



BY-LAWS

OF THE

PRESBYTERY OF THE EAST

OF THE

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH

**Approved by Motion at the 81st Stated Meeting
Of the Presbytery of the East - February 1-2, 2008
Amendment No. 1 – September 25-26, 2009
Amendment No. 2 – September 24-25, 2010
Amendment No 3 – February 3-4, 2012
Amendment No.4 – April 24-25, 2015
Amendment No. 5 – September 25-26, 2015
Amendment No. 6 – February 3-4, 2017
Amendment No. 7 – January 24-25, 2020
Amendment No. 8 – April 23, 2021**

ARTICLE I – THE ORGANIZATION

We are the Presbytery of the East (POTE), a part of the Body of Christ and members one of another.

ARTICLE II: MISSION OF PRESBYTERY

The purpose of the Presbytery of the East is: to provide services to the local churches within its bounds, to offer encouragement, training and other helps in conjunction with the General Assembly that the congregations of local churches may be effective in such areas as evangelism, education, stewardship, officer training, member instruction and other facets of an effective Christian life and ministry.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP OF PRESBYTERY

Section 1: Regular Members

The membership of Presbytery shall consist of all Teaching Elders in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and on the rolls of the Presbytery. Every church shall be represented by two Ruling Elders for each Teaching Elder on its staff, whether Senior, Associate or Assistant Pastor. A church without a Teaching Elder shall be entitled to representation by at least two Ruling Elder Commissioners. A disproportionate ratio of Ruling Elders to Teaching Elders shall be corrected according to *The Book of Order, the Book of Government*, Chapter 19-2.

Per Chapter 19-2 A and B of the Book of Government of the EPC's Book of Order, the current Moderator and the current Stated Clerk of the Presbytery are officers of the Presbytery and, therefore, are members of the Presbytery. Such members shall not be counted as part of their home church's representation. Such members shall have the right to vote in any decision of Presbytery. Members of ad hoc Committees and Commissions are not voting members of Presbytery.

Section 2: Corresponding Members

Teaching and Ruling Elders in good standing in other EPC Presbyteries, or in any denomination in fraternal relationship or correspondence with the General Assembly of the EPC, being present at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery, may be invited to sit as corresponding members. As such, they shall be entitled to voice, but not vote in the decisions of Presbytery.

Section 3: Other Persons

The Moderator may recognize and grant to other persons the privilege of the floor of Presbytery, or the Presbytery may grant to other persons the privilege of the floor of Presbytery by a majority vote. Associate members, members of the committees and commissions of Presbytery may address matters relevant to their responsibilities, but cannot vote when not members of Presbytery.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

Section 1: Quorum

- A. A quorum to conduct business shall be no less than two Teaching Elders and four Ruling Elders, being from at least three churches.
- B. The provisions of this section shall apply to both Stated Meetings and Called Meetings of Presbytery.
- C. Any meeting at which a quorum is not present shall be continued to a date and place designated by those present.

Section 2: Worship

- A. All meetings of Presbytery shall be constituted and closed with prayer.
- B. There shall be a devotional service at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery. The service at the annual meeting will include the Sacrament of Communion.

Section 3: Stated Meetings

- A. There shall be three Stated Meetings of Presbytery held each year. These stated meetings shall be held in January/February, April/May and September/October.
- B. The date, time and place of meetings shall be determined by the Executive Council.
- C. The Stated Clerk shall send a written notice of the next Stated Meeting to each Teaching Elder and to the Clerk of each church Session at least thirty days in advance of such meeting.
- D. The docket shall be prepared by the Executive Council.
- E. The September/October meeting shall be the annual meeting of the Presbytery, and shall be the time at which officers and committee members shall be elected and an annual budget adopted.

Section 4: Called Meetings

- A. When any business or emergency requires a meeting earlier than the time to which Presbytery stands adjourned, the Moderator shall, at the request or with the concurrence of two Teaching Elders and four Ruling Elders, call a special meeting of Presbytery. Such request for a Called Meeting shall be in writing and directed to the Moderator or to the Stated Clerk.
- B. If the Moderator is unable to act for any reason, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call.
- C. The Stated Clerk shall send written notice of a Called Meeting to each Teaching Elder and to the Clerk of each church Session at least ten days in advance of such meeting.

- D. In the notice, the purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and no business other than that named in the notice shall be transacted.

Section 5: Attendance

- A. It is the duty of all members of Presbytery to attend all meetings, and it is the duty of each church to be represented by duly appointed Ruling Elder Commissioners at each meeting of Presbytery.
- B. Failure of Teaching Elders to attend meetings is viewed as a serious breach of their responsibility, whom God has called to be obedient and to serve His church faithfully. Therefore, requests to be excused from attendance at a meeting of Presbytery shall be presented to the Stated Clerk before the convening of Presbytery. It is assumed that Teaching Elders will give prayerful consideration before making the decision to be absent. The Stated Clerk will record the names of absentees in the minutes of Presbytery.
- C. When a Teaching Elder fails to attend three successive Stated Meetings, the Stated Clerk shall report this first to the Teaching Elder, the Teaching Elder's Session, and the Executive Council for appropriate action. A fourth such successive absence shall be noted in the minutes of Presbytery and may result in disciplinary action up to and including placing the individual involved on Inactive Status
- D. When a church has failed to be represented by a Ruling Elder Commissioner for three successive meetings, the Stated Clerk shall communicate with the Clerk of said Session, calling the attention of the Session to this rule. It shall be the duty of the Session to ascertain the reasons for such failure to be represented and to communicate these reasons to Presbytery through the Executive Council. The Executive Council may recommend a proper response to the Presbytery.

