anything that *needs* follow up by their next meeting.

B. Comprehensive reviews

The purpose of the comprehensive review is to examine in depth the person's skills and his or her accomplishments over the past five years. The Personnel Committee will develop the process and questions for the Self-Assessment and Peer Review portions of the Comprehensive Review. The staff person will be asked to review their work and their growth over the five-year period. Information will be gathered from up to 30 persons who have worked closely with the staff person. Those providing information will be asked if they believe this person is the right person to continue to serve the Synod. A summary of the responses will be given to the staff member. A letter summarizing the review will be placed in the staff member's file.

C. Self-assessment for performance reviews

The Personnel Committee will develop the process, including questions on:

- Work objectives
- Significant accomplishments
- Self-evaluation
- Future goals
- Study leave
- Retirement plans
- Concerns



D. Review by persons identified as references

The Personnel Committee will develop the process for input from these persons, including questions relating to that person's performance in the following areas:

- Observations of this person's fulfilling of his/her job responsibilities during the past year.
- Skills demonstrated in performing his/her job.
- Areas where this staff member has excelled.
- Areas of potential improvement in the quality of his/her work
- Examples of collegial relationships.

**Chapter 7: Leaving Synod Staff Positions – Administrative Guidelines**

This policy is intended to serve as a help to the Synod and its former executive, administrative and program staff as each seeks to redefine the relationship after the end of active service. While these procedures seek to delineate appropriate and inappropriate behavior of staff who have departed, they cannot be definitive. The intent here is to invite and encourage a spirit of cooperation and support for the successor, the continuing staff, and the Synod.

A. Voluntary Termination of Employment

The timeline and procedures for voluntarily resigning one's position are delineated in Section XXI of the Synod's Personnel Policies.

B. Retirement

1. For those retiring, the Board of Pensions suggest that the process begin three to six months before the anticipated date of retirement. Therefore, a three to six-month notice to the Synod is appropriate.
2. The Synod Executive and Stated Clerk shall provide written notification to the Synod moderator and the chair of the Personnel Committee of their intent to retire as of a specific date. Administrative and program staff shall notify the Synod Executive, with copies to the chair of the Personnel Committee.
3. The Personnel Committee will report retirements to a meeting of the Synod.
4. The Personnel Committee will arrange for an exit interview with staff. This will include an explanation of appropriate boundaries post-retirement.
5. The appropriate body (such as the Steering Committee or Personnel Committee) will plan an opportunity for the Synod to say "goodbye" and recognize the staff person's ministry.
6. The staff member has the responsibility to inform the Synod that he/she will not provide advice or services following retirement and will abide by the Guidelines for Former Staff noted below.
7. All council files and records should be put in order by the retiring staff person, in consultation with their supervisor, and left intact so that a successor may easily find necessary records and equipment.

C. Guidelines for Former Staff

1. It is expected that former staff will avoid participation in meetings or activities that reflect former responsibilities until such time as the permanent successor is well established. Once the successor is well established, former staff may be invited to participate at the discretion of the Synod Executive.
2. The staff person who is leaving needs to be supportive of the search process for a successor but should not seek to influence or participate in it in any way.
3. The former staff person should make every effort to be supportive of the successor. Such support should include responding to requests for information or counsel by the new staff person.
4. If other persons make contact with concerns about a successor, they should be encouraged to address the concerns directly to the new staff person or to the Synod Personnel Committee. Former staff need to be clear that he or she will not be available for counsel or advice regarding the life and work of the Synod.

D. When there is trouble

When a former or current staff person exceeds the bounds of propriety and prudence and creates difficulties, it is appropriate for the Synod Executive or Personnel Committee chair to counsel with the former or current staff person about these guidelines and their application.

**Chapter 8: Military Leave for Active Duty – Administrative Guidelines**

- A. The Synod will comply with Federal law and USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act) guidelines in the event an employee is involuntarily called to active duty.
- B. Upon mobilization for active duty, the employee's compensation (defined as current effective salary) will be discontinued at the point military compensation (including housing and other allowances) begins unless the military compensation is less than the current effective salary, in which case the employee will be paid the difference between the military compensation and the current effective salary as an employee. This equalization of current effective salary will be effective for one year from date of deployment, subject to renewal at the sole discretion of the Synod.
- C. professional reimbursable expenses, including continuing education allowance and reimbursement for travel and business expenses, will be discontinued during active duty. Resumption of such benefits will resume at the commencement of the employee's employment with the Synod.
- D. The employee's participation in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is pursuant to the administrative rules of the Board of Pensions then in effect. (*See Board of Pensions Administrative Rule 402 – Participation: Military Leave.*) It is the member's responsibility to be familiar with and follow the applicable rules of the Board of Pensions.
- E. The employee is encouraged to utilize available transition and counseling services as needed upon return to employment.

## **Chapter 9: Employee Personal Public Witness Policy**

- A. It is the policy of the Synod to value the creativity and integrity of its staff and reaffirm the right to exercise freedom of conscience.
- B. All persons employed by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), when they are working as or holding themselves out as Synod employees, are expected to give a full and fair representation of the position of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in matters of policy, social witness statements, ~~or~~ theological or doctrinal positions. However, the possibility of personal dissent from a policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies or of the General Assembly and as articulated by any of its entities or the possibility of making a personal public witness is not precluded by employment with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and is a reasonable expression of freedom of conscience.
- C. Because public action or expressions of personal belief may affect not only the work environment, but also the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at large, employee personal public witness is subject to the following guidelines:
  - 1. When making a personal public statement, an employee shall make it clear that he or she is speaking for himself or herself and not speaking for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
  - 2. When making a personal public witness, an employee shall not make reference to his or her employee status. If questioned, the employee may acknowledge employed status without using that status to make a claim of authority. Accordingly, it is not permissible for an employee making a personal statement to use professional stationery, claim expertise by virtue of employment by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, or hold press conferences on Synod property.
  - 3. It is permissible, however, for persons employed by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to identify their personal church affiliation while making a personal public witness. Thus, it is permissible for a Synod staff person to claim membership in a particular congregation or council.
  - 4. Employees must inform their supervisor and the appropriate council, when appropriate, of their personal public witness or dissent.
  - 5. In the event an employee feels that he or she cannot carry out necessary job functions for reasons of conscience, the employee may request a change of assignment or may exercise his or her right to resign the position.
- D. In certain circumstances, employees may be required as part of work responsibilities, to accomplish work on issues currently in opposition to Synod policies or around which there is controversy. This may involve research, production of resources, or planning of or participation in programs and events. When acting within the scope of their employment responsibilities, employees are protected from disciplinary action related to the provisions of this policy.

## **Chapter 10: Remuneration for Special Services**

- A. Work related services
  - 1. Authorization: Certain members of the staff of the Synod by reason of their position or knowledge, are expected to respond to requests and opportunities to speak and/or provide other means of interpretation of the general mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Such interpretation may be provided to congregations, presbyteries, or other organizations of our church or to other groups and denominations. Also, some members of Synod's staff may

be called upon to provide a service related to the expertise of their assigned duties with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Such services may be rendered to groups either within or outside our denominational structure.

2. **Remuneration and Expenses:** The policy of the Synod with regard to the provision of interpretation and other services is to reimburse the staff member for any reasonable and necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred through the performance of the function. Ordinarily, the receipt of a fee or honorarium from organizations is not anticipated if the service is called for by the position description of the particular employee. However, if an honorarium or expense reimbursement is received from an organization in appreciation for the service rendered, the monies received are to be credited to the Synod and the staff person's travel account.

**B. Non-work related services**

1. **Authorization:** Agreement to perform services of any kind which are not provided for in the employee's job description and/or lie clearly outside the employee's responsibilities to the Synod, may be contracted only if such service can be rendered without detriment to the employee's job performance. Special work of major dimensions (writing of a book, magazine article, production of a film or film strip, art work, etc.) may be assumed by an employee of the Synod with the written approval of the Synod Executive.
2. **Remuneration and Expenses:** Remuneration or expenses resulting from approved non-work-related services which are personal, such as:
  - A. *Preaching:* If a person participates in a service for a purpose which has no relation to the position he or she holds for the Synod, any remuneration or expenses incurred are personal.
  - B. *Special work* of major dimensions (such as described under "Authorization"): it is assumed that the work will be copyrighted by the individual and not by the Synod. All work should be performed on personal time, and any use made of the church's resources, such as secretarial services, office supplies, etc., should be reimbursed to the Synod. Royalties and fees received from the work are personal income.

## **Chapter 11: Salary Administration**

**A. Salary Policies**

Salaries for executive and program positions will be determined on the basis of current salary ranges, and in accordance with guidelines established by the General Assembly. Support positions will be determined on the basis of classifications that are consistent with systems used in the geographical area where the person is employed.

The Synod is committed to salary administration principles which will provide fair pay for work performed; incentive for personal achievement and growth; equity of payment for positions of relative responsibilities; and flexibility to meet the many changes in organization, functions, positions, and personnel over a period of time. Executive, administrative and program salary levels will be maintained in a manner which is consistent with the compensation plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), responsive to changes in the cost of living, and in keeping with the church's philosophy and objectives. Support staff salary levels will be comparable to salaries paid by not-for-profit organizations in the region where they are employed.

An incumbent in any position included in the plan will receive a salary that falls within the indicated salary range for the classification to which his/her position is assigned. Initial placement within a salary range should reflect a judgment of the qualifications and experience of the appointee relative to the position requirements. An employee will normally start at a salary no higher than the midpoint of the range for the position for which he/she is employed.

B. Adjustment of salary ranges

Salary scales for executive, administrative and program staff will be reviewed at least once a year, usually during the spring. The review will be based upon information of the most current recommended indexes on cost-of-living changes, salary information on pastors in the Synod from the Board of Pensions, Compensation Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), salaries in other Synods and not-for-profit organizations in local municipalities where the employee works.

C. Availability of salary information

Information concerning the position evaluation, salary ranges and salaries for all staff are published annually in the minutes of the Synod.

## **Chapter 12: Presbytery Personnel Functions**

A. Introduction

Over the years the Synod of Lakes and Prairies has developed a close and mutually beneficial interaction between the Synod and its constituent presbyteries regarding the implementation of personnel functions. Presbytery staff persons may resource one another across presbytery lines. This partnership across council lines makes it even more important that we share common understandings of our intersecting roles and responsibilities.

