

Southminster Presbyterian Church

Bylaws



*These Amended and Restated Bylaws
were approved by Session on December 20, 2021
and approved by the Congregation on January 23, 2022.*

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Southminster Presbyterian Church Bylaws

Article I. Name

The name of this congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, is Southminster Presbyterian Church.

Article II. Purpose

The basic purpose of the Church is to fulfill the obligations, duties and privileges of being a Christian church and more especially a particular congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), of which Jesus Christ is the sole and only head. The Church and its members are bound in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and in accordance therewith, the elected Ruling Elders, who, together with the Moderator, comprise the Church Session, do rule. As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Church has a continuing relationship with, and responsibility to, the Pittsburgh Presbytery, the Synod of the Trinity and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Church staff and ministers operate under the authority of the Session and work together with elected Officers to carry out the purpose of the Church.

The Church and its members acknowledge the Scriptures to be their rule of faith and practice and the underlying sources of their guidance and direction. To carry out the broad purpose of the Church and its mission as mandated by the Scriptures, the Church affirms, and pledges to carry out, the Six Great Ends of the Church, as follows:

1. The Proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of Humankind;
2. The Shelter, Nurture and Fellowship of the Children of God;
3. The Maintenance of Divine Worship;
4. The Preservation of the Truth;
5. The Promotion of Social Righteousness; and
6. The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World.

The Ministers, Staff, Officers and Members of the Church will prayerfully seek to carry out the Statement of Purpose, the Mission and Vision Statements as they may be amended by the Session, from time to time, copies of which are attached to these Bylaws as Appendix I and made a part hereof.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

All who profess faith in Christ, promise obedience to His laws, accept the Church's ordinances, and are formally received into membership by the Session, are members of the Church, and are entitled to its rights and privileges.

Section 2. Duties of Members

As provided in the Book of Order, Church members are under obligation to make diligent use of the means of grace, to share faithfully in the worship and service of the Church, to give of their funds as the Lord may prosper them, to render wholehearted service to Christ and His Kingdom throughout the world, and to continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God. All members shall extend the fellowship of Christ to all persons without regard to color, origin or worldly condition.

Section 3. Meetings of Members

- A. Annual Meeting. There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Congregation and the Church Corporation in the Church edifice on such day in May and at such hour, as the Session shall determine, for the transaction of any business properly coming before such meeting.
- B. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Session, the Presbytery or by one fourth of the active members of the Congregation submitting a request in writing to the Session. The call for a special meeting should clearly state the purpose of such meeting, and no other matter except that specified in the call may be considered at the meeting.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings

Public notice of the time, place and purpose of the Annual Meeting and all special meetings of the congregation shall be publicly announced from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays immediately preceding the day of such meeting.

Section 5. Presiding Officer

The Moderator of the Session shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation. If the Moderator and the Ruling Elders currently serving agree that the subjects to be discussed at the meeting require it, or if the Moderator is ill or is otherwise unable to be present, an ordained minister of Pittsburgh Presbytery (preferably an associate or associate minister of the Church, designated to act in the absence of the Senior Minister) shall be invited by the Moderator and/or the Session to preside as provided for in the Book of Order. In case of doubt, such an invitation shall first be approved by the Committee on Ministry of Pittsburgh Presbytery.

Section 6. Secretary

The Clerk of Session shall be the Secretary of all meetings of the congregation. If the Clerk of Session is unable to attend, the Moderator of the meetings shall appoint an Assistant Clerk or, if no Assistant Clerk is able to attend, another currently serving Ruling Elder, as Acting Secretary.

Section 7. Voting

All communicant members of the Church in good standing shall be entitled to be present and to vote at congregational meetings. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

Section 8. Quorum

At the Annual Meeting and all special meetings of the congregation, a quorum shall consist of the Moderator or Acting Moderator, Secretary or Acting Secretary, and one-tenth of the Congregation who are eligible to vote at the meeting.

