SYNOD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII

SYNOD COMMITTEE and COMMISSION GUIDEBOOK

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Some of the materials included in this Guidebook were adapted, with thanks, from the "Presbytery of Riverside Assembly Handbook for New Chairpersons of Our Commissions, Committees, and Teams".

SYNOD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA and HAWAII

INTRODUCTION - Welcome to Worshipful Work!

The mindset of worshipful work distinguishes the Christian committee meeting from the secular business meeting. It opens us to creative and generative discussion; it frees us from focus upon narrow agendas for the sake of expediency; it leads us to honor all of our time and effort as belonging to God.

The root of all committee and commission work, regardless of the specific mandates, business or tasks, is discernment of God's will. "The steps of corporate discernment mirror the order of worship. So, we are literally doing worshipful work: turning our work into worship and our worship into work. Discernment is the result of bringing our questions before God and moving with them prayerfully through the steps of worship." [From "Discernment as Worshipful Work"; Alban Jan 17, 2013]

All committees and commissions are strongly encouraged to infuse various aspects of worship (such as reflection, meditation, silence, song, artwork, prayer, scripture and storytelling) into meetings. The first meeting is an essential opportunity to build relationships, rapport and lay a worshipful work foundation.

POLICIES - For details of the following, please visit www.synod.org

> **Statement of Purpose and Charge (2022)**
> **Mission Design**
> **Bylaws**
> **Standing Rules**
> **Safety and Protection**

RESOURCES - For information, please visit www.synod.org

> **Grants**
> **Synod News**

QUICK REFERENCE CHART - SYNOD STRUCTURE and RELATED ENTITIES*

SYNOD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA and HAWAII (SoSCH)

A middle council of the Presbyterian Church (USA) which encompasses
the following Presbyteries:
Los Ranchos - Pacific - Riverside -
San Diego - San Fernando - San Gabriel - Santa Barbara

SYNOD ASSEMBLY (SA)

Meets annually.
Equal number of Teaching Elder Commissioners and Ruling Elder Commissioners
elected from and by each presbytery, plus officers with voice / no vote.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION and COMMITTEES

Synod Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC)
Committee on Representation and Nominations (CoRN)
Polity and Records Committee (P&R Comm)

OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance (FinComm)
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
Partnering Grants (PGC)
Restricted and Special Funds (R&S Comm)
The Rev. Dr.Leon E. Fanniel Racial Ethnic Pastoral Leadership (REPL)

PERMANENT ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY (COA)

Four (4) stated meetings per year

RELATED ENTITIES

Monte Vista Groves Homes, Inc. (MVGH)
Presbyterian Camps and Conferences, Inc. (PCCCI)
Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center, Inc. (ZPPCC)
Sister Synod - Synod of the Nile, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt

*For detailed information, please refer to the Synod website: www.synod.org

COMMISSION / COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

Commission of Assembly - 21 Members
> 5 Officers (Chair of COA, Assembly Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer),
> 7 Presbytery Reps, 4 Commissioners' Reps, 3 (Black, Indigenous, People of Color-BIPOC) Reps,
> 2 Chairs -Ecclesiastical Committee (CoRN; Polity and Records)
- Serves as Board of Trustees for the Synod.
- Has a variety of authority to make decisions except for budget.
- Reports to the Assembly.
- Meets 4 times a year (March, June, October, December-if necessary). All committee recommendations are made to this body in between Assemblies.

Permanent Judicial Commission - 11 members.
- Handles all Judiciary matters.
- Conduct Trials when necessary.

Polity and Records - 7 members.
- Work on amendments to the Bylaws and other policies.
- Creates and presents policies to Assembly/COA.
- Oversees Annual Presbytery Minute Reviews.
- Processes overtures.

Committee on Representation and Nomination - 9 members.
- Identifies and invites volunteers to fill committee slates; advises them of term parameters.
- Makes recommendations to the Assembly/COA, including Chairs of committees and on the vice-moderator.

Partnering Grants - 7 members
- Accepts applications from the Presbytery partners on dedicated funding for congregation developments.
- Makes recommendations to the Assembly/COA

- Reviews and determines grant needs of the Presbyteries and makes recommendations to the Assembly/COA.