Section 6: Virtual Meetings.

- A. This section permits the use of electronic means for conducting called meetings of the Presbytery of the East. At this time electronic means are identified as teleconference calls, web conferencing, and video conferencing. This section provides the circumstances for calling virtual, called meetings and the procedures for conducting such meetings.
- B. When Presbytery business or an emergency requires a meeting earlier than the time to which Presbytery stands adjourned, in lieu of a Called Meeting held at a physical location, the Moderator may, at the request or with the concurrence of two Teaching Elders and four Ruling Elders, call a virtual Called Meeting of Presbytery. Such request for a virtual called meeting shall be in writing, including email, and directed to the Moderator or to the Stated Clerk.
- C. If the Moderator is unable to act for any reason, the Stated Clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call.

- D.** The Stated Clerk shall send, via email, written notice of a Called Meeting to each Teaching Elder and to the Clerk of Session of each local church of the Presbytery at least five calendar days in advance of such meeting.
- E.** In the notice, the purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and no business other than that named in the notice shall be transacted.
- F.** Types of Meetings. Virtual meetings may be called and business conducted according to this section by teleconference call, web conferencing, video conference and other electronic means developed in the future, between Stated Meetings for any action other than to hold a Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the East, examination of candidates for ordination, examination of pastors for receipt or transfer for ordination or installation, approval of terms of call, examination of candidates to come under care of the Presbytery, examination of churches, and appointment of Judicial Commissions. {NOTE: An Administrative Commission to Receive Churches and Pastors Into Transitional Membership was established at the 81st Stated Meeting to examine and receive pastors and churches as transitional members of the Presbytery until formal examination by the Presbytery can be made at a future Stated Meeting. This section of the ByLaws does not include the meetings of this Administrative Commission.}
- G.** Rules for Conduct of Virtual Meetings.
1. An agenda shall be sent with the meeting notification. Only business stated on the agenda will be conducted. The agenda may be amended prior to the date and time the meeting is to be held. The amended agenda shall be sent immediately to those to whom the original agenda was sent.
 2. Only TEs that are members of the Presbytery of the East and Ruling Elder Commissioners elected by their churches are eligible to participate in virtual Called Meetings. The local churches are responsible for having procedures for timely election of their Commissioners.
 3. The meeting will start on time and open with prayer. TEs and RE Commissioners that call or log in after the meeting has been called to order may have voice but not vote on any issue on the agenda.
 4. The Moderator of the Presbytery of the East (or the Stated Clerk in the absence of the Moderator) will take the roll of Commissioners to the meeting that have called or logged in on time. At that time, TE and RE Commissioners shall identify themselves by name and the church or ministry (for out of bounds TEs) they represent.
 5. The Moderator (or the Stated Clerk in the absence of the Moderator) shall determine whether a quorum is present. A quorum to conduct business shall be no less than two Teaching Elders and four Ruling Elders, being from at least three churches. Any meeting at which a quorum is not present shall be continued to a date and time designated by those present.
 6. The Moderator (or Stated Clerk in the absence of the Moderator) shall ensure each Commissioner can hear what the other Commissioners are saying and that each Commission can speak to all other Commissioners.
 7. A Commissioner shall ask for permission to speak and identify himself/herself by name and the church or ministry (for out of bounds TEs) being represented.
 8. A Commissioner who is speaking shall not be interrupted. Commissioners who wish to speak shall wait for a Commissioner to complete his/her

- comments and ask to speak. If two or more Commissioners ask to speak at the same time, the Commissioners shall show courtesy and deference to one another. All Commissioners desiring to speak shall be given the opportunity.
9. Votes on motions shall be by voice for teleconference meeting, video conference meetings, and for web conference meetings. In the case of doubt as to whether yes's or no's are in the majority, the Moderator shall take the vote count by name and verbally report it immediately to all Commissioners present. A written record of the vote shall be made and reported in the minutes of the virtual Called Meeting. Abstentions are a decision not to vote and do not count as a vote or in the total votes cast, but shall be recorded in the minutes.
 10. The meeting shall be closed in prayer and a motion made to adjourn.

ARTICLE V: THE OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY

Section 1: Moderator and Past Moderator

- A. The Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting of Presbytery and shall be installed at the following January/February meeting of Presbytery. The Moderator shall serve for one year or until the individual's successor takes office. The Moderator may be elected and serve for an additional one-year term. A Moderator-elect shall also be elected to a one-year term. The Nominating Committee will advise potential candidates for Moderator-elect that, if the current Moderator is elected for an additional one-year, potential candidates acceptance of office will extend to the following year.
- B. Duties of the Moderator:
 1. to discharge those duties prescribed in *The Book of Order* and these ByLaws, and also other special duties as may be required by action of Presbytery;
 2. to preside at all meetings of the Executive Council;
 3. to appoint any special committees, task forces, and teams, except those for which other provision is made by these ByLaws or by action of Presbytery;
 4. to maintain the order and dignity exemplary of the body of Christ at all meetings;
 5. to serve as an ex-officio member, without vote, of all committees/teams of Presbytery.
 6. may visit TEs and congregations of Presbytery periodically to foster a spirit of Christian fellowship and connectionalism;
- C. The immediate Past Moderator will serve as Past-Moderator for the year following that individual's term as Moderator or until such time as that individual's successor takes office. The Past-Moderator shall serve in the absence of the Moderator or as the Moderator requests.