Article IV. Conduct of Church Meetings

All meetings of the Church members, Session, Board of Deacons, Committees, Subcommittees, Task Forces and other organizations within the Church shall be opened and closed with prayer and, unless otherwise waived or changed by a vote of a majority of the persons present, a proper quorum having been constituted, shall be governed by the General Rules for Judicatories of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Article V. Church Organization

Section 1. Structure

The Church structure shall be as follows for the purpose of carrying out its mission:

- A. The ministerial staff, headed by the Senior Minister
- B. The non-ministerial staff, including the administrative and custodial staff and such other staff persons as may be deemed necessary by the Church Session acting through the Church Operations and Personnel Committee
- C. Session
- D. Church Treasurer
- E. Board of Deacons
- F. The following Committees, having the responsibilities, and with the Subcommittees responsible to such Committees, as follows:
 - 1) Church Life Committee
 - a) Purpose. The Church Life Committee shall encourage and assist everyone to discover, use and develop their God given gifts and strengths for Christ's work through Southminster Presbyterian Church. The Church Life Committee shall also foster involvement of everyone in church life, organizations and actions and cultivate a feeling of church family, remove obstructions to participation and involvement, and shall develop lay leaders.
 - b) Subcommittees
 - i) The Membership Subcommittee shall promote and increase membership and facilitate the process of becoming a member of the Church.

- ii) The Recruiting Subcommittee shall increase involvement of the congregation in all aspects of the Church and particularly to help staff the Committees, Subcommittees, and Task Forces.
- iii) The Nurture and Fellowship Subcommittee shall help the members of the Church experience a community of faith and feel a part of a church family.
- iv) The Council of Ordained Leaders Subcommittee shall maintain the involvement of all ordained leaders of the Church after their terms are over and solicit their involvement in church activities, church life, Committees, Subcommittees, Task Forces, church initiatives and church direction.
- v) Presbyterian Women. The Moderator of Presbyterian Women will be invited to serve on the Church Life Committee.

2) Disciple Making Committee

- a) Purpose. The Disciple Making Committee shall encourage and equip all members of the Church community to deepen their faith in Christ, to grow in Him and to bring others to Christ. Recognizing that everyone is in a different stage of spiritual development, the Disciple Making Committee shall provide opportunities to study Scripture, to further members' understanding relative to issues of Christian faith and life, and tend to members' spiritual needs through a ministry of compassion.
- b) Subcommittees
 - i) The Christian Education Subcommittee shall educate, nurture and guide members of the Southminster community so that they may respond with a desire and commitment to fulfill God's will in their lives and provide high quality and diverse Christian Education opportunities to equip members to grow in their faith and deepen their relationship with Christ.
 - ii) The Tuesday Night Live Subcommittee shall provide programming on Tuesday evenings to include the fellowship of a meal followed by speakers/discussion topics related to Christian Life of interest to all ages in the Church community.
 - iii) The Special Needs Subcommittee shall assure that the Church programming is accessible and meaningful to those in the Church community with special needs and to encourage Church members to embrace and include brothers and sisters in Christ with special needs in all church related activities.
 - iv) Stephen Ministry equips lay persons to provide Christian one-on-one care to anyone in the community who is going through a difficult time and is in need of support and compassion from a Christian friend.

3) Worship and Music Committee

- a) Purpose. The Worship and Music Committee shall provide high quality unique Celebrations of Worship that stimulate the desire of the congregation to

communicate with God through Jesus Christ, to facilitate that communication, and to encourage those without a church affiliation to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.

4) Stewardship and Property Committee

- a) Purpose. The Stewardship and Property Committee shall make sure that all buildings and grounds of the Church are maintained in such a manner that the ministry and mission of Southminster will be advanced, including responsibility for all insurance and legal requirements; shall educate the Church “family” to the joys/responsibilities of Christian Stewardship and to make sure that all monies received are accurately accounted for and distributed according to the ministry and mission goals of the Church; and shall ensure that Committees and members of the congregation are kept informed about the finances of the Church.
- b) The Southminster Endowment, LLC shall operate in accordance with its Operating Agreement and report directly to the Session. The Southminster Endowment, LLC shall have a relational association with the Stewardship and Property Committee.
- c) The Windy Ridge Retreat Center, LLC shall operate in accordance with its Operating Agreement and report directly to the Session. The Windy Ridge Retreat Center LLC shall have a relational association with the Stewardship and Property Committee.
- d) Columbarium. The Columbarium Subcommittee shall consist of at least three members of the Congregation who shall be appointed by the Stewardship and Property Committee subject to approval by the Session. In order to provide continuity, members of the Subcommittee shall be appointed for a term of three years, with one-third of the Subcommittee appointed each year. The Subcommittee shall oversee the policies relating to the operation of the Columbarium and recommend to the Session any changes to the operation the Subcommittee deems necessary or desirable.