The Constitution of the PC(U.S.A.) states that Synods will “develop and provide resources ...as well as guidelines and criteria for evaluation (G-3.0403)” in areas that include the “establishment of administrative positions, compensation, personnel policies and fair employment practices.” In response, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies has maintained equitable salary ranges for administrative positions within its bounds, developed and utilized a comprehensive “Manual for Executive/General Presbyter Search Processes,” and overseen a process for annual and comprehensive personnel reviews.

In its interaction with presbytery personnel committees the Synod seeks to ensure consistency and confidentiality in all personnel processes. It does so by proposing policies and procedures and providing confidential administrative support from experienced Synod staff. Its resources and direct participation helps to protect the interests of the presbytery and incumbent staff. All expenses of the Synod’s participation are born by the Synod.

This policy seeks to clarify the expectations the Synod has regarding how it will fulfill its Constitutional responsibilities, as well as clarify and define intersecting roles and responsibilities. In all instances the Synod seeks to be a partner with the presbyteries, so that their unique needs may be addressed and resourced.

B. Polity Foundations

It is the nature of Presbyterian polity G-3.0106 to require that “Through their members and elected commissioners, lower councils participate in planning and administration of the work of higher councils, and in consultation between bodies concerning mission, budget, staffing and fair employment practices and matters of equitable compensation.” The Synod’s interaction with presbytery personnel procedures derives from these historic principles.

C. Establishment of Administrative Staff positions

The Synod expects to be informed whenever a presbytery considers modification of the presbytery’s staffing rationale. It will also provide the means whereby the presbyteries will be consulted regarding the Synod’s staffing rationale.

When requested, Synod staff assistance is available, upon assignment of the Synod Executive, to assist the presbytery in reviewing options and exploring alternative staffing patterns.

D. Transition in Executive or Administrative Staff leadership

1. Exit Interviews: Whenever an executive/general presbyter indicates their intent to leave their position, the presbytery personnel committee should schedule an exit interview in which the incumbent would be given the opportunity to: reflect on their accomplishments and disappointments, the “state of the presbytery,” needed structural or operational modifications, ongoing agenda items and the assigned points of accountability, and the location of resource materials.

The Synod, through its Personnel Committee and/or the Synod Executive, expects to be a participant in the exit interview. The Synod also expects that the exit interview will be summarized in writing by the presbytery personnel committee, and that a copy of the summary will be maintained in the Synod ‘s confidential personnel files.

When requested, the Synod Executive is available to assist the presbytery personnel committee in developing specific questions and processes for the exit interview, and will prepare a written summary of the exit interview.

2. Executive/General Presbyter Search Processes: When a presbytery decides to authorize the administrative staff services of an executive presbyter, (*G-3.0110*) requires consultation with the Synod.

The Synod expects to be a full participant in the search process. The Synod through its Personnel Committee will appoint a liaison from another presbytery to the search committee, who should function as an ex officio member. The Synod Executive, or his/her designee, will ordinarily attend all meetings as a staff resource. In addition, the Synod expects that the “Manual for Executive/General Presbyter Search Processes” will be the basis upon which the search committee will proceed.

When requested, the office of the Synod Executive is available to provide staff resources to the search committee, including the administrative oversight of correspondence, publicizing of the position, application processes, budget oversight, and meeting arrangements. The Synod Executive is also available to assist the search committee in reference checks.

3. Search Processes for Other Administrative Staff: The Synod *expects* to be informed whenever a presbytery considers filling other administrative staff positions. When requested,

Synod staff assistance is available, upon assignment of the Synod Executive, to assist the presbytery in its search processes for other administrative staff.

E. Annual and Comprehensive personnel reviews

Presbytery personnel committees should schedule annual personnel reviews in which the goal is to support and counsel the incumbent, and periodic comprehensive reviews in which the goal is to explore, in depth, the congruency of the incumbent skills and interests with the goals and direction of the presbytery.

The Synod, through its Personnel Committee and/or the Synod Executive, expects to be a participant in annual and comprehensive reviews. The Synod also expects that the review will be summarized in writing by the presbytery personnel committee, and that a copy of the summary will be maintained in the Synod 's confidential personnel files.

When requested, the Synod Executive is available to assist the presbytery personnel committee in implementing an established procedure for review or in developing unique questions and processes.

Ordinarily, the Synod Executive will prepare a collation of any data gathered for use in the review, and upon request will prepare a written content analysis of any data gathered and/or a written summary of the findings.

When requested, the office of the Synod Executive is available to provide staff resources to the presbytery personnel committee, including the administrative oversight of data gathering.

F. Salary Administration

The Synod expects that all administrative staff positions within the Synod will be rated in accordance with denominational policies and that salary ranges will be established for each position based upon that rating. Presbytery personnel committees *should* oversee salary administration within those parameters.

Annually, the Synod will revise the salary ranges for established positions based upon the consumer price index for the second most preceding year, and communicate the new ranges to the presbyteries for their consideration.

G. Supportive Services

1. Consultation: Upon request, the Synod, through its Personnel Committee and/or the Synod Executive, is available to consult with presbytery personnel committees regarding:
  - a. the inclusion of clear statements in the presbytery's Manual of Operation of the responsibilities, process of calling, method of annual review of work, and the matter of reelection or termination of employment for administrative staff as required by *G-3. 0110*.
  - b. the training of presbytery committees regarding their responsibilities in areas such as supervision, salary administration, annual and comprehensive reviews, crisis intervention, ensuring inclusiveness etc., and
  - c. emerging problems that should not be addressed in annual or comprehensive reviews.
2. Payroll: Upon request, the Synod will provide comprehensive oversight and management of payroll and benefits for presbytery staff.

## **Chapter 13: Parental/Family Leave**

### **A. Parental Leave:**

Parental leave should normally be requested of the supervisor, and approved by the Synod Executive or the Chair of the Synod Personnel Committee, by the employee at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child. The request should specify the amount of leave time desired, which may include time before or after the expected birth or adoption of the child. If both parents are on the Synod payroll, only one parental leave may be granted. However, leave may be shared by the two parents.

### **B. Compensation**

The employee will be compensated at the rate of 60% of his or her monthly pay rate according to the following schedule:

Employment less than one year	no paid leave
Beginning the first year	one month
Beginning the second year	two months
Beginning the third year and thereafter	three months

Any approved leave beyond the time indicated in the above schedule will be leave without pay. Benefit coverage (except vacation and sick leave accrual) and credited service will continue during the entire leave with the cost of benefits being paid by the Synod. Any salary increase action for which the employee may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective upon return to employment.

### **C. Return to work**

Upon completion of parental leave, the employee will be entitled to return to his or her position if not eliminated due to a reduction in force, in which case the provisions of Section 16 would apply. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

## **Chapter 14: Section 125 Cafeteria Benefit Program**

### **I. The Program**

#### **A. ESTABLISHMENT**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (hereinafter the "Employer") hereby establishes a cafeteria compensation program for the benefit of eligible Employees, known as the SECTION 125 CAFETERIA PROGRAM (the "PROGRAM"), effective as of January 1, 1990. The Program incorporates three separate plans: A Pre-Tax Premium Plan, a Health Care Reimbursement Plan, and a Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan.

#### **B. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Program is to enhance benefits for eligible Employees with choices, within certain limits specified herein, among insured welfare premium benefits, health care benefits, dependent care benefits, and direct compensation. The Program is intended to comply with the provisions of Sections 79, 105, 125, and 129 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.



C. APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this Program are applicable only to persons who are Employees on or after January 1, 1990.

D. SINGULAR AND PLURAL

Except as otherwise indicated by context, terms used in the singular may also include the plural.

E. THIS DOCUMENT

This Document is intended to satisfy the requirements of Section 402 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

**II. Definitions**

Whenever used in the Program, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings set forth below unless the context plainly requires a different meaning, and when the defined meaning is intended, the term is capitalized:

- A. "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.
- B. "Compensation", for the purpose of this Program, means a Participant's income subject to federal income tax under the Code.
- C. "Dependent" means an individual who qualifies as a dependent under the terms of Section 152 of the Code, including any of the following individuals who, during the current calendar year, received more than one-half of his or her support from the Participant:
  - 1. The Participant's son or daughter (or a descendant of either),
  - 2. The Participant's stepson or step daughter,
  - 3. The Participant's brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister,
  - 4. The Participant's father or mother (or an ancestor of either),
  - 5. The Participant's stepfather or stepmother,
  - 6. The Participant's brother's or sister's son or daughter,
  - 7. The Participant's son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law, or
  - 8. An individual (other than the Participant's spouse) who, for the current calendar year, resides in the Participant's house as his principal place of abode and is a member of the Participant's household.

One criteria for qualification as a "Qualifying Individual" under Article II.22 is that a person must first qualify as a "Dependent".

- D. "Dependent Care Expenses" mean those expenses which would be considered employment-related expenses under Code Section 21(b)(2) and as such are amounts incurred to enable the Participant and the Participant's spouse to seek or maintain gainful employment during a period for which one or more of the Participant's Dependents qualifies as a Qualifying Individual. Expenses include expenses for household services and the care of a Qualifying Individual. If expenses are incurred with regard to a dependent care center, such dependent care center must

comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations, must provide care for at least six nonresident individuals, and must receive fees, payments, or grants for providing such services. However, payments for these services made to a child of the Participant under age 19, or a person for whom the Participant may claim an income tax deduction under Code Section 151(c), do not constitute Dependent Care Expenses and are not reimbursable under the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan.

