

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

CHAPTER I GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- SECTION 1. Name: The name of the Church is "The Presbyterian Church in Singapore".
- SECTION 2. Purpose: The purpose of the Church is to unite the Presbyterian churches in Singapore in a self-governing, self-supporting and self-witnessing spirit for the preaching of the Christian doctrine, the practice of the Christian life and the extension of God's Kingdom on earth.
- SECTION 3. Structure: For convenience in carrying out its functions the Church is organised in three levels, congregations, Presbyteries and a Synod.

CHAPTER II SUMMARY OF FAITH

- SECTION 4. The Church believes in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God in Three Persons, to be the only true God.
- SECTION 5. The Church believes in Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world and only Mediator between God and man. All powers and functions in the Church are subject to Christ's authority. The Church throughout the world and of all ages is His Body, of which our Church is a member.
- SECTION 6. The Church accepts the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as the true Word of God, inspired and holy, and as the supreme standard of faith and duty. It acknowledges the Apostles Creed and the Westminster Confession of Faith as worthily expressing the fundamental and traditional faith commonly held by the Church.

CHAPTER III MEMBERSHIP

- SECTION 7. Each congregation of the Church recognises three kinds of membership—enquirers, those baptised in infancy, and communicant members, but of these only communicant members are full members.
- (i) All who attend Sunday worship regularly and have a real desire to study the teaching can be registered as enquirers.
 - (ii) All children of the church who have received baptism are called "baptised in infancy". (in the case of infant baptism at least one of the parents must be a communicant member).
 - (iii) The following may receive Communion and be called Communicant Members:
 - a) All saved and regenerated enquirers, who have themselves decided to seek baptism and have had their qualifications examined and approved by the Session or Elders and Deacons Court thereafter are baptised.
 - b) Those who having been baptised in infancy who are

now 16 years of age and have decided to become communicant members, and have had their qualifications examined by the Session or Elders and Deacons Court and have taken part in a service of confirmation.

SECTION 8. Qualifications of Communicant Members

- (i) They must understand the meaning of being a Christian, they must abandon all evil habits and heresies, and in their daily life, character and occupation live a holy life according to the teachings of the Scripture.
- (ii) They must have a clear understanding of the fundamental Christian teachings and openly confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- (iii) They must be willing to observe the regulations of the Church and to carry out the obligations of church membership.

SECTION 9. Preparation required for baptism:

- (i) The minister, preacher, elders and deacons must organise a communicants' class for the training of those seeking membership, so that they may understand the fundamental teaching which a Christian must believe and the way of life he must follow, also the promises to be made at baptism and the rules of the church.
- (ii) Those seeking to enter the church must be able to read the Bible and to pray, understand those teachings which they must believe and follow and, in general, the practices of the church. In the case of those who are growing old in years or whose abilities are rather limited, they must at least be able to pray.
- (iii) If the minister or preacher is satisfied with the training given to those wishing to become members of the church he may then recommend them to the Session or Elders and Deacons Court. With their approval and after the names of the applicants have been announced for three successive Sundays without any objection being raised, then a time can be fixed for receiving them by baptism into the church. Exception is allowed in special circumstances.

In the case of those baptised in infancy, when they have grown up, they must also follow the procedure outlined above for reception into membership and in the presence of the congregation make their promises before they can receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

SECTION 10. The Rights of Members in the Church

- (i) Apart from sharing the Lord's Supper which is limited to communicant members, all members within the Christian body share together in all spiritual fellowship.

- (ii) At the marriages, funerals and any times of special celebration they may invite the minister, preacher, elders and deacons to conduct the ceremonies in accordance with the practice of the church and Christian teaching. Where both the bride and the bridegroom are communicant members, the marriage may be performed in the church. If the marriage is in the church it must be according to the marriage laws of the country and the minister invited must be authorised to solemnise marriages.
- (iii) Communicant members have the right to speak at the congregational meeting, to vote, to elect and to be elected.

SECTION 11. The obligations of members in the congregation:

- (i) They must pray earnestly and study the Bible diligently, join in all the different meetings and services, especially keep the Lord's Day, and attend the Lord's Supper.
- (ii) They must help in all the work of the Church and gladly perform good works.
- (iii) They must do all they can to witness for the Lord, and also pay heed to leading their families, and bringing their children under five years of age for baptism—concerning the age of the children under special circumstances exceptions are permitted.
- (iv) Inasmuch as the Church is the Lord's Body, in all matters in which members are involved they must exercise mutual love, not forming factions nor creating strife and thereby causing damage to the Church.
- (v) They are responsible for supporting the Church's normal expenses and any special needs.
- (vi) They must abide by the Constitution of the Church and accept the decisions of the Church.

SECTION 12. Regulations concerning transfer, cancellation and restoration of membership:

- (i) If a member moves to another church, the church which he is leaving must give him a certificate to take to that new church so that he might receive the Lord's Supper there and the rare and guidance of that church.
- (ii) If a member decides to transfer to a neighbouring church, and if there has been no breaking of the church's law, then the church which he is leaving must give him a certificate of transfer to the other church.
- (iii) When a church receives a certificate of transfer if it knows the character of its bearer is not in keeping with the regulations of the church, it may return it.
- (iv) If a member of a non-Presbyterian church wishes to transfer his membership to a local Presbyterian congregation, he does

not need to be re-baptised. However, the Session or Elders and Deacons Court needs to examine and ascertain if he is suitable, and being satisfied of this he may make his promises publicly and be received as a member.

- (v) It a member wishes to change to a denomination which is not related to this church, the congregation to which he belongs need not give a certificate.
- (vi) Any member who leaves the church for a long time and does not express by letter or by contributions his interest in maintaining his relationship, after three successive years , and after the minister of that congregation and the Elders and Deacons have made the utmost effort to seek him out without success, then his name must be recorded in a register of "location unknown."
- (vii) Any member who disregards his membership vows without adequate reason, and for a whole year does not attend worship or undertake other responsibilities, must be visited and exhorted by the minister, preacher or elders and deacons. If the member still ignores his vows then the Session may remove his name from the roll.
- (viii) Any member who in his behaviour rebels against the holy teaching and brings dishonour to the Lord's name, the church, according to the seriousness of the offence, must decide whether to deal with him by warning or by suspending him from Communion. If exhortation proves fruitless, and he continues in his heresy and disobedience, and if there is no hope of bringing him back, then the Session must request the permission of the Presbytery to excommunicate him for the sake of preserving the purity of the church.
- (ix) A "location unknown" member who is found, or a member who has lost contact and returns, or a member who has been excommunicated and is obviously repentant, all these may be considered by the Session and may have his membership rights restored.

SECTION 13. Membership rolls: Each congregation must keep a roll of communicant members, children baptised in infancy, and enquirers, and record their names, sex, age, residence, occupation, the Minister who baptised them, month and year of baptism, whether received from another church, and the church from which transferred, whether married or not, whether they have been exhorted or disciplined, and time of decease.