5) Outreach Committee

- a) Purpose. The Outreach Committee shall make the Church aware of the constantly changing social needs of God’s world, and our call to spread the Word of God and invite others into a relationship with Jesus Christ. This awareness will be used to motivate and facilitate active participation in mission opportunities by Church members. With prayerful discernment, the Outreach Committee shall make informed decisions about which social and humanitarian concerns and issues the Church should respond to, both financially and with volunteer efforts.
- b) Subcommittee
 - i) The Mission Subcommittee shall make Southminster aware of the constantly changing social needs of God’s world and to motivate and facilitate active participation in mission opportunities by Southminster members. The Mission Subcommittee shall collect and distribute local, national and international mission/outreach information to the people of Southminster. With prayerful discernment, the Mission Subcommittee

shall make informed decisions about which social concerns and issues Southminster should respond to, both financially and with volunteer efforts.

- c) The Transformational Mission Fund, LLC shall operate in accordance with its Operating Agreement and report directly to the Session. The Transformational Mission Fund, LLC shall have a relational association with the Outreach Committee.
- 6) Church Operations and Personnel Committee
 - a) Purpose. The Church Operations and Personnel Committee shall be responsible for the oversight of all church operations including all church personnel, for security for the church buildings and activities, and for monitoring and coordination of the Board of Directors of the Southminster Nursery School and Child Care Center.
 - b) Nursery School
 - c) Child Care Center
- 7) Such other regular and special Committees, Subcommittees or Task Forces as are created from time to time by the Session.

Section 2. Authority of Committees and Treasurer

Subject to the final authority of the Session, each of the Church Committees and the Treasurer shall have authority to conduct its and his or her business without further approval of the Session, so long as any action by the Committee and/or Treasurer is within the approved budget of the Church and carries out, or is consistent with, all action on such business approved by the Session. Subject to final authority of Session and the Committee to which they report, each Subcommittee shall have authority to conduct its business without further approval so long as any action by the Subcommittee is within the approved budget of the Church and carries out, or is consistent with, the approved policy of the Committee and Session. In addition, subject to the approval of the Session, each Committee may create a new Subcommittee responsible to that Committee in order to facilitate accomplishment of the purpose and goals of that Committee. Each Committee and Subcommittee may also create Task Forces in order to facilitate accomplishment of its purposes and goals. The Session may, from time to time, transfer one Committee or functions from one Committee to another in order to facilitate accomplishment of the goals of the Church.

Section 3. Committee Chairpersons and Personnel

The Session shall appoint the currently serving Ruling Elder members of all Committees for three year terms. In addition, the Session shall designate one or more staff members and either the Clerk of Session or an Assistant Clerk to be assigned as ex-officio members of each of the Committees. Subject to the approval of Session, the Committees shall select their Chairpersons or Co-chairpersons for one year terms. The Committee shall ratify the Chairperson or Co-chairpersons of each of the Subcommittees responsible to that Committee.

The Session shall also appoint the Chairperson of each Task Force, special or *ad hoc* committee which is created by the Session but not responsible to a particular Committee, and shall assign as appropriate one or more staff members and/or the Clerk of Session or an

Assistant Clerk to such committee. Subject to the approval of the Session, the Chairperson of each such special committee shall appoint the members of that committee.

Article VI. Session

Section 1. Responsibilities

As provided in the Book of Order, the Session consists of all ordained and called staff and the Ruling Elders in active service. The Session has authority over all of the affairs and activities of the Church, except such matters as may be specifically accorded to the Senior Minister, the Congregation or a higher judicatory by the Book of Order.

The Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual life of our congregation. To this end, the Session supervises the conduct of worship and the administration of the sacraments at Southminster. The Session is required to take the best measures to promote the spiritual interests of the entire congregation, and to lead the congregation in participating in the mission of the Church.

The Session shall also have exclusive authority over the uses to which the Church buildings and properties may be put, but may temporarily delegate the determination of such uses, subject always to the superior authority and direction of the Session.

Section 2. Number and Term of Ruling Elders

There shall be twenty-one currently serving Ruling Elders, divided into three classes of seven persons each. One class shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting. A Ruling Elder shall be elected to serve a term of no more than three years. A Ruling Elder shall be eligible for reelection for one consecutive term of no more than three years. No Ruling Elder shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years. A Ruling Elder who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to Session for at least one year.

Section 3. Eligibility for Active Service as a Ruling Elder

Eligibility for active service of Ruling Elders shall be restricted as follows:

- Relatives of the first and second degree by blood, law or marriage, shall not be eligible for concurrent service on Session as Ruling Elders (this includes: spouses, children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and half-siblings through birth, marriage or adoption).
- No Member of Staff may be elected to or actively serve on session as a Ruling Elder. This restriction does not preclude participation in meetings ex-officio, when requested.

Section 4. Meetings

Regular and special meetings of the Session shall be held at such time and place, and with such notice, as shall be determined by the Session.