- E. "Dependent Care Reimbursement Account" shall mean the account established pursuant to Article VIII.A for each Participant allocating Salary Conversions as Dependent Care Salary Conversions.
- F. "Dependent Care Salary Conversions" means that portion of a Participant's Salary Conversion designated and allocated for the purpose of Dependent Care Expense reimbursement pursuant to Article IV.
- G. "Earned Income" means income earned by the Participant or the spouse, including the Participant's Compensation, and as defined under Code Section 32(c)(2). The Participant's Earned Income shall not include any amounts paid by the Employer on behalf of the Participant or reimbursed by the Employer to the Participant under this Program. In accordance with Code Section 21(d)(2), if the Participant's spouse has no Earned Income or minimal Earned Income as a result of being physically or mentally disabled or a full-time student at an educational institution for a minimum of 5 months during the calendar year, it will be assumed that the Participant's spouse has an Earned Income of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for each month of being disabled or being a student; if in addition to such spouse the Participant has one or more Dependents who qualify as Qualifying Individuals, it will be assumed that the spouse then has an Earned Income of Four Hundred Dollars (\$400.00) for each month of being disabled or a student.
- H. "Effective Date" means January 1, 1990, the date on which the Program is effective.
- I. "Employee" means any person employed by the Employer, including ordained ministers.  
An employee does not include a self-employed individual described in Section 401(c) of the Code such as an independent contractor.
- J. "Employer" means The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).  
"Employer" shall not be construed to mean the Presbyteries of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, the Congregations of each Presbytery, or subsidiaries and affiliated corporations of The Synod.
- K. "ERISA" means the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 as amended from time to time.
- L. "Health Care Expenses" means expenses incurred for the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of Sickness, Injury, or defect. Health Care Expenses shall include, but be limited to, any payment for the purpose of affecting any structure or function of the body, for any hospital or nursing charges, optometric, ophthalmological, or auditory care, dental care, psychiatric care, prescriptions (including drugs, eyeglasses, or hearing aid appliances), medical-related transportation expenses, or all other medical care as defined in Section 213 of the Code.
- M. "Health Care Reimbursement Account" shall mean the account established pursuant to Article VII.A for each Participant allocating Salary Conversions to such account
- N. "Health Care Salary Conversion" means that portion of a Participant's Salary Conversion designated and allocated for the purpose of Health Care Expense Reimbursement pursuant to Article IV.

- O. "Injury" means an externally caused sudden hurt or damage to the body brought about by an identifiable event.
- P. "Participant" means a person who is an Employee on or after January 1, 1990, and who satisfies the participation conditions of Article III by electing to make Salary Conversions. An Employee who becomes a Participant shall remain a Participant as long as he or she continues to meet the requirements of Article III. Further, a Participant who terminates employment during a Period of Coverage shall remain a Participant in the Health Care Reimbursement Plan for the duration of such Period of Coverage in accordance with Article VII.B, and in the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan to the extent that a positive account balance remains for such Participant.
- Q. "Participation Dates" shall mean the Effective Date of the Plan or the date(s) the Employee satisfies the eligibility requirements of Article III.A if later, and each succeeding January 1.
- R. "Period of Coverage" with respect to Pre-Tax Plan Premium Salary Conversions, Health Care Salary Conversions and Dependent Care Salary Conversions, means a Plan Year plus the two and one-half (2.5) calendar months following the end of the Plan Year. If an Employee is not a Participant for an entire Plan Year, Period of Coverage means that portion of a Plan Year during which the Employee is a Participant.
- S. "Plan Administrator" means the Employer, or the person or persons appointed pursuant to Article XII to administer the Program.
- T. "Plan Year" means the twelve-month period commencing January 1 and ending December 31.
- U. "Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion" means that portion of a Participant's Salary Conversion which is designated and allocated to one or more Welfare Benefit Plans under the Pre-Tax Premium Plan pursuant to the provisions of Article IV.
- V. "Program" means the Section 125 Cafeteria Benefit Program as set forth herein and as may be amended or restated from time to time.
- W. "Qualifying Individual" means a dependent of the Participant who as described in Section 21(b) of the Code is under the age of 13, and with respect to whom the Participant is allowed a tax deduction under Section 151(c) of the Code, a Dependent of the Participant who is physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself or herself, or the Participant's spouse if the spouse is physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself or herself.
- X. "Salary Conversion" means that cumulative portion of a Participant's Compensation which he or she elects to convert as Pre-Tax Premium, Health Care, or Dependent Care Salary Conversions pursuant to Article IV for purposes of having such amount applied as Welfare Benefit Plan Premium and/or as reimbursement for eligible expenses according to the provisions of the Program. By electing to make a Salary Conversion, the Participant elects to receive payment by the Employer of Welfare Benefit Plan Premiums, and/or reimbursement for Medical Care Expenses and/or Dependent Care Expenses in lieu of Compensation. The Participant's Compensation is reduced by the amount of any Salary Conversions.
- Y. "Sickness" means all bodily infirmities, diseases, mental illnesses, and other disorders other than an injury.
- Z. "Welfare Benefit Plan" means a welfare benefit plan of the Employer, insured or self-insured, including any group or individual medical, dental, vision and/or hearing benefit plans, any health maintenance organizations, and any life insurance and/or short or long term disability insurance

plans to which the Employer subscribes or may subscribe in the future, through which medical, dental, vision, hearing, death and/or disability benefits are provided to Employees. "Welfare Benefit Plan" shall not mean any death or disability benefits provided through or from a retirement plan or any type sponsored or funded by the Employer.

A.A. "Welfare Benefit Plan Premium" means the amount of contribution, if any, required of the Employee as a condition of participation for individual or family coverages under a Welfare Benefit Plan.

### **III. Eligibility and Participation**

#### **A. ELIGIBILITY**

For purposes of becoming a Participant on or after the Effective Date of this Program, an Employee must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

1. For purposes of the Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion, the Employee must be a participant in one or more Welfare Benefit Plan(s) according to the eligibility rules established by the Employer for such Welfare Benefit Plan(s).
2. For purposes of the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account and/or the Health Care Reimbursement Account, the Employee is eligible to participate as of the first payroll date following 90 days of employment.

#### **B. PARTICIPATION**

Any Employee who satisfies the conditions of Article III.A shall be eligible to participate in the Program by completing and returning to the Plan Administrator all required enrollment forms.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the participation of Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement shall be conditioned upon provisions in such collective bargaining agreements so providing for the participation of such Employees.

As a condition of participation for purposes of Salary Conversions, a Participant agrees to:

1. Observe all rules and regulations governing this Program; and
2. Execute and deliver to the Plan Administrator an ELECTION FORM specifying the effective dates of participation, the amount of Compensation which is to be converted as Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions, Health Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversions and/or Dependent Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversions, and supply any other pertinent information as may be reasonably required by the Plan Administrator; and
3. Execute and deliver to the Plan Administrator written Reimbursement Account Claim Forms including all reports, bills, and other information which the Plan Administrator may reasonably require; and
4. Consent to inquiries by the Plan Administrator with respect to any physician, hospital, or other provider of Health Care or Dependent Care involved in a claim under this Program.

Employees declining participation in the Program when initially eligible may become a Participant on any subsequent January 1.

#### **IV. Salary Conversion**

##### **A. SALARY CONVERSION ELECTIONS**

Each Participant may elect for any Plan Year (or Period of Coverage, if shorter) to designate a portion of his or her Compensation during each pay period of such Plan Year as a Salary Conversion. Such election may be made at any time during the open enrollment period preceding such Plan Year or, for Employees becoming eligible during a Plan Year, during the 30-day period preceding his or her Participation Date. By electing to make Salary Conversions a Participant elects, to such extent, to receive benefits under the Pre-Tax Premium Plan, the Health Care Reimbursement Plan and/or the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan in lieu of Compensation each pay period during such Plan Year (Period of Coverage).

The open enrollment period shall be the month of November preceding each Plan Year.

##### **B. AMOUNT AND ALLOCATION OF SALARY CONVERSIONS**

The amount of a Participant's Salary Conversions shall be the amount designated by the Participant on his or her most recent ELECTION FORM and approved by the Plan Administrator. The Participant shall designate for a Period of Coverage the amount of his or her Salary Conversion which shall be allocated as a Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion, the amount which shall be allocated as Health Care Salary Conversion, and the amount which shall be allocated as Dependent Care Salary Conversion. The amount allocated as a Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion shall be automatically adjusted for any changes in the premium amount made during a Period of Coverage.

By reason of making Salary Conversions each Participant thereby elects for such Period of Coverage that the Employer shall:

1. Apply such Participant's Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions as Employer contributions under the Pre-Tax Premium Plan toward any amounts required of the Participant as Employee contributions toward individual or family coverage under the Welfare Benefit Plans;
2. Apply such Participant's Health Care Salary Conversions as Employer contributions to his account under the Health Care Reimbursement Plan; and
3. Apply such Participant's Dependent Care Salary Conversions as Employer contributions to his account under the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan.

##### **C. SALARY CONVERSIONS AS EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Salary Conversions made in accordance with Participant elections under this Program shall be construed as Employer contributions in accordance with Code Section 125.

##### **D. MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARY CONVERSIONS**

There shall be a required minimum annual contribution of \$120 per Plan Year (\$5 per pay period) to the Health Care Reimbursement Account and \$600 per Plan Year (\$25 per pay period) to the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account. Subject to other limitations of the Program, the maximum amount of Compensation which a Participant may designate as a Salary Conversion in any Period of Coverage is the total of:

1. Pre-Tax Salary Conversions in the amount of the actual contributions required of the Participant during such Plan Year for individual or family coverage under the Welfare Benefit Plans, plus

2. Health Care Reimbursement Plan Salary Conversions of \$5,000.00, plus
3. Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan Salary Conversions of \$5,000.00.

The maximum Health Care Reimbursement Salary Conversion shall be reduced on a pro-rata basis for new Participants whose Period of Coverage commences during a Plan Year.

E. PARTICIPANT ELECTION CHANGES

A Participant's elected Salary Conversion, and the allocation of such Salary Conversion as a Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion, Health Care Salary Conversion and/or Dependent Care Salary Conversion may be changed or revoked by the Participant as of January 1. Such change or revocation may be made at any time during the open enrollment period by the submission of a new ELECTION FORM. Any such changes or revocation shall be applicable to the next Period of Coverage (Plan Year).

F. CHANGES OF SALARY CONVERSIONS UPON CHANGE IN FAMILY STATUS

Article IV.E above notwithstanding, a Participant may revoke a Salary Conversion election or allocation and make a new Salary Conversion election or allocation during a Period of Coverage if both the revocation and the new election are on account of and consistent with a change in family status resulting from:

1. Marriage, or
2. Divorce, or
3. Death of spouse or child, or
4. Birth or adoption of child, or
5. A significant change of employment status of spouse or employee, or
6. A significant change in the employee's or spouse's health coverage attributable to the spouse's employment.

Any revocation and new election made pursuant to this Article IV.F shall be made by submission of a CHANGE OF ELECTION FORM within 30 days of the family status change and, if approved by the Plan Administrator, shall be effective for the remainder of the Period of Coverage following such change in election, and shall not be effective for the portion of the Period of Coverage occurring before such change in election.

G. NO OTHER CHANGES IN SALARY CONVERSIONS

Other than as provided in Articles IV.E and IV.F, a Participant may not change or revoke his or her Salary Conversion election or allocation.

H. DURATION OF PARTICIPANT ELECTIONS

A Participant's most recent Salary Conversion and allocation of such Salary Conversion or a Participant's revocation of Salary Conversions shall remain in effect until revoked or changed pursuant to Article IV.E or IV.F.