(The membership rolls must be prepared and planned by the Presbytery (Synod) to ensure uniformity).

CHAPTER IV OFFICE BEARERS

SECTION 14. The office-bearers of the Church are the minister, preachers, elders and deacons. Ministers are ordained by the Presbytery (Synod) according to the proper order, for the preaching of the Gospel, the nurture of the members, the administration of the sacraments and

for service in the Church. Preachers are appointed by the Presbytery for the preaching of the Gospel and the nurture of the members. Elders and Deacons are chosen and set apart in accordance with the proper order to help the minister and preacher in the preaching of the Christian Gospel of Redemption and the nurture of the members, and for the setting up of a Session and Elders and Deacons Court to manage the affairs of the congregation.

DIVISION A ELDERS AND DEACONS

- SECTION 15. Elders and deacons are the voluntary office-bearers in the congregations and their functions are as follows:
- (i) Elders assist the minister in carrying out the work of the Church, in conducting its administration, in nurturing the spiritual life of its members, in correcting their errors and in all matters concerning the upbuilding and improvement of the Church.
 - (ii) Deacons assist the minister and elders in setting the financial affairs of the congregation, in making a budget, and drawing up the financial report in managing all matters concerning finance and disposing of other business.
- SECTION 16. A congregation must elect at least two elders and two deacons. A branch congregation or preaching station may choose one or two elders and deacons according to its needs.
- SECTION 17. Election of elders and deacons:
- (i) When a congregation wishes to elect elders and deacons it must serve a notice to this effect to the members at the latest on three successive Sundays. Voting shall be by ballot, and the method of ballot may be by signed or unsigned ballot.
 - (ii) For the sake of convenience at the time of the election, the Session or Elders and Deacons Court when notice of the election is given may propose names. This gives the congregation the opportunity to pray and consider beforehand. There should not be canvassing for votes. In order to widen the opportunities for worthy service and to avoid conflict of interests, not more than two members of a family should hold office as elders and deacons.
 - (iii) All members of the congregation in good standing, have the right to vote or be elected.
 - (iv) Those who are elected must have been members of the Church for more than three years, must be well versed in Christian teaching, and in the case of those elected to be elders they should have served at least one term as deacons.
 - (v) At the meeting when the election takes place there must be a quorum of at least half of the members who are local residents. Members who must work or are ill/bed ridden may be excluded from the quorum. If, at the time of the election, there is no quorum, the chairman can announce that the election be postponed to the third Sunday from the date of

the original scheduled election. At this next meeting when the election subsequently takes place, the election may proceed if there is a quorum of at least one-third of the members who are local residents. The quorum of at least one-third of the members must be local residents does not apply to situations where there are special or important issues to be decided.

- (vi) To be elected, an Elder must attain not less than two-third, and a Deacon more than half or a majority, of the total votes cast. If there is a tie between the votes of two candidates the decision may be made by drawing lots.
- (vii) A branch congregation which wishes to elect its own elders and deacons must first obtain the approval of the Session of the mother church.
- (viii) The names of those elected must be announced to the congregation for three successive Sundays and if no objection is raised the congregation may proceed with their induction. In the case of those who have held office previously it is only necessary to declare that they are continuing in office.
- (ix) The term of office of elders and deacons is three years. (At the first election it may be decided that a certain number of candidates obtaining the highest number of votes should serve for three years and the next number of candidates for two years. At the next election those all newly elected will be elected for three years. It is also permitted for the Session not to follow this ruling). On the completion of a term of office, elders and deacons may be re-elected to continue in office.
- (x) In order to nurture new blood in the Church, elders and deacons who have already served two consecutive terms must temporarily step down for one term and when others have had their opportunity, their names may be put up again for election. If a majority complete their second consecutive term of office at the same time, lots may be drawn to decide on a suitable number to retire and the others to continue in office. Exception is allowed for special circumstances.

DIVISION B PREACHERS

- SECTION 18. (i) All graduates of Theological Colleges recognised by the Church who have been appointed by the Presbytery's Preachers' and Personnel Committee and serve as preachers for a probationary period of one year are recognised as official preachers of the Synod and may participate in all meetings of the congregation.
- (ii) Graduates of theological colleges, who did not take for their study programmes the subjects of The History of Presbyterianism and The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore, will have to be examined in these subjects during the period of their probation before they can become official preachers.

- (iii) All persons appointed by the Presbytery as preachers shall be given an official letter of appointment or certificate, as a mark of the importance attached to the appointment.
- (iv) In the event that a preacher fails to perform his bounden duties towards the Presbytery (Synod) in accordance with the terms of his invitation, and has been admonished by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee without any avail, the Preachers' and Personnel Committee may request the Presbytery (Synod) to suspend his preachers' qualification, which may be restored if he should subsequently change.
- (v) Theological students who receive scholarship grants from the Synod and who resign from their position before the three years as Preacher must repay Synod the amount of scholarship grants received.

SECTION 19. All who are graduates of other theological colleges and who wish to work in the Church must be examined with great care by the Presbytery to which they belong before recognition is given. The form of examination shall be as follows:-

- (i) The examination will be conducted by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee of the Presbytery.
- (ii) Those wishing to be examined must produce a letter of recommendation from the minister and church committee and the Session or Elders and Deacons Court of their congregation.
- (iii) The examinee must also produce for examination the graduating certificate from his theological college.
- (iv) The examinee will be examined to see if his faith is in accordance with the creeds and standards of the Church.
- (v) When the examinee has passed the examination successfully, and been appointed as a preacher, and when the time comes for him to assume his position, the Presbytery's Preachers' and Personnel Committee should appoint those who are to conduct his induction, to emphasise the importance of the matter. However, before he can be invited as an officially recognized preacher he must first serve as a probationary preacher for a term of one year in the case of a Synod theological student, or for a term of two years in the case of a non-Synod theological student. After he has been accepted as an officially recognised preacher the Presbytery's Preachers' and Personnel Committee will be requested to register him.

SECTION 20. Examination for Licensing

- (i) Preachers who have the qualifications listed below may apply to be examined for licensing.
 - (a) Those who are University graduates, have graduated from a theological college and have served as a preacher in the Presbytery (Synod) for one year.

- (b) Those who have obtained a pass in at least one "A" level and one "AO" level in the GCE "A" level examination or a certificate in the equivalent Pre-University examination, have graduated from a theological college and have served as a preacher in the Synod for three years.
 - (c) Those who have served five years as temporary preachers in the Synod and obtained a higher degree and accepted as an official preacher for more than one year.
- (ii) Those applying for examination must be recommended by two ministers and an elder or by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee to the Presbytery (Synod) Executive Committee. Criteria for making recommendation are as follows:
- (a) Applicants must be sound in faith and of a good character and have a trustworthy reputation both inside and outside the Church.
 - (b) They must have shown within the work of the Church that they have pastoral gifts.
- (iii) After investigation, the Preachers' and Personnel Committee will proceed to issue the essay subjects for the examinee.
- (a) Essays subjects will be divided into two sections.