Section 5. Quorum

At all meetings of the Session, the presence of at least eleven of the currently serving Ruling Elders, together with the Senior Minister or Acting Moderator, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

Section 6. Presiding Officer at Meetings

The Senior Minister of the Church shall be the Moderator of the Session. As provided in the Book of Order, when it appears advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside, the Senior Minister shall, with the concurrence of the Session, invite another minister belonging to the same Presbytery to preside. In the case of the sickness or absence of the Senior Minister, the same expedient may be adopted; or the Session, with approval of the Senior Minister first having been obtained, may convene and elect one of its own members to preside, except in cases involving judicial process, when a minister of the same Presbytery shall preside. During any period when the Church is without a Senior Minister, the Moderator of the Session shall be either the minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one of the same Presbytery invited by the Session, in consultation with the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, to preside on a particular occasion.

Section 7. Clerk of Session

The Clerk of Session shall be the Secretary of all meetings of the Session and of the congregation, and the Clerk shall prepare and preserve Minutes of all such meetings and shall furnish extracts therefrom when appropriate. The Clerk, as Secretary of the Session, shall handle and maintain a file of all Session correspondence. The Clerk shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of Session, unless currently serving as a Ruling Elder, and to all Church Committees and Subcommittees, and shall perform such additional duties as are delegated to her/him by the Session or the Senior Minister. The Clerk of Session must be a Ruling Elder and shall be nominated by the Senior Minister and elected by the Session for a one-year term, and may be re-elected for additional one-year terms up to a maximum successive terms of five years. The Session shall appoint one or more Ruling Elders as Assistant Clerks to assist the Clerk in the performance of duties for a one-year term, and may be re-appointed for additional one-year terms up to a maximum successive terms of five years. An Assistant Clerk may be elected as the Clerk of Session.

Section 8. Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Session for a one-year term, which term is renewable. The Treasurer must be a member of the Church and shall be a person who has a substantial financial and accounting background. The Treasurer shall report to the Session in all aspects. The Session, in consultation with the Treasurer, shall appoint at least two Assistant Treasurers for one-year terms, which term is renewable.

Article VII Board of Deacons

Section 1. Purpose and Duties

The purpose of the Board of Deacons is to minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress, in accordance with the Scriptural duties of the office. As provided in the Book of Order, the Session may delegate to the Board of Deacons certain specific responsibilities relating to the development of the grace of liberality in the members of the Church, to the devising of effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to the Church's evangelistic missionary and educational programs. In addition, the Board of Deacons shall assume such duties, not limited to the foregoing, as may be delegated to it by the Session, and such duties as the Board of Deacons itself may wish to undertake in fulfilling its stated purpose.

Section 2. Number and Term of Deacons

There shall be up to twenty-one currently serving Deacons, divided into three classes of up to seven persons each. One class shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting. A Deacon shall be elected to serve a term of no more than three years. A Deacon shall be eligible for reelection for consecutive term(s), however, no Deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years. A Deacon who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the Board of Deacons for at least one year.

Section 3. Meetings

Regular and special meetings of the Board of Deacons shall be held at such time and place as shall be determined by the Moderator of the Board of Deacons or by the Senior Minister. The Board of Deacons shall keep a record of its proceedings, and of all the funds at its disposal and their distribution, and shall submit its records to the Session for approval at least once a year, and at other times upon the request of the Session.

Section 4. Presiding Officer at Meetings

As provided in the Book of Order, the Senior Minister, if a member of the Board of Deacons, shall be its Moderator, except as hereinafter provided. With the consent of the Senior Minister, whether or not the Senior Minister is a member of the Board of Deacons, the Session may:

- A. Designate as Moderator of the Board any other minister who has been named to membership thereon; or
- B. Authorize the Board to elect a Moderator from its membership. The Board of Deacons may also elect from its membership a vice-moderator, a secretary, and a treasurer of the funds of the Board.

Section 5. Quorum

One-third of the members of the Board of Deacons shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board of Deacons.

Article VIII. Congregational Nominating Committee

Section 1. Purpose and Duties

The purpose of the Congregational Nominating Committee is to bring to the Annual Meeting nominations for the offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon, and subcommittees therefrom which require members elected from the congregation. The Congregational Nominating Committee shall additionally bring to the Annual Meeting nominations for members of the Boards of Managers and Officers for the Southminster Endowment, LLC, the Transformational Mission Fund, LLC, the Windy Ridge Retreat Center, LLC and the Congregational Nominating Committee.

Nominations made by the Congregational Nominating Committee shall express the rich diversity of the congregation's membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness as set forth in the Book of Order.

