

**Bylaws of the First Presbyterian Church
of Lexington, Nebraska**

~ *adopted May 19, 2019*

I. Statement of Purpose or Mission

The First Presbyterian Church of Lexington, Nebraska has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world. We exist to “Build God’s Kingdom, Share Love and Hope, Here and Now”.

II. Relation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Lexington, Nebraska, First Presbyterian Church is a member church of the Presbytery of Central Nebraska in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

III. Governance of the Church

This church shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Consistent with that Constitution, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

IV. Congregational Meetings of the Church

The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held as soon as practical in December. The purpose of the meeting shall be as follows:

- to receive the Congregational Nominating Committee’s report (see article XI);
- to receive nominations from the floor;
- to elect ~~from~~ new classes of ruling elders and deacons;
- to elect Members-at-Large for the next year’s Congregational Nominating Committee from amongst those church members nominated from the floor;
- to review, make any necessary changes to, and ultimately approve the pastor’s terms of call as presented by Session as part of the annual budget;
- to receive the proposed annual budget;
- to receive the financial report from the preceding year.

The congregation shall receive: annual reports from congregational organizations, committees of session, the deacons, and selected staff members as soon as is reasonably possible the following January.

Special congregational meetings may be called by the session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call. (*G-1.0501*)

V. Notice of Congregational Meetings

Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given, including notice given at regular services of worship prior to the meeting. Notice must be given at two regular services of the church (the day of the meeting may count as one service).

VI. Moderator of Congregational Meetings

The pastor shall moderate the meetings. If there are co-pastors, they shall alternately preside at meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. When this is not expedient, and when both the pastor or the moderator concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside. *(G-1.0504)*

VII. Secretary of Congregational and Session Meetings

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary for all meetings of the church (Section IV) and session. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve at a meeting of the church, the congregation shall elect a secretary. If the clerk is not present or unable to serve at a meeting of session, the session shall elect a secretary.

VIII. Minutes of the Congregational and Session Meetings

The minutes of congregational and session meetings shall be attested by the moderator and the secretary of the meeting, and recorded in the minutes book of the session. *(G-1.0505)*

IX. Quorum for the Meeting

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and at least ten percent of active members. Consistent with the laws of the state of Nebraska a quorum shall be at least ten percent of active members on corporate matters. The secretary shall determine that a quorum is present. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. *(G-1.0501)*. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

X. Incorporation

In accordance with the laws of the state of Nebraska, the congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation. *(G-1.0503)*. (Note: There will be variations from state to state on provisions for incorporation. Since the pastor or moderator is not a member of the corporation, consistent with Article VI, a member of the session shall be invited to moderate the meeting when corporate matters appear on the agenda. The elders serving on the session shall serve as trustees.)

XI. Congregational Nominating Committee (*See G-2.0401*)

The congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

- (1) There shall be six active members on the nominating committee.
- (2) Two of the members shall be active ruling elders who are currently serving on the session.
- (3) One active deacon shall serve on the committee. The active deacon shall be determined by the deacons.
- (4) Three members-at-large shall be nominated and elected from the floor at the December congregational meeting (see article IV).
- (5) A majority of all active members present and voting shall be required to elect.
- (6) The pastor shall be a member ex officio and without vote.

XII. Ruling Elders

The congregation shall elect nine ruling elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. Ruling elders shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years on the session and may be eligible for reelection according to congregational rule. No ruling elder shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, either full or partial, and a ruling elder who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year.

An additional session position, with voting privileges, shall be available for a confirmed high school youth willing to fill a one year term. Filling the youth position shall be optional. The position shall be filled in accordance with the regular nominating and election processes.

The session, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect an inactive elder to serve as clerk of session. The session shall form such committees as it deems necessary to conduct the work of the church. At least one active ruling elder shall serve on each committee. Each committee will be chaired by an active ruling elder. A quorum for the session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and at least one half of the active ruling elders.

XIII. Deacons

The congregation shall elect twelve deacons divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. The congregation shall also elect a thirteenth deacon for a three-year term to serve in the physical absence of one of the twelve. No deacon shall serve for more than two consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A deacon having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the board of deacons for a period of at least one year.

The board of deacons, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect a moderator and a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work.

The pastor shall be an advisory member of the board of deacons. A quorum for the board of deacons shall be one third of the members, including the moderator.

XIV. Vacancies

Vacancies on the session or the board of deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the session may determine.

XV. The Endowments and Gifts Committee

The Endowments and Gifts Committee shall be a standing committee of session, whose members shall be chosen every year exactly as are the other committees of session. The session shall be the sole administrator of the Endowments and Gifts Committee and one of the two active elders chosen by session to serve on the committee shall be named the chair thereof. The Endowments and Gifts Committee shall make regular reports and recommendations to the session regarding proper use and administration of the funds of the Endowments and Gifts Committee.

XVI. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of Nebraska and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by a two-thirds vote of eligible voters present at a congregational meeting, providing that the proposed changes in printed form shall have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.

XVII. Inactive Membership Status

The First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, shall maintain a membership status designation hereafter called "inactive". Members who have moved away or ceased regular participation in the ~~life~~ work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years are subject to being placed on inactive status by vote of the session in lieu of being removed from the membership rolls as per the Book of Order (G-3.0204a). The Session shall, before moving active members to inactive status, seek to restore said members to active participation in the work and worship of the congregation. Should a member whose status has been changed to inactive by the Session desire to change their status back to "active", they may request Session to do so. A member may also request that Session move their membership status to inactive in lieu of being deleted from the rolls and all members continue to reserve the right to request that Session delete their name from the rolls as per the Book of Order (G-3.0204a).

Revision Record

Article XVII, *Inactive Membership Status*, was approved by the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Lexington at a Congregational Meeting held for that sole purpose on February 9, 2020.

Multiple grammar and verbiage changes throughout the document, a correction to *one* annual meeting, and multiple amendments to Article XVII were approved by the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Lexington at a Congregational Meeting held for these purposes alone on September 17, 2023.