The first Section: Faith and Experience

1. Personal life and experience of his call.
2. Important Christian doctrines (study of a special subject).

The second Section: Work and Practical Experience

1. Past Experience in church work and what has been learned from it.
2. Critical Analysis of church history.
3. Duties of a minister and church government (including the rites, sacraments and the Constitution of the church).
4. Licensing sermon The preaching test may be taken in the applicant's church where he is serving by requesting the Preachers' and Personnel Committee to observe the preaching.

- (b) Examination of the Constitution

Those Applicants who have completed and passed the course on constitution of the Church as theological students may be exempted from this examination on

Constitution.

- (c) Applicants must complete the essays within two years from date of issuance of the essay subjects. Unless reasons are furnished and accepted by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee, those who have exceeded the time limit for submission of their essay must reapply for licensing.
- (iv) If the Committee is satisfied with the standard of the essays then it must report to the Presbytery Executive Committee.
- (v) For those who have been approved for licensing, a certificate must be given in accordance with the prescribed form. Candidates must publicly declare their vows and sign the statement at the Presbytery Annual General Meeting or Executive Committee Meeting.

SECTION 21. Preacher's termination of service:

- (i) When a preacher is inducted to that office in a congregation, both parties to the invitation must abide by its terms. When the term of office is completed and there is no desire by either party to renew the term of office, this must be made known to the Preachers' and Personnel Committee three months ahead and the preacher must complete arrangements for handing over to the Elders and Deacons Court/Session.
- (ii) The retirement age for a preacher is 65. After retirement, the Church will be responsible for his living expenses as a mark of respect to a servant of God.

DIVISION C MINISTERS

SECTION 22. All who have served in this Church as preachers, who are sound in faith, have had experience of conducting church affairs, have satisfied the examination committee and been licensed, and receive a call from a congregation, may be ordained as ministers of the Church.

SECTION 23. The duties of the minister are to preach the true Christian doctrine of redemption, to conduct the Sacraments, exercise pastoral care of the believers, to serve the church, and to carry out the work appointed by Presbytery (Synod), but he must not adopt methods that cause disturbance to other churches.

SECTION 24. The Presbytery shall appoint Interim-moderators of their congregations which do not have ministers. If the congregations are strong they must be urged to elect a minister.

SECTION 25. The Moderators and Interim-moderators of congregations preside over Session, Elders and Deacons Court and Congregational Meetings, and conduct all the Sacraments.

Ministers and Associate Ministers are official members of the abovementioned meetings and have the right to voice their opinions and cast their votes. The Moderator has the right to invite

other ministers to take his place where necessary.

SECTION 26. The procedure for the election and calling of a minister is as follows:-

- (i) Three months prior to completion of the term of office the Moderator/Associate Minister of the different language services, the Session must meet to decide whether the call should be renewed. If the Session at its meeting, whether for financial or other reasons, is of the opinion that the call the Minister/ Moderator/ Associate Minister should not be renewed it must, for the sake of emphasising the importance of the matter, call a meeting of the congregation to vote regarding its decision.

Concerning the election of a minister, all ministers of this Church and licentiates are qualified to be candidates. If the Session considers it necessary they may select a few names from which the Congregational Meeting may elect one. At the time of the Congregational Meeting, any member of the Church has the right to propose the name of a minister as a candidate for election, after obtaining their consents. The proposal must be seconded and approved by not less than one-third of the members present for the name to be listed with the other candidates. If the Session wishes to invite a minister from outside the country it must obtain the permission of the Presbytery/ Synod and thereafter the name may be included among those nominated.

- (ii) When a congregation wishes to elect a minister, the congregation and any branch congregations must be informed on each of the three previous Sundays before the election. All members must gather together at the appointed time and place to stress the importance of the matter.
- (iii) In the election of a minister the voting will be by ballot and the voting papers signed by the voters. A quorum will consist of at least half of the resident members of the congregation.

If, at the time of the election, there is no quorum, the chairman can announce that the election be postponed to the third Sunday from the date of the original scheduled election. At the next meeting when the election subsequently takes place, the election may proceed if there is a quorum of at least one-third of the members who are local residents. The quorum of at least one-third of the members who are local residents does not apply to situations where there are special or important issues to be decided.

- (iv) To be elected it is necessary to obtain two-thirds of the votes cast.
- (v) Where a church wishes to elect a minister, the Session must make written request to the Presbytery Executive Committee to appoint one minister and two elders to attend and supervise the election.
- (vi) When a minister has been elected the Session must prepare a

call signed severally by the elders and deacons and sealed with the seal of the congregation. They must also appoint representatives to convey this call to him.

- (vii) The said representatives of the congregation must first convey this invitation of a call to the minister of their choice, and if he is a minister holding office in a congregation they must also inform the congregation of which he is minister.
- (viii) The said representatives of the congregation, when the Presbytery meets, must submit the form of call to the minister to the Presbytery and set forth the reasons for the call and the procedure which has been followed. If the one invited is a minister not holding office or a licentiate, then the Presbytery must convey the call to him. If he accepts, the Presbytery may fix a date for his induction or ordination.
- (ix) If the invited minister is a minister holding office then the Presbytery must interview the representatives of the congregation which is calling him, interview the one who is being called, and the representatives of the congregation of which he is at present ministering. The views of all must be examined but special weight must be attached to the minister's personal judgment. The Presbytery must then decide whether or not to place the call in the hands of the minister. If he accepts it, a date may be fixed for his induction.
- (x) If the invited minister is holding office in another Presbytery, the inviting congregation must first present the call to the Executive Committee of the Presbytery for consideration. If it is considered satisfactory, the Presbytery will appoint representatives, together with those of the congregation to convey the call to the executive officers of the Presbytery to which the minister belongs. That executive body must hear the reasons of the representatives of the Presbytery and the congregation, and also hear the views of the minister and the representatives of the congregation in which he is holding office. Special consideration must be given to the personal judgement of the minister. They must then decide whether or not to agree, and the representatives appointed by the Presbytery must report accordingly to the Presbytery. If the call has been accepted, a date may be fixed for his induction.
- (xi) If the one invited is a licentiate of, or a minister not holding office but belonging to another Presbytery, then the congregation calling him must first ascertain his personal opinion and, if he agrees, it must, together with him, inform the Moderator, Clerk or Executive Committee of that Presbytery. The Moderator and Clerk will then inform the Presbytery to which the inviting congregation belongs, so that a date for ordination or induction may be fixed.
- (xii) The ordination or induction of a minister will be conducted by a special meeting of the Presbytery Executive Committee.
- (xiii) The term of office of a minister is four years. A minister may

be invited to continue for a further term. The invitation, according to the regulations, must be presented to the Executive Committee to be passed on to the minister.