- D. If the Moderator is elected for an additional one-year term, the immediate Past Moderator will serve an additional one-year term.

Section 2: Stated Clerk

- A. The Stated Clerk shall be elected at the annual meeting of Presbytery to a term for three years and may be re-elected for an indefinite number of terms. The Stated Clerk shall take office immediately following adjournment of the meeting at which elected. If the office becomes vacant, Presbytery may elect an Acting Stated Clerk at any Stated Meeting to serve until a regularly elected Stated Clerk shall take office.
- B. It shall be the duty of the Stated Clerk:
1. to prepare for all meetings of Presbytery in accord with Article IV of the ByLaws;
 2. to have sufficient materials at every meeting as may be needed to conduct Presbytery business;
 3. to receive and record all pertinent communications and, after reporting them to Presbytery, recommend appropriate action;
 4. to keep a record of attendance, and to notify the Executive Council of trends, as provided in these ByLaws, Article IV, Section 5;
 5. to keep accurate minutes of all Presbytery meetings, distribute such to the members of Presbytery, and, after Presbytery's approval, to transfer the minutes to a permanent minutes record;
 6. to file all reports and papers upon which action is taken by Presbytery, including those which may be pending, and to record only such resolutions and recommendations as are adopted by Presbytery, together with reports and/or statements as may be essential for present and future use;
 7. to coordinate the notification of all members of committees, teams or other officers of Presbytery concerning their election or appointment;
 8. to file all reports of Presbytery's committees, teams, commissions, and the Treasurer, including those reports as required by the General Assembly;
 9. to keep all rolls and records as required by *The Book of Order* and the General Assembly of the EPC;
 10. to conduct all official correspondence of Presbytery not otherwise provided for;
 11. to serve as ex-officio member, without vote, of all committees and teams;
 12. to serve as a voting member of Presbytery's Executive Council;

13. to serve as registered agent for the corporation, if law requires such an agent, unless Presbytery chooses to elect another Trustee to serve as such;
 14. to represent the Presbytery, as may be required or needed, at denominational and other meetings, events, functions in which the cause of Jesus Christ may be served;
 15. to provide counsel, as needed, to officers, committees, teams, task forces, TEs, and Sessions concerning matters of polity, parliamentary procedure, discipline, and administration;
 16. to work in cooperation and support with the Moderator and Moderator-Elect;
 17. to maintain communication with the Moderator on a regular basis;
 18. to provide oversight of administrative tasks as enumerated above, and for all those tasks which may be assigned by the Executive Council and/or Presbytery;
 19. to be accountable to the Executive Council by means of regular reporting, and an annual performance review and interview, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Council;
 20. above all else, to pray each day for God's blessing upon the Presbytery and the EPC.
- C.** The Presbytery may elect assistants to the Stated Clerk for an annual term, and may be re-elected for an indefinite number of terms.
- D.** A temporary clerk may be elected by the Presbytery, as needed, for such term as the Presbytery shall state in the motion by which such temporary Clerk is elected. The motion shall also state the purpose or purposes for which the temporary clerk is elected.

Section 3: Treasurer

- A.** The Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of Presbytery for a term of three years and may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms. The treasurer shall take office on January 1 next succeeding. If the office becomes vacant, Presbytery may elect an Acting Treasurer at any Stated Meeting to serve until a regularly elected Treasurer shall take office.
- B.** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer:
1. to receive, deposit, and disburse Presbytery's monies at Presbytery's direction;
 2. to keep proper books of account of all receipts and disbursements;
 3. to make reports to the Stewardship Team before Stated Meetings or as determined by the Stewardship Team;

4. to assist the Stewardship Team in developing proposed annual church development and operating budgets for the Presbytery;
5. to report annually to Presbytery's congregations as to the amount of their contributions to Presbytery's work;
6. to maintain all payroll records in conformity with actions of Presbytery and all state and federal requirements;
7. to notify all churches of Presbytery the total amount of their proportionate share of the expenses of the Presbytery;
8. to reimburse committee members, commissioners, and officers of the Presbytery for expenses incurred in the conduct of Presbytery business in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue regulations.

C. The fiscal year of the Presbytery shall be on a calendar year basis.

D. Presbytery may elect an Assistant Treasurer to work under the direction of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall meet the requirements of Treasurer, and shall assume the duties of Treasurer should the Treasurer become unable to discharge the official duties. The term of the Assistant Treasurer is one-year and may be re-elected for an indefinite number of terms.

Section 4: Presbytery Chaplain

A. Upon nomination by the Executive Council, the Chaplain shall be elected by the Presbytery at a stated or Called Meeting and shall serve at the pleasure of the Presbytery. The Chaplain shall take office immediately after election. In case of a vacancy, the Executive Council may nominate a successor at the next immediate meeting of Presbytery.