I. SALARY REDUCTION

A Participant's Compensation for any Period of Coverage shall be reduced by the amount of the Participant's selected Salary Conversion in effect for such Period of Coverage.

**J. LIMITATION ON SALARY CONVERSIONS OF EMPLOYEES**

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, total Salary Conversions of "Key Employees" during a Plan Year shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total accumulated Salary Conversions of all Employees for such Plan Year.

For purposes of this Article IV.J, "Key Employee" shall mean any Participant or a Beneficiary of such Participant who, at any time during a Plan Year or of the four (4) preceding Plan Years, is an Officer of the Employer (but in no event shall more than fifty Employees or, if lesser, the greater of 3% or 10% of the Employees, be treated as officers) having annual compensation greater than 150% of the amount in effect under Code Section 415(c)(1)(A).

**V. Employer Contributions**

**SALARY CONVERSION CONTRIBUTIONS**

An Employee's Salary Conversions and allocations of such Salary Conversions as Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions, Health Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversions and/or Dependent Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversions shall be contributed by the Employer as Employer contributions under the Welfare Premium Benefit Plan, the Health Care Reimbursement Plan, and/or the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan, according to the allocations of the Participant.

**VI. Pre-tax premium plan**

**A. PRE-TAX PREMIUM SALARY CONVERSIONS**

Pursuant to Article IV.B, each Participant may elect to allocate for any Period of Coverage all or a portion of his or her Salary Conversion as Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions, if required of any Employee who participates in the Welfare Benefit Plans.

**B. APPLICATION OF PRE-TAX PREMIUM SALARY CONVERSION**

Pursuant to Article IV.B, the Employer shall apply a Participant's Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversion as Employer contributions toward the Employee's Welfare Benefit Plan Premium for one or more such Welfare Benefit Plans, as directed by the Employee.

**C. ADJUSTMENT OF PRE-TAX PREMIUM SALARY CONVERSION**

As provided under Article IV.B and XII.B.5, the Plan Administrator shall have discretion at any time to adjust Participant's Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions in response to changes in the amounts required of Participants and/or their eligible dependents for coverage under the Welfare Benefit Plans.

**VII. Health Care Reimbursement Account Plan**

**A. HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS**

A Health Care Reimbursement Account shall be established for each Participant participating under the Health Care Reimbursement Plan. Each Health Care Reimbursement Account shall initially contain zero dollars (\$0.00) as of the beginning of each Period of Coverage.

B. ADDITIONS TO A PARTICIPANT'S HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT

A Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account shall be increased from time to time during a Period of Coverage in an amount equal to the Participant's total Health Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversion election, divided by the number of applicable payroll periods over which the total amount will be deducted from the Participant's Compensation.

With respect to this Health Care Reimbursement Account Plan only, a Participant's required contributions to his or her Health Care Reimbursement Account shall not cease merely because of the Participant's termination of employment with the Employer during a Period of Coverage. A Participant who has terminated employment with the Employer will be required to pay directly to the Plan Administrator the amount necessary to complete the funding of his or her Health Care Reimbursement Account up to the amount elected by the Participant for such Period of Coverage.

The Participant who has terminated employment during a Period of Coverage shall, with the approval of the Plan Administrator, pay the balance due in a lump sum to the Plan Administrator, or in equal monthly installments over the time period remaining in the Period of Coverage. Such contributions by the Participant after termination of employment shall be made with after-tax contributions.

The Plan Administrator may establish such procedures as are necessary, including a lump sum deduction from any final paycheck or the periodic billing of former Participants, to assure that the former Participant fully funds his or her Health Care Reimbursement Account.

C. DECREASES IN HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENT PLAN ACCOUNTS

A Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account shall be reduced during a Period of Coverage by the amount of any benefits paid to a Participant pursuant to Article VII.D.

D. HEALTH CARE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Subject to the limitations contained in Article IV.D, a Participant who incurs documented covered health care expenses attributable to himself or herself, his or her spouse, or his or her Dependents during a Period of Coverage shall be entitled to receive from the Plan Administrator reimbursement for such expenses. Only those expenses for which the Participant has a receipt from the provider of the service or supply, which includes the amount of the expense and the date incurred, will be eligible for reimbursement.

The Plan Administrator shall reimburse to the Participant from the Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account the full amount of the expenses submitted by the Participant, not to exceed the amount allocated by the Participant to his or her Health Care Reimbursement Account for the Period of Coverage. Amounts reimbursed which exceed the Participant's accumulated Health Care Reimbursement Account contributions at any time during the Period of Coverage shall be paid from the assets of the Employer, and recovered by the Employer from future accruals to the Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account.

E. TERMINATED PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS

Participants who terminate employment with the Employer may continue to request reimbursement for eligible expenses for the duration of the then-current Period of Coverage in accordance with VII.D.



F. FREQUENCY OF CLAIMS AND MINIMUM CLAIM AMOUNTS

Participants in the Health Care Reimbursement Account Plan may submit claims to the Plan Administrator for reimbursement at any time. The minimum claim that may be submitted is \$20, except that claims of less than \$20 may be submitted at the end of any Plan Year.

The Plan Administrator reserves the right to process claims and make reimbursements once a month for all claims submitted in the previous 30 or 31 days.

The Plan Administrator shall have the authority to establish other rules and provisions as may be necessary for the expeditious administration of the Plan, except that the Plan Administrator may not require claim submission less frequently than once a month, establish a minimum claim amount greater than \$50, or make reimbursements less frequently than once each calendar month.

G. HEALTH CARE EXPENSES MUST BE INCURRED DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF COVERAGE

A Participant's Health Care Expenses may not be reimbursed during a Period of Coverage unless:

1. The Participant has elected to allocate Salary Conversions to the Health Care Reimbursement Plan for such Period of Coverage, and
2. Such Health Care Expenses are actually incurred during such Period of Coverage. (Health Care Expenses incurred before or after the Participant's current Period of Coverage may not be reimbursed during such Period of Coverage.)

For purposes of Article VII.G.2, Health Care Expenses are incurred when the Participant (or his or her spouse or Dependent) is provided with the medical care that gives rise to the Health Care Expenses (and not when the Participant, spouse or Dependent is formally billed, charged for, or pays for the medical care).

H. LIMITATIONS ON HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENTS

Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, no reimbursement for expenses shall be made under this Plan in the event and to the extent that such expense is covered under any insurance policy or policies, whether paid for by the Employer or the participant, or under any other health and accident plan by whomever maintained. In the event that there is such a policy or plan in effect providing for such reimbursement or payment of these expenses, in whole or in part, then to the extent of the coverage under such policy or plan, the Employer shall be relieved of any liability under this Health Care Reimbursement Plan.

I. NO DEDUCTION FOR REIMBURSED EXPENSES

Medical expenses reimbursed under this Plan shall not be deductible by the Participant on his or her federal or state income tax returns.

J. COVERED MEDICAL EXPENSES

Medical expenses which can be reimbursed by a Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account shall be limited to those services and supplies listed in Appendix A to this document.

## **VIII. Dependent Care Reimbursement Account Plan**

### **A. DEPENDENT CARE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS**

A Dependent Care Reimbursement Account shall be established for each Participant participating under the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan Account and shall initially contain zero dollars (\$0.00) as of the beginning of each Period of Coverage.

### **B. INCREASED IN DEPENDENT CARE REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNTS**

A Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account shall be increased from time to time during a Period of Coverage in an amount equal to the Participant's total Dependent Care Reimbursement Account Salary Conversion allocation, divided by the number of applicable payroll periods over which the total amount will be deducted from the Participant's Compensation.

Allocations to the Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account shall cease upon the Participant's termination of employment with the Employer.

### **C. DECREASES IN DEPENDENT CARE REIMBURSEMENT PLAN ACCOUNTS**

A Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account shall be reduced during a Period of Coverage by the amount of any benefits paid to or on behalf of a Participant pursuant to Article VIII.D.

### **D. DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

Subject to limitations contained in Articles IV.D and VIII.H of this Program, and to the extent of the amount contained in the Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account, a Participant who incurs documented expenses for Dependent Care attributable to his or her eligible Dependents during a Period of Coverage shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for such expenses to the Participant upon the presentation to the Plan Administrator of a statement and proof of payment for such expenses in a form satisfactory to the Plan Administrator.

The Plan Administrator shall reimburse to the Participant from the Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account the full amount of the expenses submitted, but not to exceed the lesser of: (1) the accumulated value of the Participant's account or (2) the maximum Salary Conversion allocated by the Participant pursuant to Article IV.D.

Claims which exceed (1) above but are less than (2) above will not be reimbursed until such time as additional contributions are made to the Participant's account pursuant to Article VIII.B.

### **E. TERMINATED PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS**

Participants who terminate employment with the Employer may continue to request reimbursement for eligible expenses for the duration of the then-current Period of Coverage to the extent that a positive balance remains in his or her account.

### **F. FREQUENCY OF CLAIMS AND MINIMUM CLAIM AMOUNTS**

Participants in the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account Plan may submit claims to the Plan Administrator for reimbursement at any time. The minimum claim that may be submitted is \$50, except that claims of less than \$50 may be submitted at the end of any Plan Year.

The Plan Administrator reserves the right to process claims and make reimbursements once a month for all claims submitted in the previous 30 or 31 days.

The Plan Administrator shall have the authority to establish other rules and provisions as may be necessary for the expeditious administration of the Plan, except that the Plan Administrator may not require claim submission less frequently than once a month, establish a minimum claim amount greater than \$50, or make reimbursements less frequently than once each calendar month.

In the event that a Participant ceases to be an Employee during a Period of Coverage, upon presentation to the Plan Administrator by such Participant of satisfactory statements and proofs of payment, the Plan Administrator shall pay during the remainder of such Period of Coverage all approved Dependent Care Expenses of such Participant to the extent of the amount remaining in the Participant's Dependent Care Reimbursement Account.

**G. DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSES MUST BE INCURRED DURING CURRENT PERIOD OF COVERAGE**

A Participant's Dependent Care Expenses may not be reimbursed during a Period of Coverage unless:

1. The Participant has elected to allocate Salary Conversions to the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan for such Period of Coverage, and
2. Such Dependent Care Expenses are actually incurred during such Period of Coverage. (Dependent Care Expenses incurred before or after the Participant's current Period of Coverage may not be reimbursed during such Period of Coverage.)