- (xiv) In the interests of emphasising the holy nature of the ministry, if a congregation wishes to call a person who is not a minister of this Church, he must pass a full investigation and examination of the Presbytery and or be ordained in accordance with the regulations of the Church.
- (xv) At the time of his induction the minister must sign a pledge in the presence of the Presbytery and Congregation. If the pledge is not carried out, then the procedure for disciplining must be followed (see Section 63). If the minister does not submit to the discipline, the minister may appeal to the Synod within three months.
- (xvi) If a minister acts in an unlawful manner or spreads heretical teaching, then the Presbytery having examined the truth of the charge must deal with it in accordance with the regulations concerning exhortation and punishment.

SECTION 27. Moderator

- (i) The Moderator must be nominated by the Session and elected at the Congregational Meeting with more than two-thirds of the votes cast. If the congregation has two or more language services, the Moderator shall be decided by the combined session.
- (ii)
 - (a) In order to help churches develop their work, it is permissible for churches to invite an Associate Minister. An Associate Minister must have attained the qualifications of being licensed in order to be ordained. Where a Church wishes to call an Associate Minister, the Session shall submit a request in writing to the Presbytery Executive Committee to appoint one minister and two elders to attend the election. The term of office of an Associate Minister is four years, and he shall be eligible for re-election.
 - (b) There are three ways of calling an Associate Minister:
 - (1) The procedure for calling an Associate Minister who is licensed but not ordained should follow that for electing a minister, and the ordination should follow that for electing a minister, and the Presbytery Executive Committee should be requested to send officials to supervise the election.
 - (2) The Session may decide to call a minister who has been ordained to serve as an Associate Minister in the congregation of the same language service. In such event, the Presbytery Executive Committee must be notified.
 - (3) In calling an ordained minister to serve as an Associate Minister in a different language

congregation, the same procedure for electing a minister is to be observed, and the Presbytery must be requested to send officials to supervise the election.

- (iii) In order to avoid difficulties when a Church elects a Moderator, an Associate Minister who is not entitled to stand for election has the right to stand for election in another Church.
- (iv) Interim Ministers may assist in either English or Chinese language congregations. They are appointed by the Executive Committee to churches which have a Moderator or an Interim Moderator and can be called an "English Interim Minister" or a "Chinese Interim Minister".

SECTION 28. Presbytery Ministers

- (i) Presbytery ministers must first have qualified for licensing. They must be proposed by the Presbytery Executive Committee before they can be ordained by the Presbytery.
- (ii) Term of Office. The term of office is four years. Before completion of a term, the Presbytery may invite them for a further term, and in this case, the Presbytery will present such an invitation to the ministers concerned.
- (iii) Salary. The salary of Presbytery ministers is according to the standard prescribed by the Synod.
- (iv) The work of a Presbytery minister is decided by the Presbytery Executive Committee.

SECTION 29. (i) The Moderator or an Associate Minister of a different language service.

- (a) If a minister does not wish to continue serving, he must inform the Presbytery of his intention to resign. After the Presbytery has received his letter of resignation, it must inform the congregation to appoint representatives to express the views of the congregation. If the congregation expresses a desire to retain him, the Presbytery must do all it can to encourage and exhort the minister to continue serving. If the congregation does not appoint representatives or express a desire to retain him, the Presbytery must allow the minister to resign.
- (b) A minister who is not in office but is still exercising the ministry of preaching or is serving in an institution related to the Presbytery or who has retired by reason of age, shall be allowed to retain his title as a minister. In the event he changes his vocation, his title as a minister shall be terminated.
- (c) If the Session decides by a two-thirds majority to terminate a minister's duties, it shall inform the Presbytery Executive Committee which shall appoint an

Investigation Committee to determine if there is a case to offer. If the Investigation Committee determines there is sufficient cause for a complaint, a Congregational Meeting shall be held in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Constitution. At the congregational meeting, there must be a quorum of at least half of the members who are local residents.

- (ii) An Associate Minister of the same language service.

If an Associate Minister does not wish to continue serving, the Session may decide on the matter and inform the Presbytery Executive Committee or the Synod Executive Committee.

SECTION 30. Minister's Retirement

- (i) A minister completes his service at the age of 65. If a minister is physically fit and his work effective and acceptable, and if the church is in need of his services, then with the agreement of both parties he may continue serving, but the term of service is to be limited to one year at a time.
- (ii) When a minister wishes to retire on completion of service he must, together with the Session, work out a satisfactory arrangement which will be jointly proposed to the Presbytery for its decision. If the Presbytery agrees, the minister will retire. The said minister must hand over to the new minister the administration of the congregation and the church's future development.
- (iii) In order to obviate problems of livelihood for aged, retired pastors, before Session Meeting invites a new pastor they should carefully consider the ministerial retirement allowance they can offer and thus show respect for God's aged servants.

SECTION 31. The position of missionaries in the Presbytery.

- (i) Overseas Mission Boards, in response to requests from the Presbytery appoint missionaries as needed to join in the work of the Presbytery.
- (ii) The service of missionaries in the Presbytery is by appointment by a Mission Board with the consent of the person concerned.
- (iii) New missionaries, during their period of language study, are observers of the Presbytery Meeting.
- (iv) When missionaries have been appointed to any form of mission and pastoral work, they are members of Presbytery.
- (v) Before a missionary completes his term of service the Presbytery should decide whether or not it wishes him to renew his service.
- (vi) Missionaries like all the Presbytery ministers and preachers

must observe the Church regulations, preserve the harmony of the Church and seek the promotion and extension of its missionary task.

CHAPTER V CONGREGATIONS

- SECTION 32. All such as meet the conditions set out below, have made application to the Presbytery, and have been investigated and approved, and have had representatives from the Presbytery appointed to give guidance and are lawfully constituted, are called congregations
- (i) The congregation must meet the conditions of self-governing, self-supporting and self-witnessing and have forty or more communicant members.
 - (ii) Among the members it must be possible to elect two elders and two deacons to be responsible for the affairs of the church.
 - (iii) There must be a fixed church building at which services of worship may be held at the fixed time.
 - (iv) There must be adequate financial resources to invite a minister or a preacher and to share the expenses of the work of the Presbytery.
 - (v) If the congregation falls short of the qualifications required, it has three years following exhortations by the Presbytery in which to recover its former condition and retain its status. If it fails to do so, it must be reduced to the status of a branch congregation.
- SECTION 33. Branch congregations: A branch congregation which is within reasonable distance of a congregation, has twenty or more communicant members and a suitable meeting place for fixed times of worship, on the request of the Session to the Presbytery may be recognised by the Presbytery as a branch congregation of that congregation. Its administration will come under the said congregation.
- SECTION 34. Preaching station: A preaching station which is within reasonable distance of a congregation, has less than twenty members and a suitable place for worship, with the agreement of that congregation can be called a preaching station and its administration comes under that congregation. If it is too far from any congregation then it comes under the care and control of the Presbytery.
- SECTION 35. Establishment of a congregation, its place in and its relationship to the Presbytery:
- (i) Establishment of a congregation.
 - (a) Any branch congregation of a congregation, or members of a congregation who wish to establish a separate congregation or branch congregation must prepare a statement of their reasons, to be signed by all the communicant members in good standing who so

wish to organise themselves.