B. It shall be the duty of the Chaplain:

1. to be a Pastor to Teaching Elders, Candidates and Sessions by encouraging and counseling through visits and communications that demonstrate loving concern and pastoral care;
2. to maintain confidentiality in all contacts requiring such discretion;
3. to pray for TEs, Candidates and their families, Sessions and congregations of the Presbytery;
4. to be a Pastor to Presbytery teams, committees, commissions, Executive Council and assigned agencies;
5. to establish personal rapport with TEs and their families, soliciting suggestions as to how Presbytery may be effectively responsive to their needs and/or problems;

6. to participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars, which may be called by the Presbytery or General Assembly, with other Presbytery Chaplains;
 7. to work with the Church Development Team, Ministerial Committee and the Resource Team in planning and implementing spiritual retreats for Presbytery's TEs and their spouses;
 8. to fulfill other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Council.
- C. The Chaplain shall be accountable to the Executive Council.
- D. The Chaplain shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of authorized duties in same manner as committee members, commissioners, and officers, except that reimbursement may include expenses of the chaplain's spouse when incurred at the same time for an authorized purpose.
- E. The Chaplain shall be a Teaching or Ruling Elder with pastoral experience or equivalent experience in a vocation requiring positive relational and spiritual gifts and skills. The individual shall also possess strong leadership and communication skills.
- F. Presbytery may elect an Assistant Chaplain to work under the direction of the Chaplain. The Assistant Chaplain shall meet the requirements of the Chaplain, and shall assume the duties of Chaplain should the Chaplain become unable to discharge the official duties. Further, the Chaplain may assign some of the duties from B. 1 through 8 of Article V of the ByLaws to the Assistant Chaplain.

ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, TEAMS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS

Section 1: Definitions/Membership/Reporting

A. Definitions

A **team** is appointed by Presbytery to function within the authority and parameters assigned by these ByLaws. It shall make a full report to Presbytery at each Stated Meeting or as needed at other times.

A **committee** is appointed by Presbytery to study and/or recommend action or to execute the directions and/or decisions of a court. Committees may be either permanent (which have a continuing existence) or special (which cease to exist once a specified task is completed). In either case, a committee shall make a full report to Presbytery, and its recommendations shall require action.

A **commission** is empowered by Presbytery to deliberate and take action upon a matter referred to it by a court. A commission acts in behalf of and with the full power of Presbytery within the scope of specific powers granted to it. A full record of its proceeding shall be kept and shall be submitted to Presbytery, which upon approval, shall be entered in its minutes and is to be regarded as the actions of the court itself. The functions of a commission are described in *The Book of Order, the Book of Government*, Chapter 21-1.

B. Membership and Quorum

1. Teams, committees and commissions of Presbytery shall consist of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders of Presbytery. Special committees may be elected by Presbytery or appointed by the Moderator as Presbytery chooses. Commissions may be established, as defined by *The Book of Order, the Book of Government* Chapter 21-1, and these ByLaws, by three-fourths vote of the Presbytery. Committees and Commissions shall have a quorum of a minimum of one-half the membership. The membership and length of service on commissions shall be determined by Presbytery action.
2. Membership of all teams and committees shall be divided into three equal classes, of which one class shall be elected at the fall meeting of Presbytery to serve for three years on a rotating system. A second term of three years may be allowed, after which one year must elapse before re-election. The term of office shall correspond to the calendar year. The team or committee chairman shall report vacancies promptly to the Resource Team. Presbytery shall act to fill all vacancies by election at the next Stated Meeting.
3. The team or committee itself shall determine its chairman. The Presbytery shall determine chairmanship of all commissions.

C. Reporting

A written report and/or recommendations from all teams and committees shall be prepared and distributed prior to each Stated Meeting of Presbytery, normally via Presbytery's email and/or website. Commissions, when dissolved, shall file their minutes with the Stated Clerk and report of their action recorded in Presbytery's Minutes.

Section 2: Executive Council

1. Purpose: The Executive Council shall serve as a coordinating team to promote the fulfillment of Presbytery's stated purpose and to monitor the progress of each team and committee to that end.
2. Membership: The Executive Council shall consist of the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the Past Moderator, the Stated Clerk, the Assistant Stated Clerk, and the Chairman of each team and committee, all of whom are voting members of the Council.
3. Duties:
 - a. to plan all meetings of Presbytery;
 - b. to review proposed annual operating budgets submitted by the Stewardship Team and upon approval, submit to Presbytery at the fall meeting for Presbytery's action;
 - c. to facilitate communications between the teams, committees,

- special committees, advocacy groups and officers of Presbytery;
- d. to approve all leaders and speakers, including compensation, of all Presbytery related activities.
4. Meetings: The Executive Council shall meet at least quarterly and at other times either by means of a regular meeting or by video or telephone conferencing as determined by the Moderator, but not by email. Specially called meetings of the Executive Council can be held upon 72 hour notice by the Moderator and the Stated Clerk. A quorum for all meetings shall be more than one-half of its members.