Restricted and Special Funds - 7 members
- Receives grant applications from Presbytery partners relating to designated funds and Matthew 25 grants
- Makes recommendations to the Assembly/COA.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation - 9 members
- Maintains its own designated funds.
- Makes recommendations relating to various issues.
- Provides funds for related projects.

The Rev. Dr. Leon Fanniel Racial Ethnic Pastoral Leadership - 7 members
- Has its own coordinator (paid staff).
- Manages own funding.
- Carries annual grant budget of $8,000.
- Makes decisions on scholarship grants ($3,000 max per) to seminarians on the ordination tract.
- Follows up on grant recipients' progress and reports to the Synod annually.

Finance Committee - 7 members
- Oversees all finance-related matters to ensure Synod practices good stewardship Oversee investments to ensure proper returns.
- Creates a budget and presents it to the Commission of Assembly.
- Synod treasurer is an ex officio member.

CHAIR / MODERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attend, as appropriate, training workshops facilitated by the Stated Clerk.
- Ensure contact information for members is accurate and send updates to the Synod Business Manager
- Poll members for best meeting dates/times

- Establish a schedule of meetings for the year; send to members and the Synod Business Manager for publication on the website in early February.
- Provide timely notice of meetings (preferably at least 10 days)
- Moderate according to Meeting Guidelines (See below)
- Arrange for timely distribution of minutes to members (preferably within 10 days following the meeting)
- Submit, at the end of the calendar year, the entire minutes of the year to the Synod Business Manager.
- Prepare and give reports to the Commission of Assembly or Synod Assembly as appropriate. Chairs are encouraged to attend COA meetings regularly to be in touch with Synod life.
- Be attentive to committee health and effectiveness; contact absent members; notify CoRN when a member has missed three consecutive meetings.

MEETING GUIDELINES

- **Number of meetings -** A minimum of two per year is required. The first is to connect as the body of Christ, build rapport, and appreciate committee work as discernment of God's will. Even if no "business" comes before the committee during the year, a subsequent meeting later in the year is just as essential to connect in prayer and thanksgiving for each other, the mission of the Synod, its Presbyteries and the wider Church.

- **Quorum -** A simple majority of the voting members of a committee (e.g. If there are 7 voting members of the committee, a quorum is 4). Although actions cannot be voted upon without a quorum, meetings and discussions may be held. Minutes should be recorded, stating lack of a quorum.

- **Minutes -** These are an essential history of the ministry of the Synod committees / commissions and the Synod as a whole. It is helpful for someone, other than the Chair, to record minutes. [SEE MINUTES REQUIREMENTS BELOW]

MINUTES REQUIREMENTS

The *Book of Order* requires that an administrative review be conducted of each Synod to "determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church."

We have not adopted a parliamentary rule regarding the precise format or content of committee minutes, but towards the goal of having relatively consistent records of our committees' work, we have prepared certain format and content recommendations and a list of what the reviewers are looking for when your committee's minutes are being reviewed. As a minimum, your minutes should include these items:

1. Date & time of meeting, and which method of meeting was used, e.g. in person, electronic or email meeting.
2. That the meeting was opened with prayer.
3. That the moderator of the meeting is identified (not necessarily the chair).
4. Record of committee members present, absent and excused, as well as guests present. We recommend a grid layout, such as in the sample below. Your grid may look different if it serves your needs.
5. A declaration that a quorum is present.
6. Any approval of previous minutes.
7. All motions and result of vote (bold highlighting the motion and/or the outcome is helpful). The outcome may be approved, passed, accepted, adopted, not approved, failed, etc. Motions which are withdrawn do not need to be documented. We generally do not require that the minutes reflect the person's name that made a motion, but it is acceptable to do so.
8. That the meeting was closed with prayer and at what time.
9. Minute taker's name. The "Respectfully submitted" closing is an optional custom, not a requirement.

The next page has a sample format appropriate for committee minutes. Note that the use of a grid is optional.

SAMPLE MINUTES FORMAT

Committee / Commission Name
Minutes of Meeting - Date

The meeting was opened with prayer at <time> by _____. (Specify method, e.g. in person or by electronic or telephonic means.)