This statement must be presented to the Session of the congregation for consideration and forwarded to the Presbytery to decide. If the Session does not agree, they must request the Presbytery to decide.

- (b) Any fellowship of Christians who do not yet belong to a congregation in that area and who wish to establish themselves as a congregation must prepare a statement of their reasons signed by all the communicant members in good standing who wish to organise themselves in this way and appoint representatives to convey this request to the Presbytery for its decision.
 - (c) After the Presbytery has agreed to receive the application, it must appoint representatives to examine and report to the Presbytery. If the report is satisfactory, it must appoint a minister as an Interim Moderator. For carrying out the procedure of establishing a congregation and the selection of a minister at least one minister, and one elder must be appointed.
 - (d) When a branch congregation becomes a fully established congregation it may have its own meeting place and must plan its own development. If necessary the mother congregation should render-its help and support.
- (ii) The congregation's place in and its relationship with the Presbytery and the relationship between the mother congregation and its branch.
- (a) All English or Chinese branch congregations or services, once it has attained the financial and manpower abilities to establish a separate congregation, has met the requirements laid down in the "Establishment of a Congregation" and obtained the approval of the mother congregation, should be encouraged to form a separate congregation. This will not only encourage the spirit of self-governing, self-supporting and self-witnessing but is one of the best ways to promote the growth of a congregation.
 - (b) All English or Chinese branch congregations or services with sufficient financial and manpower to support a Session and the administrative powers of a congregation but is unable or not willing to move out of the premises of the mother church should be encouraged to establish a separate congregation. After the formation of a new congregation, it should discuss with the mother congregation with a view to entering into a contract for sharing the use of the property and buildings of the mother church. However, the property and buildings of the mother congregation will remain their assets and this new congregation may not seize them. Nevertheless, the new congregation may state in the contract with the mother congregation that they

will not be evicted from the premises.

- (c) If a church has two to three congregations, each with its Session and power of self-governing, self-supporting and self-witnessing, they should all share in the premises and facilities of the mother congregation. In addition, they should help each other and strengthen the co-operative spirit among their office bearers. There should also be a main Session to oversee the common interests of the various congregations, for instance, the use of common premises, sharing of the financial burden regarding the maintenance and extension of the church building, water, electricity and other common utilities expenses, rents, employment of common workers.
- (d) If the English or Chinese service has neither the ability nor intention to form a separate congregation, it can apply to the Synod or the Presbytery for recognition as a branch congregation with the administrative powers remaining with the mother congregation.
- (e) Those congregations with the abilities to form independent congregations but unwilling to be separated from the mother congregation may send representatives to sit in the Presbytery in order to become official members of the Presbytery.
- (f) Those English or Chinese branch congregations which have become full-fledged congregations can elect to join either the English or Chinese Presbytery. The Chinese-English congregations can also elect to join either Presbytery. Application for transfer to another Presbytery may be made after three years and may only be made once.

SECTION 36. Congregational meetings

- (i) A Church may have:
 - (a) a Congregational Meeting.
 - (b) a Session.
 - (c) an Elder and Deacons Court.

It is also permitted to have only a Congregational Meeting and an Elders and Deacons Court.

- (ii) The Congregational Meeting is the meeting together of all the members. Its functions are (a) the election of ministers, elders and deacons, (b) the approval of the accounts, the budget for the new year and the proposals of the Elders and Deacons Court. If ordinary members have proposals they must first be examined by the Session and Elders and Deacons Court, and only thereafter, be brought forward to the Congregational Meeting. There should be a meeting at least once a year, preferably near the beginning of the year

(the notice being given by the Moderator on three successive Sundays preceding the meeting). If the Session considers a Congregational Meeting is not necessary, this is also permissible, but the fact must be recorded in the minutes. But if a quarter of the locally resident communicant members petition the Session for it to be held, then it must be called. However, it is also permissible for the Session to exercise authority in matters relating to proposals before and decisions of the Congregational Meeting.

- (iii) The Session is formed by the meeting together of the elders. All matters concerning the nourishing and support of the spiritual life and character of the members, exhortation and disciplining, reception of new members and transfers are the responsibility of this body.
- (iv) The Elders and Deacons Court is made up of all the elders and deacons at present holding office. All matters concerning building, repairs, putting affairs in order, the raising of regular and special funds, their allocation and preservation, are discussed by this meeting when, decisions made and carried out. If more than half of the congregation oppose, they must re-examine these matters so as to obtain general approval.
- (v) The minister of the congregation or the interim-moderator appointed by the Presbytery is the moderator of all the meetings set out above. In matters of urgency the moderator may authorise an experienced elder as temporary chairman to deal with the necessary business, but at the election of a minister the representative appointed by the Presbytery should be the chairman of that Congregational Meeting.
- (vi) The resolutions of the Meeting must be carefully minuted by the Clerk and recorded in the Minute book so that they may be presented to the Presbytery and preserved permanently for reference.
- (vii) Preachers if they are members of the congregation in which they serve may join in all congregational meetings.
- (viii) Session requires a quorum of half of the elders present. A meeting of Session requires over half the number of elders and deacons present. When important matters are tabled for discussion, there must be a quorum of two-thirds of the total number.
- (ix) A congregation which is in need of an elder may ask an elder of a neighbouring congregation to help temporarily as an elder or may request Presbytery to appoint an elder to assist.
- (x) A congregation in matters of difficulty may seek the guidance of the Presbytery.

SECTION 37. Representation of congregation

- (i) The number of representatives appointed by a congregation to attend meetings of the Presbytery is in proportion to its

membership according to the following ratio:-

40-75 members appoint one elder; 75-250 members appoint two elders; 250-500 members appoint two elders and one deacon; 500-750 members and above appoint three elders and two deacons.

- (ii) Representatives to attend the Presbytery meeting are appointed either by the congregation or the Elders and Deacons Court.