Section 3: Teams and Committees

A. Ministerial Committee

1. Membership: There shall be twelve members of this committee, six of whom shall be Ruling Elders and six shall be Teaching Elders.
2. Duties: to have those responsibilities as defined in *The Book of Order, the Book of Government*, Chapter 21-2, Sections B through D (reiterated in quotations in 1 a through g and 2 a through f below), and the additional responsibilities as may be assigned by Presbytery.

“1. With regard to Teaching Elders and Candidates

a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee. “

(i) to secure personal knowledge about those members of churches under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery who are seeking to be Candidates to the Gospel Ministry, in order to recommend to Presbytery a course of action regarding their request for candidacy.

(ii) to oversee the training program of each Candidate, with special emphasis on the spiritual growth and practical ministry experiences of the Candidate.

(iii) to oversee the written examination of the Candidate when ready to be presented for ordination.

(iv) to examine the Candidate orally as to beliefs, opinions, and understanding of the areas of Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order, the history of the church and the Reformed Tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.

(v) to present those Candidates who have passed their written and oral examinations to Presbytery for its oral examination and approval for ordination.

“b. it shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery, or Candidate desiring ordination.

c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to Presbytery concerning the application.

d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the *Book of Government*.

e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.

f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.

g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship, and make a recommendation to Presbytery.

2. With regard to local churches

a. It shall counsel with local churches in securing Pastor(s). Calls shall always be placed in the hands of this Committee who shall then make its recommendation to the Presbytery. No call to a Pastor may be issued by a congregation that has not first consulted with the Committee.

b. It shall recommend to the Presbytery a Teaching Elder to serve as Moderator of the Session, and shall work with a congregation in securing pulpit supply. The Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to appoint, with concurrence of the Session, an Interim Moderator of the Session.

c. The Committee, or a Presbytery-designated alternate committee, shall consult with local churches receiving aid from Presbytery and shall make recommendations to the Presbytery concerning that aid.

d. Although no complaint may have been received, if in the judgment of the Committee a local church may be having difficulties or appears to be failing in its mission, the Committee has the authority to investigate and to make recommendations to Presbytery.

e. Presbytery may authorize the Ministerial Committee to serve as a Judicial or Administrative Commission. The Committee may also be appointed as an ongoing Administrative Commission to:

1. Dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss Teaching Elders according to the **Book of Order** when both the congregation and the pastor concur in the dissolution.
2. Approve temporary pastoral relationships.

3. Review terms of call or invitations for all pastoral relationships, excluding out-of-bounds terms of calls, to ensure that the terms meet the minimum established standards.
4. Ordain and/or install Teaching Elders in accordance with provisions in the Book of Government.
5. Appoint advisors for Candidates Under Care and mentors for Commissioned Pastors.

B. Church Development Team

1. Purpose:
 - a. The mission of the Church Development Team is to take primary leadership in the implementation of Presbytery's purpose, and to resource, train and hold accountable the leaders of member churches in order to fulfill the Great Commission through spiritual and numerical growth. In consultation with the Executive Council, the Team shall identify new strategic ministry areas within the Presbytery and establish, nurture and support churches within the areas for the purpose of reaching the lost and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, transform members into Christ-like maturity.
 - b. We believe that a church of any size can expand, grow and advance the kingdom of God, and its leadership can become passionate about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church Development Team is most zealous to fuel financially those churches that demonstrate such zeal and which set and accomplish specific strategies and goals to reach the world for Christ.
2. Membership: There shall be twelve members of this team, six of whom shall be Ruling Elders and six shall be Teaching Elders. Every attempt shall be made to have members geographically distributed throughout the Presbytery.
3. The duties of this team shall be:
 - a. to consider all requests and applications for new churches, mission churches, and petitions from churches seeking approval from the Presbytery to join, merge, relocate, or to be dissolved, and mission projects within the bounds of Presbytery, and to recommend to the Executive Council for appropriate action. When approved, to present such requests and applications to Presbytery. Such new works shall not be undertaken by any individual or group under the jurisdiction of Presbytery without approval of Presbytery.
 - b. to provide care and oversight to the mission churches for the purpose of preparing them to become local churches, and to report periodically to Presbytery regarding such mission churches and to recommend appropriate action by Presbytery on behalf of and in regard to those mission churches.
 - c. to study opportunities and possibilities for new church plants within the bounds of Presbytery; and, with the Presbytery's approval, initiate such enterprise when circumstances warrant.

- d. to encourage, promote and coordinate the revitalization of local congregations within Presbytery's bounds;
- e. to refer to the trustees for appropriate action bequests and gifts of money, real estate, and other properties for church development within Presbytery, from whatever source, using such funds and properties as directed by Presbytery.
- f. to refer to the trustees for appropriate action all legal matters relating to the development, organization, and ongoing life of the individual churches within the bounds of Presbytery.
- g. to refer to the trustees for appropriate action any church properties which have been transferred to the Presbytery upon dissolution of a local church within the Presbytery.
- h. to respond to the Resource Team's efforts to fulfill Presbytery's purpose through specific training events at Presbytery meetings and at member churches.
- i. to recruit, train, equip and provide oversight to those called as Evangelists and/or organizing TEs involved in church planting efforts within Presbytery.
- j. to make regular reports of its work at all meetings of Presbytery, as required.
- k. to develop and operate in accordance with a Church Development Manual approved by Presbytery.
- l. to maintain oversight of supportive and/or collaborative committees appointed either by the Team or Presbytery or as stipulated by these ByLaws.