USE OF A GRID IS OPTIONAL

Name	Present / Excused	Class / Year of Service	Name	Present / Excused	Class / Year of Service
Committee Chair	E	2024/4	Cmte Member 4	P	2024/1
Cmte Member 1	P	2024/3	Cmte Member 5	P	2024/3
Cmte Member 2	E	2024/2	Cmte Member 6	P	2024/1
Cmte Member 3	P	2024/2	Guest 1	P	

The meeting was moderated by <moderator's name>, as the <cmte chair's name> was excused. A quorum was declared.

The docket was approved with two changes.

The minutes of <date> were approved with one correction. *State the corrections*.

Agenda item 1: Any relevant description. **Motion** to <carefully worded motion> was made. **The motion was approved.**

Agenda item 2: Any relevant description. **Motion** to <carefully worded motion> was made. **The motion was not approved.**

Agenda item 3: Any relevant description. **Motion to approve** <item> and to recommend approval to the Synod Assembly. **The motion was approved.**

The meeting was closed in prayer by _____ at <time>.

Respectfully submitted,

VOTING PROCEDURES

Electronic Voting Policy - From time to time an urgent matter of business needs to be acted upon between meetings of the Synod Assembly, the Commission of Assembly or a committee of either the Synod Assembly or the Commission of Assembly. At the discretion of the Moderator or Chair of that entity, it may be determined reasonable to provide for a vote by email by the members of that entity in the interests of time and efficiency.

This procedure is not intended to be used casually or to circumvent healthy discussion regarding the matter of business; rather, it is a means of expeditiously conducting time-sensitive business when necessary. All members of the entity will be notified electronically and will have seventy-two (72) hours in which to respond to the request. At a minimum, a quorum of the members of that entity must vote on the measure and all responding votes must be affirmative in order for the measure to be approved. A single negative vote or a request for discussion will result in non-approval. The measure approved will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the entity and may be amended or rescinded in the same manner as that entity could otherwise amend or rescind a prior approval.

For transparency, one email thread, initiated by the chair /moderator must be used; all voters will use the "Reply All" response. A single negative vote or request for discussion with the full committee will result in the email vote being suspended.

Summary of Process:
1. Via email, the Chair notifies the following: a) the motion, b) the maker of the motion, c) the 72-hour period which will commence when the motion is seconded, d) that all voters should respond to the originating email, using the "Reply All" feature.
2. At the end of the 72-hour voting period, the Chair will send an email announcing the results of the vote.

3. The measure approved will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent stated meeting.

Electronic Meeting Policy - In addition to the processes set when an urgent matter of business needs to be acted on between meetings of the Synod Assembly, the Commission of Assembly or a committee of either the Synod Assembly or the Commission of Assembly, at the discretion of the Moderator or Chair of that entity, it may be determined reasonable to provide for a discussion and subsequent vote by conference call. All members of the entity will be notified electronically of the matter to be acted upon and the time and date of the conference call at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the call. At a minimum, a quorum of the members of that entity must participate in the conference call. After discussion of the matter, a majority of those participating in the call must support any measure voted upon in order for it to be approved. The measure approved will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the entity and may be amended or rescinded in the same manner as that entity could otherwise amend or rescind a prior approval.

REPORT REQUIREMENTS to SYNOD ASSEMBLY or COMMISSION of ASSEMBLY

Your committee or Commission may or may not have anything to report to the full Synod Assembly or Commission of Assembly at each meeting. Even when a report will be submitted, what is normally in your report has not been formally defined. Some chairs submit their minutes as their report; others will summarize those minutes into items that the full Assembly needs to know about.

Your report becomes part of the official record of the Assembly meeting. Include in the report:

    1. Action Items
            • Any item which requires approval by the Assembly

    2. Information Items
            • Any item you feel is important for the Assembly to know.

Submitting a report to the Assembly does not negate the requirement for properly documented minutes.

<u>Note to Commissions:</u> It is vital and required that all Commissions submit a report (or minutes) detailing the decisions they made on behalf of the Assembly since the last Assembly meeting.