SECTION 38. The property of congregations:

- (i) The ordinary contributions of church members, and all special funds are in the care of the Elders and Deacons Court for their careful allocation. Income and expenditure accounts must be carefully and clearly kept in accounts books so that the Elders and Deacons Court can appoint such person(s) to examine and report on them.
- (ii) If the congregation has accumulated funds they must be carefully preserved by the Elders and Deacons Court and the balances recorded in the Minute Book. It must be passed by a majority where they should be kept and administrators appointed. Those who are appointed in charge must submit a detailed report of their stewardship to the Elders and Deacons Court each year and this report should be recorded in the minutes.
- (iii) If a member makes a special contribution amounting to a memorial fund or immovable property, he should be asked to provide a written statement of his offering, handing it over to the Elders and Deacons Court for safe keeping and to determine its use. Thereafter, the contributor has no right to interfere.
- (iv) If a member makes a special contribution amounting to a memorial, or gives immovable property, and in his statement of offering he indicates how it should be used, the Elders and Deacons Court must preserve and use it for the purposes specified. If the Elders and Deacons Court wishes to use it for other purposes of the church it must first obtain the donor's written consent. If the original donor has died, they must then obtain his heir's consent, before the congregational meeting decides the matter.
- (v) If a congregation buys property or administers church funds, it must use the following title in the deeds or documents:

"The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Singapore."

Church funds must be banked in the name of the Church and cheques validated by the signatures of the treasurer and either the chairman or secretary.

- (vi) If a congregation wishes to sell its properties or its church building, a decision will have to be first taken by the Elders and Deacons Court and the concurrence of the congregation

duly obtained at a Congregational Meeting, where not less than two-third of the members present shall have voted in favour, before the matter can be referred to the Synod Trustees for them to attend to the sale formalities. In the case of sale of the Church Sanctuary, it must obtain the agreement of the Presbytery or Synod.

- (vii) The Deeds of all Synod, Presbytery or congregational property and all important documents must be entrusted to the Synod Trustees which will be made up of two representatives elected by Synod, two elected by each Presbytery, the Moderator of Synod, the Chinese Stated Clerk of Synod and the Treasurer.

At each meeting of the Presbytery or Synod one representative may be changed, and those elected successively may also continue to hold office. All the Deeds and documents must be kept in safe deposit and a record kept in the Trustees' minutes of the day, month and year of their deposit or removal.

- (viii) In the event that a congregation should unfortunately be dissolved, it shall first obtain the concurrence of the Presbytery, and the congregation so dissolved shall discharge all its debts and liabilities (legally incurred on its behalf and transfer all its remaining properties, movable or immovable, including its church building(s), landed properties, funds, and bank deposits to the Presbytery or to other charitable organisation which are registered under the Charities Act, Cap 37.

CHAPTER VI PRESBYTERY

SECTION 39. Structure

- (i) The Presbytery's bounds and demarcation are determined by its geographical location or the medium of language used.
- (ii) The Presbytery must be constituted by at least live ministers of congregations and five congregations.

SECTION 40. Functions:

- (i) To establish, assist, guide, coordinate or supervise congregations and branch congregations belonging to it.
- (ii) To encourage the evangelistic work of each congregation and other religious activities which are beneficial to the spiritual life of the members.
- (iii) To train voluntary workers, to examine for licensing, to ordain ministers, to transfer ministers, to deal with their termination of service, their retirement on completion of service and their exhortation and discipline.
- (iv) To discuss and make decisions on the proposals of the congregations or the representatives.

- (v) To examine all Presbytery Committees' minute books, the financial reports and the congregations' minute books and membership rolls.
- (vi) To appoint representatives to attend the Synod.
- (vii) To carry out the decisions of the Synod and to undertake such business as is handed down to it by Presbytery.
- (viii) A Presbytery in matters of difficulty may seek the guidance of the Synod or the Synod Executive Committee.

SECTION 41. Members of Presbytery

- (i) Official members: Official members of Presbytery are the interim-moderators, ministers of congregations and officially recognised preachers and the elected representatives of the congregations belonging to the Presbytery. Retired ministers, ministers and preachers serving in theological colleges are deemed to be "fellow-workers of the Synod" and are official members of the Synod and observers of the Presbytery.
- (ii) Observers: Probationary preachers and Western fellow-workers, who have not been appointed as interim moderators of congregations or who are serving in theological colleges are observers. All observers shall have the right to vote or to be elected.
- (iii) Co-opted members: If the Presbytery Executive Committee thinks it necessary it may invite to attend Presbytery certain persons as co-opted members from those connected with its work. But in the meeting the co-opted members must not exceed one-tenth of the total number.

SECTION 42. Quorum:

There must be at least half the total number of official members to form a quorum at each meeting of the Presbytery.

SECTION 43. Time of meeting:

- (i) The ordinary meeting is once a year, the time and place to be decided by the Presbytery or its Executive Committee.
- (ii) Extraordinary meetings, when necessary, can be called by the Executive Committee by giving three weeks' notice in accordance with the procedure as below. Exceptions to this may be allowed in case of urgency.
 - (a) The Moderator and Clerk should inform the members by letter of the reasons for the special meeting.
 - (b) If there are other matters which need to be dealt with there must be a further notice sent out so that these matters may be thought over before the meeting. Any matter which has not been notified to members may not be included in the agenda.

- (c) If a congregation wishes an extraordinary meeting to be called to deal with an important matter it has encountered it must give reasons in writing to the Executive Committee and obtain its approval. All expenses involved in the extraordinary meeting must be borne by the congregation in question.

SECTION 44. Officers of Presbytery

- (i) Moderator and Vice-Moderator, to conduct the meetings and to represent the Presbytery in exercising its functions. The Nominations' Committee of Presbytery brings forward several names from whom the Presbytery first elects a Moderator and then a Vice-Moderator. The Moderator must receive two-thirds of the votes cast to be elected. The Vice-Moderator can be elected by a simple majority. (If desired election can be without nominations).

Both the Moderator and the Vice-Moderator shall hold office for a term of two years, and shall then retire for one term. Save the Moderator who must retire for one term after his term of office expires, the Vice-Moderator may be nominated as candidate for election to the office of Moderator.

Only Singapore citizens and permanent residents are eligible for election as Moderator or Vice-Moderator of Presbytery.

- (ii) There shall be a Stated Clerk and an Assistant Stated Clerk, who shall each hold office for a term of two years. The Stated Clerk must retire for one term after his term of office. The outgoing Assistant Stated Clerk may be nominated to be elected as Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk shall take charge of the correspondence and records of the Presbytery, while it shall be the responsibility of the Asst. Stated Clerk to keep the minutes of the Presbytery's Annual General Meeting.
- (iii) A Treasurer, who shall hold office for a term of 2 years, and shall not be elected for a consecutive term. Withdrawal cheques signed by the Treasurer must be validated by the counter-signature of either the Moderator or the Stated Clerk as is legally required.
- (iv) A Business Committee and a Nominations' Committee of three members each shall be appointed by the Executive Committee from amongst its own members to decide the order of agenda of the meetings, to examine the proposals of the members, to distinguish between matters requiring guidance, and at the time of appointments bring forward nominations for decision by the Presbytery.
- (v) An Executive Committee to carry out decisions and settle matters of urgency. The Presbytery Executive Committee is composed of the following members -

The Moderator and Vice-Moderator, the Stated Clerk and Assistant Clerk, and the treasurer who are; all ex-officio. In addition, there are eight elected members making a total of thirteen of whom seven are to be pastors or preachers and six

elders or deacons.