C. Resource Team

1. Purpose: The primary purpose of the Resource Team shall be to offer opportunities for the encouragement and inspiration of the TEs and member churches of Presbytery.
2. Membership: There shall be twelve members of the Resource Team consisting of six Ruling Elders and six Teaching Elders.
3. The duties of this Committee shall be:
 - a. to provide encouragement to women's and men's ministry; youth ministry networking through communications, coordination and advocacy of these and similar ministry efforts, which may be organized as subteams under the oversight of the Resource Team.
 - b. to review the Session records of each member church of Presbytery at least

once each year and review the required rolls of each church of Presbytery at least once every three years, for compliance with the requirements of *the Book of Government of The Book of Order*. If errors or omissions are found, corrective action shall be recommended and follow-up review made to assure compliance. Once satisfactory compliance has been assured, the records are to be signed by a designated member of the team. To report to Presbytery on the results of the annual review of records, and to monitor the minutes of Session meetings of member churches for indications of possible conflict/problems and to report same to Presbytery for appropriate review and action.

- c. to be responsible for recruiting, and nominating candidates for Presbytery officers (unless otherwise specified by these ByLaws), members of teams and committees, and to perform additional duties which may be required by Presbytery. Nominations by the Team shall not preclude nominations from the floor for any position.
- d. to make regular reports at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery concerning its work.
- e. *to facilitate the communications/information technology requirements of the Presbytery of the East in the conduct of its business. The Executive Council shall have final approval of any Presbytery of the East, Evangelical Presbyterian Church information and/or information of an organization outside the POTE and EPC placed on the POTE website, Internet sites, social medial platforms, or any future electronic communications methodology that is developed commercially or privately. This ministry by the Resource Team is not intended to provide technical support for individuals and churches separate from their participation in POTE meetings and events.*

D. Stewardship Team

e

1. Purpose: The Stewardship Team shall encourage Biblical stewardship, including giving in support of God's Kingdom work in Presbytery, and for oversight of all financial operations of the Presbytery.
2. Membership: The Stewardship Team shall consist of six members, three of whom shall be Ruling Elders and three shall be Teaching Elders. In addition, the Treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of the Team.
3. Duties shall include the following, and other duties as may be assigned by the Presbytery.
 - a. to develop plans to provide financial resources for the support of the Presbytery;
 - b. to assist the churches of the Presbytery in understanding and applying Biblical principles of stewardship;
 - c. to develop annual proposed church development and operating

- budgets in consultation with the Church Development Team, Stated Clerk, Moderator, and the Executive Council prior to submission to Presbytery for its approval;
- d. to provide oversight of the Treasurer and all financial operations of the Presbytery;
 - e. to review the Treasurer's records for the preceding year, presenting results to Presbytery at its winter Stated Meeting;
 - f. to decide differences of opinion on the validity of a request for expense reimbursement, the Treasurer shall refer the matter to the Stewardship Team for final decision;
 - g. to provide for an Independent Annual Review of the Financial Records of the Presbytery. "Independent" excludes anyone (and their family members) who is an officer of the Presbytery, a member of the Stewardship Team or involved with the work of the Stewardship Team, and who has any financial responsibilities within the Presbytery to provide for an annual audit of Presbytery's financial records.

E. Training Team

1. Purpose: The Training Team shall, consulting and coordinating with the Church Development, Resource, and POTE World Outreach Teams and the Ministerial Committee, support the work of Teaching and Ruling Elders by providing opportunities for ongoing training in all aspects of spiritual growth and church leadership.
2. Membership: The Training Team shall consist of ten members, five of whom shall be Ruling Elders and five shall be Teaching Elders.
3. Duties shall include the following, and other duties as assigned by the Presbytery of the East.
 - a. develop and project a vision for ongoing training among POTE churches and Teaching and Ruling Elders;
 - b. identify and catalogue training resources and serve as a clearing house and resource for POTE training needs;
 - c. work with individual churches or individual Teaching and Ruling Elders to develop programs for ongoing personal and leadership development;
 - d. assist churches in identifying leadership training needs and resources to address those needs;
 - e. provide regional (within POTE) training opportunities and training cohorts (regional groups) as needed;
 - f. develop a plan and resources for training Commissioned Pastors and/or church planters throughout POTE as needed;
 - g. discover and provide tools for assessing personal and congregational needs and opportunities for growth;
 - h. help as needed with preparing POTE Candidates for ministry;

- i. report to POTE on the training activities of churches and individual Teaching and Ruling Elders.