For purposes of Article VIII.G.2, Dependent Care Expenses are incurred when the dependent care is provided (and not when the Participant formally billed, charged for, or pays for the dependent care).

**H. LIMITATIONS ON DEPENDENT CARE REIMBURSEMENTS**

Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, a Participant's total Dependent Care Reimbursement under Article VIII.D in any calendar year shall not exceed:

1. In the case of a Participant who is not married as of the last day of the calendar year, an amount equal to such Participant's Earned Income for such calendar year; or
2. In the case of a Participant who is married as of the last day of the calendar year, an amount equal to the lesser of the Earned Income of the Participant or his or her spouse for such calendar year.

**IX. Termination of Employment**

**A. DISPOSITION OF SALARY CONVERSIONS AND ACCOUNT BALANCES**

Upon a Participant's termination of employment by reason of his or her death, disability, retirement, or other termination of employment, his or her elected Salary Conversions shall cease at such time as he or she ceases to receive Compensation.

Except as provided in Articles VII.E, VIII.E, and VIII.F the Participant, his or her spouse and Dependents shall no longer be eligible to participate under the Pre-Tax Premium Plan, the Health Care Reimbursement Plan and/or the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan.

## **B. EFFECT OF COBRA**

Upon termination of coverage under the reimbursement account portion of the Plan, continuation of coverage, if any, will be administered pursuant to the rules set out in the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), Part 6 of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 4980B of the Internal Revenue Code, including applicable regulations.

## **X. Period of Coverage Year-End**

### **A. DISPOSITION OF SALARY CONVERSIONS AND ACCOUNT BALANCES**

As of the end of each Period of Coverage, any Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions of a Participant which have not been applied as Employer contributions under the Welfare Premium Benefit Plan shall be forfeited to the Employer; likewise, any amounts remaining under a Participant's Health Care Expenses or Dependent Care Expenses shall be forfeited to the Employer.

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, any Health Care Expenses and Dependent Care Expenses incurred by a Participant during the Period of Coverage, and approved for reimbursement within 90 days following such Period of Coverage, shall be reimbursed prior to any amounts being forfeited from such Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account or Dependent Care Reimbursement Account.

### **B. DISPOSITION OF FORFEITURES**

The Employer shall have sole discretion as to the disposition of any amounts forfeited pursuant to Article X.A. In no event, however, shall the Employer directly or indirectly re-allocate forfeitures among individual Participants in a manner or in amounts relative to the amounts or the ratio of forfeitures of such individual Participants.

## **XI. Claims Procedure**

The Plan Administrator shall notify a person within one hundred and twenty (120) days of his or her claim for benefits of his or her eligibility or non-eligibility for benefits under the Program. If the Plan Administrator determines that a person is not eligible for any benefits or for full benefits, the notice shall set forth (1) the specific reasons for such denial, (2) a specific reference to the provisions of the Program on which denial is based, (3) a description of any additional information or material necessary for the claimant to perfect his or her claim (and an explanation of why such information or material is necessary), and (4) an explanation of the Program's claims review procedure, written in a manner calculated to be understood by the person. If a person is determined by the Plan Administrator not to be eligible for benefits, or if the person believes that he or she is entitled to greater or different benefits, he or she shall have the opportunity to have his or her claim reviewed by the Plan Administrator within sixty (60) days after receipt by him or her of the notice issued by the Plan Administrator. Said petition shall state the specific reasons the person believes he or she is entitled to benefits, or greater or different benefits. Within fifteen (15) days after receipt by the Plan Administrator of said petition, the Plan Administrator shall afford the person (and his or her counsel, if any) an opportunity to present his or her position to the Plan Administrator orally or in writing, and said person (or his or her counsel) shall have the right to review the pertinent documents. Within fifteen (15) days after said hearing or the date of receipt of the petition if the person does not request a hearing the Plan Administrator shall notify the person of his/her decision in writing, written in a

manner calculated to be understood by the person, stating specifically the basis of said decision and specific provisions of the Plan on which the decision is based.

## **XII. Administration and Finances**

### **A. ADMINISTRATION**

The Program shall be administered by the Employer, which may delegate any of its powers or responsibilities to one or more of its Employees and to such other agents as the Employer deems appropriate.

### **B. POWERS OF THE PLAN ADMINISTRATOR**

The Plan Administrator shall have all powers which are necessary to administer the Program, including, without limitation, the power to:

1. Interpret the provisions of the Program;
2. Establish and revise the method of accounting for the Program and to maintain the accounts; and
3. Establish rules for the administration of the Program and to prescribe any forms required to administer the Program.
4. Adjust the Salary Conversion elections of key employees (as defined in Article IV.J and Section 416(i)(1) of the Code) and highly compensated employees (as defined in Section 414(q) of the Code) to the extent necessary to prevent a violation of the non-discrimination provisions of Section 123 of the Code; and

In its discretion, adjust Participant's Pre-Tax Premium Salary Conversions in response to changes in the amounts required of Participants and/or their eligible dependents for coverage under the Welfare Benefit Plans.

### **C. ACTIONS OF THE PLAN ADMINISTRATOR**

All determinations, interpretations, rules, and decisions of the Plan Administrator shall be conclusive and binding upon all persons having or claiming to have any interest or right under the Program.

### **D. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

The expenses of administering the Program shall be paid by the Employer.

### **E. INTEREST ON SALARY CONVERSION CONTRIBUTIONS**

There shall be no interest credited, paid, or accrued on Salary Conversion Contributions.

## **XIII. Miscellaneous Provisions**

### **A. AMENDMENTS**

The Employer may amend the Program from time to time. Any such amendment shall be filed with the Program documents.

Employees shall be notified of amendments to this Program in the manner and time prescribed by ERISA.

B. TERMINATION

The Employer expects the Program to be permanent, but necessarily must, and hereby does, reserve the right to terminate the Program at any time. Neither the Employer nor any of its Employees shall have any further financial obligations hereunder from and after such termination of the Program except such that have accrued up to the date of termination and have not been satisfied.

C. NON-ALIENATION

No benefit payable at any time under this Program shall be subject in any manner to alienation, sale, transfer, assignment, pledge, attachment, or encumbrance of any kind.

D. APPLICABLE LAW

The Program and all rights hereunder shall be governed by and construed according to the laws of the State of Minnesota except to the extent such laws are preempted by the laws of the United States of America.

E. PROGRAM NOT AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

The establishment of the Cafeteria Benefit Program shall not be construed as constituting an employment contract between the Employer and any Participant or other Employee. The Cafeteria Benefit Program shall not be deemed to confer any legal or other rights upon any Participant or Employee for continuation of employment and shall not interfere with the right of the Employer to discharge any Participant or Employee, regardless of the effect such discharge shall have with respect to participation in the Cafeteria Benefit Program.

F. NO PERSONAL LIABILITY

Subject to the limitations of Article VI of the Synod's Articles of Incorporation or any provisions of the Bylaws, no provisions contained in the Cafeteria Benefit Program shall impose on any Employees, officers, or directors of the Employer any personal liability for any benefits payable to any Participant or Dependent under the Employer's Welfare Benefit Plans, the Dependent Care Reimbursement Plan, or the Health Care Reimbursement Plan.

G. SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS

If any provision of any of the Cafeteria Benefit Program is held to be invalid by any court or other competent authority with jurisdiction over the Program, such provision will be disregarded and considered invalid. Such invalidation will not impair the Program and all other provisions will be construed and enforced as if the Program did not contain such invalid provision.

H. HEADINGS

The headings and subheadings in this Cafeteria Benefit Program document are provided for convenience or reference only and are not to be considered in the construction of its provisions.

**APPENDIX A: LIST OF REIMBURSABLE HEALTH CARE EXPENSES**

The fees of the medical professionals practicing within the scope of their licenses and the cost of the services and supplies listed below shall be reimbursable from a Participant's Health Care Reimbursement Account to the extent these fees, services or supplies are not covered by the Participant's (or spouse's) medical and/or dental Welfare Benefit Plan(s). This list is intended as examples of reimbursable expenses and not to be all-inclusive.

Abortion	Obstetrician
Acupuncture	Oculist
Ambulance Hire	Operations and related treatment
Anesthetist	Ophthalmologist
Artificial limbs and teeth	Optometrist
Birth Control pills	Orthodontics
Blood donor (expense)	Osteopath
Chiropodist	Oxygen equipment
Chiropractor	Pediatrician
Christian Science Practitioners	Physician
Clinic	Podiatrist
Convalescent facility	Practical Nurse
Dentist	Prescribed drugs and medicines
Diathermy	Psychiatrist
Dialysis	Psychoanalyst (medical care only)
Doctor	Psychologist (medical care only)
Examination, physical	Psychopathist
Eye examination	Rental of medical equipment
Eyeglasses	Sanitarium
Guide dog	Sex therapist
Gynecologist	Special schooling for physically or mentally handicapped child
Hearing Devices	Sterilization
Hospice Care	Support or corrective devices (such as orthopedic shoes)
Hospital	Surgeon
Iron lung, operating cost	Therapy (speech, physical, occupational)
Laboratory	X-ray and other diagnostic procedures
Lip-reading lessons	Nurses' expenses and board
Midwife	

The Health Care Reimbursement Plan can also be used by Participants for reimbursement of certain out-of-pocket health and dental expenses not reimbursed by any medical or dental Welfare Benefit Plan, health Maintenance Organization or Dental Maintenance Organization, or similar health or dental Benefit Plan. Such out-of-pocket expenses that may be reimbursed by the Health Care Reimbursement Plan include:

- Deductibles of all types (calendar year, per cause, per type of expense)
- Coinsurance or copayments
- Expenses that exceed usual, reasonable, and customary fee levels of the Benefit Plan insurer or administrator
- Expenses that exceed Benefit Plan limitations, including annual, lifetime, per cause or type of service maximums

## Chapter 15: Travel/Professional Expense Policy

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy statement is to clarify and define the use of travel/professional expense accounts and reflect personal stewardship. It is the intention of the Synod that staff members and volunteers be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses connected with travel while conducting Synod business.

### B. Reimbursable Business Expense

The Synod shall pay all regular travel/professional expenses incurred by the traveler in the performance of his or her work on behalf of the Synod. It is the policy of the Synod that all work related travel is assigned to the staff person's travel budget and is not to be charged to a program budget. Travel on behalf of non-Synod staff persons will ordinarily be charged to the appropriate committee expense or other line item, as determined by the Director of Finance. Synod Officer and volunteer travel expenses are subject to the same guidelines and policies as staff. The Synod **WILL** reimburse the following:

1. Personal vehicle by Synod and presbytery staff: Use to and from the business or meeting site (other than to and from the Synod office or other normal place of business) at the per mile rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for employee business use of a personal vehicle. Whenever a vehicle is used and more than one person is traveling, employees will ordinarily car-pool, when practical. Consideration will be given to using a rental car when the total charges can reasonably be expected to be less than reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle.