The Senior Minister shall be a member of the Congregational Nominating Committee ex-officio and without vote.

Section 2. Number and Term of Congregational Nominating Committee

The Congregational Nominating Committee shall consist of two elders, elected by the session (one elected chair), one deacon, elected by the deacons, and 4 members of the congregation elected at the Annual Meeting. The congregational members shall not be currently serving on any board or committee. The terms of service for all members of the Congregational Nominating Committee shall be one-year from election, or until the next congregational meeting prescribed by the ByLaws.

Article IX. 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. Nominations for such vacancies shall be made by the Nominations Committee.

Article X. Responsibilities of the Senior Minister

Section 1. Constitutional Duties

As provided in the Book of Order, it is the responsibility of the Senior Minister to pray to God for and with the members of the congregation; to read, expound, teach and preach the Word; to cultivate in the congregation the singing of the praises of God; to administer the sacraments; to instruct the children and youth; to visit the people, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and with the currently serving Ruling Elders to exercise the joint power of government.

There are certain responsibilities which belong to the Senior Minister as pastor which are not subject to the authority of the Session, but which must be exercised by the Senior Minister subject only to constitutional authority, namely: the selection of the hymns or psalms to be sung at each service, the selection of a passage or passages of Scripture to be read at each service, the leading of the people in prayer, and the preparation and preaching of the sermon. Subject to direction from the Session, the Senior Minister shall have responsibility to arrange special worship services including weddings, funerals and baptisms, and the Senior Minister shall report to the Session concerning such special services from time to time.

Section 2. Head of Staff

The Senior Minister shall be the head of the Church's staff, responsible for the supervision and direction of all Church ministerial and non-ministerial employees and the delegation of all Church work to be performed, subject to the advice and consent of the Session, based upon recommendations from the Church Operations and Personnel Committee, where appropriate, and pursuant to any policies which might be adopted or approved by the Session.

Section 3. Moderator of Session

The Senior Minister shall be the Moderator of the Session.

Section 4. Ex-Officio Member of Committees and Subcommittees

The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of all Church Committees and Subcommittees.

Section 5. Emergency Powers

Between meetings of the Session, where necessary, due to emergency, the Senior Minister may make determinations concerning matters requiring immediate decision, after consultation with, if possible, one or more of the following as appropriate to the matter to be decided: Clerk of Session, the Chairperson of the Stewardship and Property Committee and the Chairperson of the Church Operations and Personnel Committee,. The Senior Minister shall inform the Session of any such determination, and, where appropriate, shall request the Session's ratification thereof, at the next succeeding meeting of the Session.

Article XI. Amendment to Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended, subject to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) at any annual or special meeting of the members of the congregation, by a two-thirds vote of the voters present, providing that a full reading of the proposed changes, or a printed distribution of same, shall be made in connection with the notice of the meeting.

Appendix I

Statement of Purpose

The basic purpose of Southminster Presbyterian Church is the fulfillment of the obligations, duties, and privileges of being a Christian Church of which Jesus Christ is head. Under the Presbyterian form of government, we acknowledge the Scriptures to be our rule of faith and practice.

We adopt the six Great Ends of the Church as acknowledged in the Book of Order for our denomination:

1. ***The Proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of Humankind*** - We proclaim the Gospel through the sharing of time, talent and treasure.
2. ***The Shelter, Nurture and Fellowship of the Children of God*** - All are welcome to belong to our fellowship and each member is encouraged to become involved in worship plus at least one activity.
3. ***The Maintenance of Divine Worship*** - We provide for the worship of our members and our guests through the Word and Sacraments, prayer and music.
4. ***The Preservation of the Truth*** - We provide Christian Education to people of all ages.
5. ***The Promotion of Social Righteousness*** - We seek to demonstrate the love and justice of God, through our outreach to the community and throughout the world.
6. ***The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World*** - We believe in evangelism, seeking to share the gospel with others.

Approved by Session October 19, 1987

Revised 5-22-91 – Approved by Session to conform to the Book of Order.

MISSION STATEMENT

Southminster Presbyterian Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, seeks to glorify God by leading others to Jesus Christ; extending and nurturing our community of faith spiritually, physically, intellectually, and emotionally and reaching out to the world with love and support.

VISION STATEMENT

We are, and we are seeking to become, more fully and faithfully an inviting church, inclusive in its welcome; centered on God; obedient to Christ through the Scripture; nurtured, disciplined, and equipped for ministry and mission in relational groups; gathered in worship, scattered in service and witness; sharing ministry and mission that is transforming our lives, our relationships, our community, our city, our nation, and the world for all eternity.