F. POTE World Outreach Team.

1. Purpose or Mission: The POTE World Outreach (WO) Team works to make known God's mission purpose, to elevate the church's awareness of the Biblical basis for mission, to stimulate prayer for world missions, to educate and mobilize the church for mission, to encourage evangelism, and to broadcast current events in missions. The POTE WO Team will endeavor to mobilize people from POTE churches who will go and serve the Lord among least reached people groups. In addition, the Team enlists the financial support of POTE member churches for those workers the Team sends out and requests funds for designated projects that strengthen overall mission efforts.
2. The POTE WO Team shall, consulting and coordinating with EPC World Outreach representatives, outside consultants and mission agencies, indigenous national workers, along with other interested parties, develop strategies and grow ministries in support of EPC World Outreach initiatives such as Engage 2025.
3. Membership: The POTE WO Team shall consist of 12 members, six of whom shall be Ruling Elders and six shall be Teaching Elders. The POTE WO Team may choose to use consultants and or ex-officio individuals, who will have voice but not vote. Every effort shall be made to have members distributed geographically throughout the Presbytery.
4. Duties shall include the following, and any other duties assigned by the Presbytery of the East:
 - a. Establish regular, recurring prayer ministry for worldwide and specific missions; invite other to pray along with the Team.
 - b. Review requests concerning missionary support, evaluate missionary call, background, training, etc., and provide a recommendation to POTE.
 - c. Encourage indigenous and American workers by providing practical support in the effort to accomplish World Outreach initiatives sponsored by POTE.
 - d. Communicate through various ways and media about missions among POTE churches, mission committees, pastors and individuals.
 - e. Maintain personal contact with POTE-sponsored missionaries through e-mail correspondence, telephone, video teleconferencing, and vision trips to assigned regions by the POTE WO Team, POTE church members and selected individuals.
 - f. Process vouchers through the POTE Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to provide financial support to POTE sponsored missionaries and projects, fund special requests and enable annual vision trips, with the POTE, the travelers themselves and traveler's churches paying a percentage of vision trip expenses.
 - g. Advise member churches in developing their own mission programs by recommending web sites, books, mission training materials and by providing training.
 - h. Conduct POTE-wide mission workshops and participate in member church mission conferences or other events to publicize outreach to our communities here and to least reached peoples abroad.

- i. Work with the Stewardship Team to develop an annual proposed POTE WO Team budget prior to submission to Presbytery for approval.
- j. Serve as a liaison between member churches and EPC World Outreach, the denominational mission sending agency.
- k. Present reports on both Missions and EPC World Outreach initiatives such as Engage 2025 to the Presbytery at each Stated Meeting, as needed.

ARTICLE VII TRUSTEES OF PRESBYTERY

Section 1: Incorporation

The Presbytery of the East is a legal entity incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey as a corporation on April 2, 1991. The EIN is retained by the Treasurer.

Section 2: Membership

The Trustees shall be the members of the Executive Council, and shall serve concurrently with their terms of office.

Section 3: Duties

- A. to take and hold all property, real or personal, including cash assets, which may be acquired by or be devised, bequeathed, transferred, or conveyed to the said Presbytery or the said Board for the use and benefit of the said Presbytery or the denomination which it represents within its bounds.
- B. to manage and dispose of such property according to the directions of said Presbytery subject to such restrictions as might be imposed by the terms of the will, deed, or other instrument by which such property was acquired.
- C. to take and hold all property, real or personal, including cash assets, which may be acquired by or be devised, transferred or conveyed to the said Presbytery or the said Board of Trustees upon dissolution of a local church within the Presbytery. Such property may come into the possession of the Presbytery by virtue of affirmative acts by the appropriate board or boards of the dissolved or dissolving church to devise, transfer or convey such property to or for the benefit of the Presbytery, or such property may come into the possession of the Presbytery by virtue of a default by the appropriate board or boards of the dissolved or dissolving church to otherwise appropriately dispose of such property prior to the completion of the dissolution of said church and its ceasing to exist. EACH CHURCH WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT CONCURS THAT ANY PROPERTY OF ANY LOCAL CHURCH WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY WHICH DISSOLVES OR CEASES TO EXIST WITHOUT THE APPROPRIATE BOARD OR BOARDS OF THE DISSOLVING CHURCH HAVING DISPOSED OF ALL OF THE PROPERTY OF SUCH CHURCH, SHALL AUTOMATICALLY BE THE PROPERTY OF THE PRESBYTERY. This By-Law provision is to be construed in such manner as to be consistent with *The Book of Order, the Book of Government*, Chapter 25 and is not intended to infringe upon or to impose any property rights in the property of any local church in favor of the Presbytery except in the event of dissolution of the local church and failure of the

appropriate board or boards of the local church to first dispose of all of the property of that dissolving church prior to its ceasing to exist.

- D. to make contracts, sign deeds and other legal documents, and to manage the financial business, and legal affairs and activities of the Presbytery under the direction and control of the Presbytery, who shall exercise all powers permitted under the New Jersey Corporation Law to Trustees of a religious corporation.

E. to maintain benevolence and missions programs under the direction and control of the Presbytery, from which programs or other similar programs by or on behalf of the Presbytery substantial parts, even up to 100%, of the assets and property of the Presbytery may be donated as gifts, benevolences, or other transfers without the Presbytery receiving return compensation or consideration for such gift, benevolence or other transfer.

Section 4: Reports

Trustees shall report to Presbytery at the next scheduled Stated Meeting following the discharge of any of its duties described by these ByLaws. Trustees shall also report at other times at their discretion or upon request by the Presbytery.