Personal vehicle by others: Use to and from the business or meeting site at the per mile rate of 25¢ for travel in a personal vehicle. Car-pooling is to be encouraged by reimbursing the driver an additional 5¢ per mile for each additional authorized traveler. Any tax consequences that may be incurred by the driver are the responsibility of the driver.

2. Tolls and parking
3. Bus, taxi, and limousine expense: the least expensive alternative
4. Auto rental: A car may be rented when necessary or cost effective for Synod responsibilities. The Synod should be named on the rental contract in addition to the traveler. Charging the rental car on the Synod credit card will provide collision insurance; therefore, the Synod credit card must be utilized for this expense at the time of the rental. Travelers other than those in possession of a Synod credit card should consult their personal insurance agent to determine whether personal insurance coverage will extend to a vehicle rented for Synod business purposes.
5. Air transportation by common carrier: the most economical method of transportation should be used. Normally, air transportation will be used only when travel by personal automobile would be five hours or more, one way. When two or more travelers are traveling together, consideration will be given to driving more than five hours before deciding upon air travel. Circumstances of schedule, health, or other factors may determine whether one travels by air or by automobile. If travel is to be by air, every effort must be made to plan far enough in advance to obtain the least expensive coach class rate. Ordinarily, reimbursement will be made only for the least costly non-refundable coach airfare available three weeks or more in advance of travel. Deviations from this policy for staff travel must be approved by the Synod



Executive (or by the Treasurer in the case of Synod Executive travel). Deviations from policy for non-staff must be approved by either the Synod Executive or Treasurer. Deviations from policy will be routinely approved when the meeting involved was not scheduled far enough in advance to allow for advance purchase of air transportation.

6. General aviation travel
  - a. Travelers are not encouraged to travel by private aircraft.
  - b. If approved in advance by the Synod Executive, reimbursement shall not exceed the cost for the same travel by common carrier for all those authorized to travel for the Synod.
  - c. If not approved in advance, reimbursement shall not exceed the cost for the same travel by personal automobile.
  - d. All private pilots flying for Synod purposes shall maintain a minimum of \$1,000,000 in liability insurance, naming the Synod as co-insured.
7. Hotel/Motel accommodations: Economy or mid-range hotels are to be used when available. When traveling together, travelers will be housed two to a room unless they each pay the cost differential. Exceptions are reasons of gender or medical conditions.
8. Meals: the reasonable cost of the following of meals are reimbursable:
  - a. Meals when traveling overnight on Synod business.
  - b. Meals while meeting with Synod Committee members (charged as a Committee expense).
  - c. Meals of guests where prudence calls for the Synod to pay.
  - d. Other meals deemed appropriate by the Synod Executive.
9. Professional Expense: Dues for professional organizations related to one's Synod responsibilities may be charged to one's travel expense account with the approval of the Synod Executive.

III. Items for which a traveler **WILL NOT** be reimbursed:

- A. Meals where one works; these are considered personal expenses. An exception is when the meal is during a meeting for the Synod's benefit.
- B. Commuting to and from the employee's home to the usual place of business (e.g., Synod Office).
- C. Hotel accommodations within a reasonable commuting distance from the employee's home, except as required by meeting purposes.
- D. Personal clothing items including cleaning thereof.
- E. Surcharge on canceled or changed airline tickets if the change is for the convenience of the traveler.
- F. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, and all drugs (legal or illegal).

#### IV. Guidelines

- A. Expense reporting: Travelers are to keep an accurate record of expenses and will submit a report for reimbursement on the Synod's form at least monthly. Travelers are to document each expense, including such items as purpose/location of travel, itemization of expenses, information on people entertained and nature of discussion, and purpose and nature of other expenses.

Receipts for all expense items are encouraged; receipts must support expense items of \$20.00 or more. All expenses must be of reasonable cost and necessary for the conduct of Synod business.

The cost of alcoholic beverages **is not** to be charged to the Synod. Each traveler is requested to obtain and submit a detailed receipt for meals showing that alcoholic beverages were not included in the purchase. A credit card receipt without detail is not sufficient.

- B. Credit cards: The Synod will issue a telephone charge card and one general use credit card to each exempt staff member and others as determined by the Synod Executive. Synod credit cards are to be used for Synod expenses only. Each receipt must be attached, and the expense noted on the employee's expenses report form. Expense report forms should be submitted on a timely basis so the Director of Finance can match the invoice from the credit card company with the expense report.
- C. Travel advances: Temporary travel advances for a particular purpose must be approved by the Director of Finance and be in an amount appropriate for the purpose. Temporary advances will be repaid at the time the expense report is submitted. Permanent travel advances for Synod staff members of up to \$500.00 must be approved by the Synod Executive. Permanent advances will be returned upon separation from Synod employment.
- D. Spousal travel: If one's spouse accompanies a traveler on a work-related trip, the traveler is responsible for all spousal expenses. If overnight travel is involved and the traveler would otherwise have shared a room with another Synod traveler, the traveler will be responsible for one-half of the lodging expense. This provision will be waived if disability or health considerations require another's assistance.
- E. Continuing education expenditures (Synod staff only): These are separate expenses and should be submitted on a separate reporting form. All continuing education expenditures and time off for continuing education must be approved **in advance** by the Synod Executive.
- F. Use of seat belts: All travelers, whether drivers or passengers, are to use seat belts in any motor vehicle. The driver will require all passengers to use seat belts.
- G. The appropriateness of any expense not mentioned in this policy shall be determined by the Synod Executive. Approval of and/or determination of the appropriateness of expenses of the Synod Executive will be by the Synod Treasurer.

# **SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES**

## **I. POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and all entities of the General Assembly that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all Synod of Lakes and Prairies (here after referred to as Synod) sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

## **II. POLICY RATIONALE**

The implementation and documentation of a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- A. Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
- B. Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.
- C. The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is crippled by the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm perpetrated that woefully cripples God’s call on the Church.
- D. The Book of Order states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (Book of Order W-2.3013).
- E. Children and youth are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also, the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s love, in the same way taking up all children and youth into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environment in which to grow in every way.

### III. DEFINITIONS

Each state has its own statutes regarding what is defined as child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse. This policy advises all sponsoring councils and entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to consider and be familiar with state statutes pertaining to the location of each event/activity.

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this particular policy. For the purpose of this policy:

***Child:*** A child will be defined as a person between the ages of 0–11.

***Youth:*** A youth will be defined as a person between the ages of 12–17.

***Minor:*** A minor is any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

***Child/Youth Worker:*** Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at Synod sponsored events or activities involving children and/or youth.

***Vulnerable Adult:*** Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

***Vulnerable Adult Abuse:*** Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

***Child/Youth Abuse:*** Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or youth.

***Sexual Abuse:*** In the *Book of Order*, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (Book of Order, D-7.0901).

***Misuse of technology:*** The use of technology that results in the harassing or abusing of a child/youth. This includes using technology to send suggestive message and images to a child or youth. Adults should not have any technological contact with a child or youth that is not either preapproved by the child/youth’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, or the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church website or another social media program.

***Safe Child Response Team:*** The Safe Child Response Team is a team comprised of a minimum of three members of/or appointed by the sponsoring council or entity of the Synod who are specifically trained to respond to allegations and reports of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse at Synod sponsored activities. This team must be readily available when needed.

#### **IV. SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Any adult who works in a child/youth program at a Synod event, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to:

- A. The Synod's receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the event policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references. All forms will be reviewed by a Synod staff member and/or at least one member of the Planning Team or committee responsible for the event or its designee. The review will include:
  - 1. Checking form for completeness.
  - 2. Confirmation that teachers and leaders are at least 18 years old and three years older than the oldest youth they are serving.
  - 3. Reviewing answers to questions.
  - 4. Securing references or additional information as reviewers deem necessary.
  - 5. Securing appropriate criminal background check.
  - 6. The reviewers will notify a member of the Planning Team and Synod staff assigned to the event if there are questions regarding the approval of an applicant.
  - 7. Persons not approved will be notified in writing.
  - 8. Completed forms and related confidential information will be kept in confidential files in the Synod office for six years.
  - 9. Approval will apply for three years. After that period, the applicant must reapply.
  - 10. No person shall be exempt from these procedures.
  - 11. At all times, the Synod reserves the right to determine who shall serve.
- B. The applicant's consent to a criminal background check. The Synod will consult with the insurance company through which they have coverage to determine what background checks are appropriate for their particular event. The Synod will cover the costs of the background checks for all child/youth teachers and leaders.
- C. The Synod shall maintain all child/youth worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.
- D. All child/youth teachers and leaders, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training at least every three years. The training is to be provided by the Synod and shall cover the Synod's child/youth protection policy thoroughly as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The Synod may contract with others to provide these trainings. These trainings shall further cover:
  - 1. What constitutes child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
  - 2. How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
  - 3. What needs to be reported.
  - 4. Review of the Synod policies

5. Appropriate boundaries with children and youth, especially regarding adult/child/youth ratios, transportation, and use of technology.
  6. A detailed reporting plan.
  7. There will be people identified for each Synod sponsored event who are trained in first aid, CPR and AED use.
  8. Other related topics.
- E. Each adult engaged in the leadership of a Synod event shall acknowledge receipt of the Synod Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing an application to be employed, volunteer, or supervise. In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a Synod event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this policy.
- F. No person may work with children/youth at a Synod event who has a conviction on his/her record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
1. Criminal homicide;
  2. Aggravated assault;
  3. Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
  4. Sexual abuse;
  5. Sexual assault;
  6. Injury to a youth;
  7. Incest;
  8. Indecency with a youth;
  9. Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
  10. Possession or promotion of child pornography;
  11. The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
  12. Employment harmful to youth;
  13. Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
  14. Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
  15. Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;
  16. Any crime that involves sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
  17. Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
  18. Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
  19. Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping;

## **V. MANDATORY EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The Synod shall ensure that the following measures be in place and actions taken for each event or activity involving children and youth:

- A. Two-adult rule: Insofar as possible, no adult should be left alone, one on one, with a child or youth. The only exceptions are if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible or when the contact occurs in a public place and other persons are in and out of the areas where the adult is working with children or youth. This will be emphasized during the training of all leaders for children's and youth programs. This rule is intended to protect children and to protect the leaders from false accusation. The Synod is committed to providing adequate personnel for all events so that this rule may be maintained.
- B. Restroom Guidelines: When children are escorted to a bathroom by a teacher or volunteer, that person shall remain outside the bathroom unless a child requests help. Teachers and leaders should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.
- C. Accidental Injuries to: In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:
  - 1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, teachers and leaders will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care or by phone.
  - 2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's coordinator. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
  - 3. Once the child/youth has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional or injuries that prevent the child or youth from participating in the activities.
- D. Minimum age differential: All child and youth teachers and leaders and volunteers must be a minimum of three years older than the age group they lead or supervise.
- E. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there are one or more minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.
- F. View Windows and Open Doors: When minors and adult teachers and leaders or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.
- G. Photos/movies: Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by a signed consent form from the participant's legal guardian. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations (ex. taking age-appropriate photographs and movies, not taking photographs of minors who are not fully clothed).