SECTION 45. Committees: The Presbytery meeting appoints different committees to deal with the various kinds of Presbytery business. The first name of those appointed serves as chairman and in the event of his absence the second name acts on his behalf, and so on. At each meeting a quorum consists of over one-half of the members. Any meeting at a fixed time at which there is not a quorum present does not constitute a meeting but a second continuing meeting can be held within a week. If there is still not a quorum, the meeting may be held at the time stated and all decisions if they can obtain the written agreement of a quorum of members may be taken as effective.

SECTION 46 Expenses: The Presbytery expenses are to be borne by the congregations of the Presbytery.

SECTION 47. Order of business

- (i) At the beginning of the Presbytery meeting the retiring Moderator leads in worship. Thereafter the new Moderator and other office bearers, Executive Committee etc. take office, and proceed to business
- (ii) The Stated Clerk calls the register of members
- (iii) The Moderator invites the Stated Clerk to read the minutes of the last meeting and the rules of procedure.
- (iv) The Moderator invites the representatives of each congregation to read out its statistics.
- (v) Appointment of members to examine the minute books of all sub-committees and sub-committees accounts and the minute books of each congregation and to collate their statistics.
- (vi) Reception of reports of those committees appointed at the previous meeting.
- (vii) The business committee brings forward motions, petitions, requests for guidance to be decided by the meeting.
- (viii) Reception of reports of those committees appointed at the present meeting.
- (ix) Examination of budget and statement of accounts.
- (x) Treasurer's report.
- (xi) Appointment of one third of the Presbytery members as delegates to Synod and election of officers for the next term by ballot.
- (xii) Decision on time and place of next Presbytery meeting.
- (xiii) The Stated Clerk reads the minutes and calls the register once more; thereafter, meeting closes.

CHAPTER VII SYNOD

- SECTION 48. Structure and organisation: The Synod is composed of the duly elected representatives of the Presbyteries.
- SECTION 49. Function:
- (i) To represent the Church in external relations. To link up each Presbytery in internal relations and to supervise the various congregations.
 - (ii) To enact the regulations governing Church meetings and to make decisions concerning questions related to doctrine.
 - (iii) To make decisions concerning the establishment of presbyteries, to determine their bounds and to guide the business performed by Presbyteries.
 - (iv) To promote the devotional life and evangelism and the public affairs of the Church.
 - (v) To exercise control over the property, deeds and records.
 - (vi) To examine the minute books of each church meeting and the accounts of each Presbytery.
 - (vii) To make decisions on matters referred to it by presbyteries.
- SECTION 50. Members
- (i) Each Presbytery elects one-third of its Presbytery members as delegates to Synod. Half of them must be lay representatives. Those already holding important office in Synod must receive preference in being appointed,
 - (ii) The Synod Executive Committee, if it considers necessary, may appoint from within the Synod a number of special members to attend the meetings but the number of special members may not exceed one-tenth of the total.
- SECTION 51. A quorum of an Annual General Meeting shall consist of at least thirty members of whom ten must be ministers and the remaining twenty lay representatives must also represent more than half of the Presbyteries. The quorum for an Extraordinary Synod Meeting shall consist of at least twenty members of whom seven must be ministers and the remaining thirteen lay representatives.
- SECTION 52. Times of Synod meetings:
- (i) The Annual General Meeting is held once a year, the time and place to be decided by the Synod or its Executive Committee. If the Synod cannot meet at the time agreed the Executive Committee must call together the Executive Committee of each Presbytery and hold an enlarged Executive Committee meeting.
 - (ii) Extraordinary Synod Meeting. When the need arises an

Extraordinary Synod Meeting may be called by the Synod Executive Committee, giving three weeks' prior notice according to the following procedure, but the procedure does not apply to matters of extreme urgency.

- (1) The Moderator and the Stated Clerk must send a letter to all Synod members giving information on the reasons for calling the Extraordinary Synod Meeting.
- (2) If there are additional matters to be settled at the meeting these must also be included in the letter or in a supplementary letter so that they can be thought about before the meeting; any matter that has not been stated in the letter of notice may not be listed on the agenda.
- (3) If a Presbytery encounters some important matters, it can request an Extraordinary Synod Meeting. The matter must first be placed before the Synod Executive Committee for approval and all expenses shall be borne by the Presbytery concerned.

SECTION 53. The Synod's Nominations' Committee and the Moderators of the Presbyteries shall nominate candidates from among the delegates at the Synod Annual General Meeting for election.

- (i) From these, the members of the Synod first elect a Moderator and then a Vice-Moderator. The Moderator must receive two-thirds of the votes to be elected. It is sufficient for the Vice-Moderator and other officers to receive a simple majority of votes to be elected. The term of office of the Moderator and the Vice-Moderator is two years. They cannot continue in the same office for a consecutive term. The Moderator cannot be nominated for the Vice-Moderatorship. The Vice-Moderator can be nominated for the Moderatorship. The current Moderator of the Presbytery may not be nominated for the Synod Moderatorship. Only Singapore Citizens or permanent residents can be elected as the Moderator and the Vice-Moderator.
- (ii) Stated Clerk, Assistant Stated Clerks and Treasurer, together with the members of Executive Committee are all elected by the Synod. Their term of office is two years and coincides with the term of the Moderator.
- (iii) The term of office of the Chinese and the English Stated Clerks is two years. They must step down for one term at end of office. They cannot at the same time stand for election as Assistant Stated Clerks. The Assistant Stated Clerks can stand for election as the Stated Clerks.
- (iv) The term of office of the Treasurer is two years. At the end of office, he must step down for one term after which he can stand for election again.
- (v) The Moderator presides over the meetings of the Synod and the Executive Committee and represents the Synod. The Vice-Moderator, in the absence of the Moderator, performs these functions.

- (vi) The Stated Clerk looks after the official documents, keeps the minutes and is responsible for their printing. He is also responsible for the preservation of historical records. He is assisted by the Assistant Stated Clerk, who also has the responsibility of recording the minutes at the Annual General Meeting.
- (vii) The Treasurer looks after the Synod's finances. He represents the Synod in dealing with accounts. Apart from the funds necessary to meet regular monthly expenses, he cannot hold more than \$500 in cash. If the cash account exceeds this amount, he must, in the name of the Synod, deposit it in a Bank designated by the Executive Committee. Cheques drawn on the account are to be validated by the signatures of the Treasurer and either that of the Moderator or the Stated Clerk.
- (viii) The Synod must invite a qualified accountant to audit the Synod's accounts. The auditor is responsible for examining the Synod's accounts for that year and reporting to the Synod's Annual General Meeting. During his term of office, the auditor, on the instructions of the Moderator, may audit the accounts at a specific time and report to the Executive Committee.