ARTICLE VIII DUTIES OF SESSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS TO PRESBYTERY

Session and congregations of Presbytery are expected to exercise those rights, responsibilities, duties, and powers designated by *The Book of Order* of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In addition, each Session shall be responsible to fulfill its ministry in the areas listed hereafter.

Section 1: Commissioners to Presbytery

- A. The Session of each church shall designate Ruling Elder Commissioners for every meeting of Presbytery.
- B. The manner of selection and length of service of such Ruling Elder Commissioner shall be at the discretion of each Session.
- C. If unable to attend a meeting of Presbytery, a Ruling Elder Commissioner shall notify the Clerk of Session of the individual's congregation, who shall petition Presbytery for an excused absence for that Commissioner.

Section 2: Session Records

- A. The Session of each church shall keep a legible and accurate record of all its proceedings, including all meetings of the congregation, in a suitable book. This record shall be submitted to Presbytery for annual review.
- B. Each Session shall also keep a legible and accurate church register of Teaching Elders, officers, communicants, baptized children, baptisms, marriages performed in the church or by its Teaching Elders, and deaths of communicants. This register shall be submitted to Presbytery for periodic review.

- C. Each Session shall procure and keep with its records a current copy of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a current copy of the By-Laws of the Presbytery of the East.

Section 3. Ministerial Matters

- A. The Session of each church shall report annually to the Ministerial Committee the full details of contractual arrangements with all persons whose employment is under the jurisdiction of Presbytery. Any proposed modification of such contractual arrangements shall be reported to and approved by Presbytery.
- B. When a congregation is without a Teaching Elder, the Session shall immediately seek the guidance of the Ministerial Committee.
- C. A congregation desiring to call a pastor or associate pastor shall through its duly constituted committee, consult the Ministerial Committee before the name of any TE is presented to the congregation. Once the congregation has affirmed the call, the Session shall submit the request to the Presbytery for approval and issuance of the call. All calls, including the calling of an Assistant Pastor and moving an Assistant Pastor to the Associate Pastor position, must be approved and issued by the Presbytery.

As a precondition of the approval of a call, the Presbytery shall undertake a background check on all Candidates. Such check shall include any past criminal and/or drug related activities and personal financial status with regard to overwhelming debt or bankruptcy. Ordinarily, the background check shall be done by persons or organizations qualified by reason of education, training, and/or experience. The Presbytery shall include in its annual budget sufficient funds for the conduct of the background checks. Similarly, a background check shall be completed on any person wishing to come under care of the Presbytery prior to action for acceptance under care as Candidates for the Gospel ministry.

- D. A Session shall consult the Ministerial Committee concerning any contemplated termination of contractual arrangements with any person whose employment is under jurisdiction of Presbytery.

Section 4: Financial Responsibilities

- A. The Session of each congregation is responsible for the sound financial operation of that congregation, including an annual audit of all financial records.
- B. Each Session shall lead the local church in interpretation and support of the mission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church through the work of the General Assembly and the Presbytery.
- C. Each Session shall encourage and practice financial support for the program and mission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, giving consideration to the guidelines established by the General Assembly.

Section 5: Church Property

- A. The Session is responsible for the incorporation of the church under the laws of the State in which it is located.
- B. The Session is responsible to review regularly the insurance program of the church including fire and extended coverage, worker's compensation, public liability and hospitalization.

ARTICLE IX OPERATION OF BYLAWS

Section 1: Amendments to the By-Laws

These By-Laws may be amended only at a Stated Meeting of Presbytery and by a two-thirds vote, and only when notice of the proposed change has been given at a previous Stated Meeting. Written notice shall be sent to each Teaching Elder and to the Clerk of each church Session at least twenty days prior to the meeting at which the amendment shall be voted upon.

Section 2: Suspension of the By-Laws

These By-Laws, with the exception of Article IX, may be suspended but only at a Stated Meeting of Presbytery and by a three-fourths vote. Article IX may not be suspended under any circumstances.

**Chronology of Amendments to the ByLaws
Of the Presbytery of the East**

<u>Amendment No.</u>	<u>Article, Section, Paragraph Amended</u>	<u>Meeting/Date Amended</u>
No. 1	Article VI, Section 3, D, g.	86 th Stated Meeting – September 25-26, 2009
No. 2	Article V, Section 3, B, 8	89 th Stated Meeting – September 24-25, 2010
No. 3	Article IV, Section 6 (added)	93 rd Stated Meeting – February 3-4, 2012
No. 4	Various Articles – Conform to changes to the Book of Government per the 34 th General Assembly	103 rd Stated Meeting – April 24-25, 2015
No. 5	Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph E	104 th Stated Meeting – September 25-26, 2015
No. 6	Article V, Section 3, Paragraph B.8 and Article V, Section 5, Paragraph D	108 th Stated Meeting – February 3-4, 2017
No. 7	Article III, Section 1; Article VI, Section 2, Paragraph 2; Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph A, Subparagraphs 2.1 a through (iv), subparagraphs c, e, and f., and Paragraph 2 e. and 1 through 5; Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph C, Subparagraphs C.1 and C.3 a through g; Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph E, Subparagraph 1; and Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph F.	117 th Stated Meeting – January 24-25, 2020
No. 8	Article VI, Section 3, Paragraph C, 3 e	122 nd Stated Meeting – April 23, 2021