- H. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance. No minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).
- I. Parental permissions: The Synod will request insurance information and parental permission to seek medical treatment for each child or youth participating in the case of a medical emergency. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off campus events.
- J. Sleeping arrangements: Adults should never share sleeping quarters with children or youth except for their own child(ren) or grandchild(ren). If a child/youth will be staying with someone else, written permission must be given and kept on record from the child/youth's parent/legal guardian.

## VI. CODES OF CONDUCT

All volunteers and employees at any Synod sponsored events must abide by the code of conduct spelled out in the following specific standards of behavior:

### Approval and Affection

In providing approval or affection to children/youth the following guidelines apply for staff and volunteers:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder to shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul> <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child/youth or the employee/volunteer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in an isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting for/with youth</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a child</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child/youth or employee/volunteer</li> <li>• Staring at or commenting on children's bodies.</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas (except for diaper changing)</li> <li>• Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with a minor (under the age of eighteen).</li> </ul>



### Verbal Interactions

The manner of speaking with children/youth establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involving children in personal problems or issues.</li><li>• Having secrets with youth/children.</li><li>• Use of profanity</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Derogatory remarks about anyone</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate children</li></ul>

### One on one interactions

Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a minor, private one on one meetings are prohibited unless approved in advance by the program coordinator. When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:

One on one interaction guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When meeting one on one with a child/youth, always do so in a public place in full view of others.</li><li>• Avoid physical affection that can be misconstrued. (See appropriate physical interactions above)</li><li>• If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.</li><li>• Inform other staff that you are alone with a child/youth and ask them to randomly drop in.</li><li>• Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that could be misinterpreted.</li></ul>

### Other

In addition, employees and volunteers are expected not to:

- A. Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
- A. Possess sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
- B. Abuse youth/children in any way, including (but not limited to) the following:
  - 1. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
  - 2. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
  - 3. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
  - 4. Mental abuse: shame, humiliation, act cruelly.
  - 5. Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
  - 6. Permit children or youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games of Truth or Dare, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity

## **VII. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

### Social Media—Electronic Communications

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationships.

The following practices and guidelines apply principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication. They are intended to raise awareness of issues and open doors of conversations while being mindful that our calling is to meet children and youth where they are; model healthy boundaries; and love and care for them safely. Adults engaged in ministry to youth and children should consider their relationship with the youth or child when interacting with them using digital media, and should conduct themselves in a manner that would be acceptable on church grounds.

The Synod Steering Committee shall review the Social Media Guidelines at least every two years.

We will seek to protect the privacy and identity of all minors in our use of social media. All church leaders and adult leaders in youth and children’s ministry should closely monitor the privacy settings of any posted youth images to ensure that they are not accessible to individuals who do not have permission to view them.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Those who work with children/youth must have permission from a minor’s parent or guardian before contacting the minor via social media or before posting pictures, video, and other information that may identify that minor.</li><li>2. We strongly encourage the respect and dignity of every person depicted in an image. Only pictures depicting youth in an appropriate light should be posted. “Appropriate” pictures may</li></ul> |
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include goofy pictures that the youth’s parents are comfortable being posted. If a picture would make the youth feel self-conscious, vulnerable, or would subject the youth to ridicule, the picture should not be posted.

3. When checking in with any location tagging social media, only check in yourself. Never check in minors. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants’ locations.
4. Social media postings should not disclose sensitive or confidential information unless the person that the information concerns has given written consent to share such information. This might include medical information or other personal matters.
5. Parents must have access to everything provided to their children. For example, parents should be made aware of how social media are being used, be told how to access the sites, and be given the opportunity to be copied on all material sent to their children via social networking (including text messages). While parents should be provided with the same material as their children, it does not have to be via the same technology (that is, if children receive a reminder via Twitter, parents can receive it in a printed form or by an e-mail list).
6. Child/youth teachers and leaders (paid and/or volunteer) are encouraged to save copies of conversations whenever possible, especially those that concern the personal sharing of a teen or young adult.
7. If a child or youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

## VIII. SOCIAL NETWORKING CODE OF CONDUCT

### The Synod Social Networking Code of Conduct:

1. Prohibits comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Prohibits sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
3. Prohibits private messages between volunteers and children or youth. If a minor sends a private text to a volunteer, the volunteer must respond with a copy to either the parent or a Synod staff member.
4. Prohibits posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
5. Provides children, youth, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
6. Encourages parents to play a role in monitoring their children’s and youth interactions with employees and volunteers.

## IX. CONNECTING ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

At times youth may wish to establish social media connections with church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with them. Adults who are willing to participate in these relationships should use the following guidelines when establishing these connections:

1. Adults should not submit 'friend' requests to children or youth. Minors may feel like they are not able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between them and adults. Exceptions to this rule should only be made in situations when the adult's privacy settings make it difficult or impossible for the youth to find the adult's page on the site. In these circumstances, it is acceptable for an adult to request a youth as a friend, if the youth has requested that they do so.
2. Due to the greater potential for misinterpretation, inappropriate discussions, and inadvertent exposure of youth to inappropriate content; personal pages should be maintained appropriately. Church leaders and adult volunteers should avoid relationships with children/youth via Social Networking sites, unless an actual relationship (ministry, family friendship, etc.) already exists between them.
3. All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry with children and youth are strongly encouraged to set strict privacy settings on any personal social networking profile, making every effort to prevent youth and children from being introduced to objectionable content. Privacy settings on personal pages and information should be thoroughly scrutinized on a regular basis to prevent this information from being available to minors. In the event that a church leader or adult volunteer does not feel that they can set the proper privacy settings and/or regularly check their personal pages (2-3 times per day) for inappropriate material that might have been posted by others, they are asked to completely restrict child/youth access to their pages.
4. For the sake of their own privacy and the well-being of the child/youth participants, leaders and volunteers should not add or invite children or youth to any groups, events, pages, chat rooms, etc. that are not solely dedicated to activities directly related to the children or youth ministries or ministry activities.
5. All communication sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes, or posts, etc.) may be shared or reposted to others. Adults should be mindful that comments sent to a youth may be shared by that youth in a number of ways and that misinterpretation of those comments may occur.
6. 'One on one' video, photo or chat room based interaction is generally not appropriate between adults and minors. Such communications should only be engaged in where no face-to-face communication is possible, such as where the youth is away for the summer in a foreign country but regularly communicates with the adult in person.
7. When the content of received communications raises concerns or questions, it should be shared with a Synod staff member to determine if additional action is needed.
8. Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the preferred mode of communication, when responding to emotionally driven communication or pastoral emergencies, and should be used, when possible, to provide the appropriate level of support.

## X. REPORTING

Anyone who has knowledge or suspicion that inappropriate conduct has occurred should report it immediately to the Supervisor of the Children or Youth Program or the Event Staff person. It is especially incumbent upon those in leadership positions within the children and youth program to be particularly sensitive and alert to warning signs of abuse and potential incidents. When an individual reports an incident or allegation, that person should refrain from engaging in questioning the alleged victim so that the appropriate investigative procedures may be followed.

Preliminary Steps	<p>The person observing and reporting an incident of alleged inappropriate conduct should first:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Secure the safety of the child/youth. This may include an immediate call to emergency services as deemed necessary.</li><li>2. Secure the safety of others and stabilize the environment in which the incident occurred. Under no circumstances should a reporter who has responsibility for a group of children or youth leave them unsupervised in order to report an incident. Seek help from other caregivers who are close at hand.</li></ol>
Internal Reporting	<p>The following procedure should be used to report the incident to the appropriate supervisors or staff at the event:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reporter reports orally to his/her immediate supervisor, the alleged offender's supervisor, or to the Event Staff if the supervisor is less accessible at the time of the incident or the time of reporting. If the reporter is an event participant and not someone providing leadership, it is appropriate to report directly to the Event Staff. Event Staff is the member of the Synod Staff or the delegated Presbytery Staff member assigned to and on-site at the event.</li><li>2. Supervisor reports the allegation/incident to the Event Staff.</li><li>3. Event Staff:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. investigates the facts of the incident/allegation.</li><li>b. prepares the official incident report.</li><li>c. initiates the response to the allegation and incident.</li><li>d. reports to Synod office and/or Synod Attorney regarding insurance or legal implications, if deemed necessary.</li><li>e. contacts parents or responsible adults as soon as feasible.</li></ol></li></ol>
Reporting to Child Protection or Other Civil Authorities	<p>The specific definition of a "mandatory reporter" varies from state to state according to its relevant law. Ordinarily, these definitions could be extended to include those who have responsibility for the care of children and youth. The Synod recognizes that it has a moral, if not legal, obligation to exercise the care evidenced in</p>

	<p>Christ's invitation to the little children to "come to him." Therefore, when the investigation of an incident or allegation confirms that the incident or allegation is consistent with what would require reporting to civil authorities, the Event Staff will do so. If the incident is such that it poses an immediate or imminent threat to the safety of the child or youth, any person witnessing the incident may report it to the appropriate authorities. All incidents so reported should also be reported to the Supervisor and/or Event Staff as soon as possible. Training for all children and youth leaders will include appropriate procedures for reporting and how to contact appropriate civil authorities if it should become necessary.</p>
Record Maintenance	<p>A confidential record will be kept on file in the Synod office that a report of suspected abuse or neglect was made. This notation will include the name of the event or activity and the staff person to whom the report was made, the date and time that the report was made, and the names of the persons making that report. Nothing confidential will be included in this notation.</p>

### *Response to Allegations and Incidents*

The Synod recognizes that we have an obligation to respond to a number of individuals and audiences, depending on the facts of the particular allegation/incident.

The Synod also affirms that any response decision is at the sole discretion of the Event Staff person in consultation with the committee responsible for the event and in the best interest of the event. A determination of an unfounded accusation may nonetheless result in a leader being asked to relinquish their leadership responsibility and/or to leave the event if such separation is deemed in the best interests of the event and its participants.

The following guidelines shall apply as the Event Staff and committee or Planning Team determine the appropriate response:

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| To victim(s):   | <p>Determine need for and provide appropriate care for and follow up on immediate needs of the victim(s).</p>  |
| To the accused: | <p>Remove the accused from leadership, at least temporarily, until the investigation of facts is completed.</p> <p>Report of an allegation is not a presumption of guilt and, therefore, appropriate care will be exercised to provide the accused with an opportunity to be heard.</p> <p>The Committee responsible for the event should meet to determine the next steps regarding the accused's further participation in and presence at the event.</p> |

	The Committee may recommend pursuance of any further disciplinary action needed (e.g., calling the police, Child Protection Agency, Synod Sexual Misconduct Response Team, or the accused's council of jurisdiction.)
To parents or responsible adults:	Share the facts of the incident, the committee's actions, and provide care and follow up as appropriate.
To the Event:	Event Staff or committee/Planning Team member reports the facts of the incident to a plenary of event participants as necessary and appropriate, exercising appropriate pastoral care for the victim, the accused, and the other event participants.

### Response Team

A Response Team must be trained by the Synod and be available throughout the entire duration of the event. This team should be comprised of at least three members, staff or appointed by the sponsoring council or entity staff. An attorney chosen and secured by the Synod shall be on-call for all events. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as established procedures under the Rules of Discipline, Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for responding to complaint(s) of alleged child/youth abuse against any minister, elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) for the event.

The Response Team shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect incurred against any child/youth worker or event participant:

1. Immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved.
2. If the report alleges abuse or harassment of a minor, the response team will:
  - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law;
  - b. immediately notify the parents or guardian of the minor;
  - c. notify the insurance company of the allegation and that no investigation has yet occurred.
3. Make immediate decisions concerning the temporary removal of the individual accused from any contact with children or youth pending an investigation and/or removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.
4. Notify designated people at the Synod immediately of the report of alleged abuse/neglect including an attorney who is on-call throughout the duration of each event, who must be previously secured by the Synod in case of such allegations during each sponsored event. Any possible media requests will be handled by a designated person or office as per the communication policies with advice from the on-call attorney, taking care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
5. If the report is against a minister, the response team shall send a written statement of allegation to the stated clerk of the presbytery that holds the minister's membership. This written statement of allegation shall trigger the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II.

6. If the report is against an elder, the response team will notify the session of membership that an allegation of offense has been received against an elder that triggers the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.
7. If the report is against an employee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee, Human Resources, and Legal Services. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.
8. If the report is against an employee of the Synod, the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.
9. If the report is against a volunteer, or nonmember of the PC(U.S.A.), the response team will request that the Synod appoint an investigating committee of three persons to initiate an investigation of the allegations in order to:
  - a. gather any statements of abuse from those making the report, including any information from the Safety Response Team, and any party to the abuse;
  - b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse;
  - c. make written determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.
10. Provide immediate pastoral counseling and referrals for the principal parties involved (accuser(s), possible victim(s), accused, family members).
11. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the Synod.
12. Any person bringing a report of abuse or assisting in investigating will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.



# SEXUAL MISCONDUCT RESPONSE POLICY

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. It is the policy of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (hereinafter referred to as Synod) that all church members, persons in ordered ministries (hereinafter referred to as POM), non-member employees, and volunteers of the Synod are to maintain the integrity of the ministry, employment, and professional relationships at all times. Persons who engage in sexual misconduct are in violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, and also of the ministry, pastoral, employment, and professional relationships. It is never permissible or acceptable for a Synod officer, employee, elected representative, contracted person or volunteer to engage in sexual misconduct.
- B. This policy and its procedures shall be made available to all persons involved in the life of the Synod, to those who accuse others of misconduct, and to those who are or claim to be victims of sexual misconduct and their families. It is intended as guidance and policy for the Synod.
- C. Standards of Conduct

... As [God] who called you is holy,  
be holy yourselves in all your conduct;  
... Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, ...  
not under compulsion but willingly, ...  
not for sordid gain but eagerly. ...  
not lord it over those in your charge,  
but be examples to the flock.

... You know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

1 Pet. 1:15; 5:2–3; Jas. 3:1, NRSV

The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because through these representatives an understanding of God and the gospel's good news is conveyed. "Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world" (Book of Order, G-2.0104).

- C. The basic principles of conduct guiding this policy are as follows:

1. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the role of all who are called upon to exercise integrity, sensitivity, and caring in a trust relationship.
2. Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principle by misusing a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. It is the responsibility of all persons to maintain the appropriate roles, boundaries, and relationships.
3. Sexual misconduct takes advantage of the vulnerability of persons who are less powerful to act for their own welfare, including children. It is antithetical to the gospel call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world and violates the mandate to protect the vulnerable from harm.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:
  - 1. Child sexual abuse: including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not it is consented to by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.
  - 2. Sexual abuse as defined in the Book of Order; “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (Book of Order, D-10.0401c).
  - 3. Sexual harassment: defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
    - a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued status in an institution;
    - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
    - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or
    - d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.
- B. Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.
- C. Sexual conduct: (such as offensive, obsessive, or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching, or fondling) that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.
- D. Sexual Malfeasance: as defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.
- E. Misuse of technology: use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting, or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

## **I. CHURCH RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **Principles**

- A. In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, Synod officer, employee, elected representative, contracted person or volunteer members, shall seek healing, and assure the protection of all persons. Where possible, the privacy of persons should be respected, and confidentiality of communications should be maintained.
- B. In responding to allegations of sexual misconduct, Synod officer, employee, elected representative, contracted person or volunteer of the SYNOD should seek to uphold the dignity of all persons involved, including persons who are alleging harm, persons who are accused of sexual misconduct, and the families and communities of each.
- C. The Synod has jurisdiction over its members, officers, employees, elected representatives, contracted persons and volunteers such that if any of these is alleged to have committed an offense against Scripture or the PC(U.S.A.) Constitution, the church has the duty to inquire into the allegations and, if the allegations are proven, to correct the behavior of the member, officer, or employee and ensure the safety of others in the community. Allegations of sexual misconduct are always considered allegations of offense against Scripture or the PC(U.S.A.) Constitution that trigger the disciplinary processes of the PC(U.S.A.) set forth in the Book of Order. In the case of an active non-member who is employed or volunteers with the church, the individual will be covered by the procedures of the written personnel policies of the council or entity.
- D. If the person accused of sexual misconduct is no longer a member, officer, or employee of the Synod, but the conduct occurred while the person was acting on behalf of the Synod, the church does not have jurisdiction to correct the behavior, but it does have a duty to hear the allegations of offense and to take measures to prevent future occurrences of harm. The appropriate council may appoint an administrative committee or commission to hear the allegations of sexual misconduct. The Synod will take measures to reduce the risk of harm through education and policy.

## **IV. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct will occur in a variety of ways.

- A. Because a council or entity cannot control to whom the victim of sexual misconduct will speak first, it is important that officers, employees, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors understand how reports of incidents are channeled to the proper person. The allegations may come from persons who have or who do not have a formal relationship with the PC(U.S.A.) and may be made to a variety of officers or leaders within the PC(U.S.A.). It is the duty of these officers to see that any allegation of sexual misconduct is reported appropriately keeping in mind the mandatory reporting requirements for allegations of child abuse.
- B. Reports of allegations of sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the victim, the accused, and the church. Reports of allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined below.
- C. The first person to learn of an incident of sexual misconduct should not undertake an inquiry alone or question either the victim or the accused unless the incident is divulged in the process of pastoral care, counseling, or a therapy session. If the victim is hesitant to talk to “higher authorities,” the person who has received the initial report has a special pastoral responsibility to

build trust and willingness to speak with the accuser, lest the church be unable to respond because no one is able to give firsthand information.

- D. The person making the report of alleged sexual misconduct may be the person alleging harm or any member of PC(U.S.A.). The person receiving the initial report of allegations of sexual misconduct shall analyze the relationship of the person accused of sexual misconduct with the PC (USA) and shall make sure that the allegations of offense are filed with the counsel having jurisdiction over the person accused.
- E. If the report is made orally, the person receiving the report of allegations should request that the person making the report of allegations place it in writing. A report of allegations of sexual misconduct in writing from a member of the PC(U.S.A.) alleging another member or officer of the Synod committed an offense must be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order. If a clerk or stated clerk receives a report of allegations in writing from a nonmember of the PC(U.S.A.) alleging another member or officer of the PC(U.S.A.) committed sexual misconduct, the report also should be acted on according to the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order. If the person who makes the report is unwilling or unable to place it in writing, any member of the PC(U.S.A.) may make the written statement that will automatically trigger the Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order.
- F. In addition, if the person accused of sexual misconduct is a member, officer, employee or volunteer of the Synod, a report shall also be made to the Synod Stated Clerk or Synod Executive.

## **V. MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained out of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse. (G-4.0302) These provisions of the Book of Order attempt to balance conflicting moral duties for persons in ordered ministry of the Synod.

## **VI. RESPONDING**

- A. The appropriate Synod response will vary according to the relationship of the Synod with the person who is accused of sexual misconduct. Church members and persons in ordered ministries are subject to inquiry and discipline (censure and correction) under the Book of Order. Non-church member employees and volunteers are subject to oversight and correction by the Synod.
- B. When an allegation of offense of sexual misconduct has been received by the Stated Clerk of the Synod or Synod Executive, the clerk or executive will report to the Personnel Services Committee that an offense has been alleged.
- C. Councils and entities must cooperate with civil authorities in an investigation of child sexual abuse or other criminal sexual misconduct. Church disciplinary proceedings cannot interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities and may have to be suspended until these are completed.
- D. When the Synod receives an accusation of offense of sexual misconduct against a nonmember employee or volunteer, the procedural response of the Synod will be guided by the written personnel policies of the Synod.

- E. In all cases, the personnel committee shall prepare a written report, which shall be included in the accuser's permanent personnel file. The accused shall be allowed to attach any written statements to said documents, also for permanent inclusion in the permanent file.
- F. All procedures shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Synod.