SECTION 54. Synod's expenses: The Synod's expenses are borne by the Presbyteries within the Synod. Special expenses and the expenses of its activities may be met by the Executive Committee raising special funds.

- SECTION 55. The order of business at Synod meetings:
- (i) The Moderator leads the meeting in opening worship.
 - (ii) The new officers and the Executive Committee take office.
 - (iii) The Stated Clerk calls the roll of the duly appointed members.
 - (iv) The Stated Clerk reads the minutes of the last meeting and the rules of procedure.
 - (v) The moderator of each Presbytery reads out its statistics.
 - (vi) To appoint members to examine the records of the Synod, the Executive Committee of the Presbyteries, the Preachers and Personnel Committees, and other specially appointed committees, to examine the accounts of each fund, and the statistic reports of each Presbytery.
 - (vii) To receive reports of those committees appointed at the previous meeting.
 - (viii) To receive the requests for guidance from the Presbyteries.
 - (ix) The business committee, having collated and arranged each motion, brings them forward for the meeting to decide.

- (x) To receive reports of those committees appointed at the present meeting.
- (xi) To examine the budget and the financial statement of accounts.
- (xii) Election of new officers.
- (xiii) To decide the time and place of the next meeting.
- (xiv) The Stated Clerk reads the minutes and calls the register once more and thereafter, is the closing worship.

SECTION 56. Synod Executive Committee

- (i) Members of the Synod Executive Committee must be members with experience and devoted to service.
- (ii) Formation

The Synod Executive Committee is composed of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, the Chinese and English Stated Clerks, Assistant Stated Clerks and the Treasurer as members ex-officio together with ten other members, of whom nine are to be ministers or preachers and eight elders or deacons, elected from among Synod members.

- (iii)
 - (a) When the Synod meeting has ended the Synod Executive Committee shall 1) carry out the decisions of Synod, 2) supervise the functioning of all Synod committees, 3) deal with urgent business. I
 - (b) At the time of the next meeting of Synod it is responsible for appointing a business committee, a nominations committee and a steward for the meeting. The work of those appointed to arrange the business is two-fold:
 - A Before the meeting of the Synod to work out an agenda and at the beginning of the meeting to announce it.
 - B Before the meeting to receive and collate all motions from Presbyteries and individual members.
- (iv)
 - (a) The Synod Executive Committee must meet four times a year to transact business. When necessary a special meeting may be called by the Moderator and Stated Clerk of Synod. If the Moderator is on leave the Vice-Moderator can call the meeting.
 - (b) If an urgent decision on any matter must be made and a special meeting cannot easily be called, the Moderator of the Synod or the Moderator of Presbytery may first discuss the matter with the Presbytery concerned and then bring their decision to the other Presbyteries to seek their opinion. If there is no opposition the proposal may then be carried out by the Moderator of

the Synod.

- (c) The Synod Executive Committee and the Presbytery must have their own minute books which must be presented to the Synod for examination and recorded in the annual minutes.
- (v) Term of office. The term of office of the Synod Executive Committee is two years. They take office at the beginning of the Synod Annual General Meeting in the year of their election.

CHAPTER VIII RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR EACH MEETING

SECTION 57. Rules of procedure for meetings of Presbytery and Synod.

- (i) The business of the meeting must be conducted by either the present Moderator or Vice-Moderator, and all be under his control.
- (ii) At each meeting the Stated Clerk must call the roll to see whether or not there is a quorum and report those attending, those failing to attend and those who have requested leave of absence.
- (iii) Each meeting must be opened and closed with prayer.
- (iv) At the beginning of each meeting the Stated Clerk must record each member present. Those who arrive late may have their names recorded subsequently.
- (v) If a member cannot attend he must write a letter asking leave of absence. Those who attend may not arrive late or leave early without seeking permission.
- (vi) At the beginning of the meeting the Stated Clerk must read the minutes of the last meeting and the rules of procedure. If there is unfinished business from the last meeting it must be given precedence on the agenda.
- (vii) Any member wishing to speak in a meeting must first obtain the permission of the chairman.
- (viii) Anyone who wishes to bring forward a motion must first set it out in writing giving both the reasons for it and the course of action to be taken and give it to the business committee. After examination it may be brought forward for discussion.
- (ix) Any proposal not on the agenda which does not have a seconder may not be accepted as a proper motion.
- (x) Decisions may be taken by a show of hands, by standing vote or by ballot. The method used should be decided by the meeting. If the meeting cannot decide, the decision on the method of voting rests with the chairman. Those who do not have the right to vote may not take part.
- (xi) Normally a simple majority should decide a matter. But if

there is some special matter then the agreement of more than half or two-thirds of the members present may be required. Before such a vote it is necessary first to count the number of members present.

- (xii) If a motion has been moved and seconded, any amendment to it must also be moved and seconded. Any amendment to a motion which has been moved and seconded should be thrown open to debate and will be dealt with first in the meeting, provided always that there should be no more than two amendments to each motion which has been moved and seconded. In the event there are more than two amendments to such a motion, a vote shall be taken to determine which of the two amendments are to be dealt with.
- (xiii) The proposer of a motion who wishes to withdraw it, if it has not yet been discussed and if he obtains his seconder's agreement, may do so. But if it has already been discussed the moderator must ask the meeting to decide whether it may be withdrawn.
- (xiv) In the meeting the proposer of a motion may speak once to put forward his views and then speak again in explanation, but on each occasion he may not speak more than ten minutes. His seconder and those taking part in the discussion may each speak only twice but they may not exceed five minutes each time. If the seconder and those debating have not finished and wish to speak again the moderator must ask the consent of the meeting.
- (xv) If a motion includes more than one clause, and if two people agree that the clauses should be separated and decided separately, this must be allowed.
- (xvi) Motions that have been passed at one meeting cannot be re-opened for discussions at the same meeting. If there is an important matter and it must be discussed again, the decision to do so must be approved by two thirds of the members present.
- (xvii) The Nominations' Committee, after careful consideration must bring forward its nominations for its working committees. Nominations may also be made from the floor of the meeting. All appointments must be approved by the meeting.
- (xviii) If the voting on any motion results in an equal number of votes being cast for and against, the chairman has the casting vote. If the chairman does not exercise this vote then the motion is not carried.
- (xix) If the chairman proposes a motion, joins in the discussion or makes a report, then the vice-chairman must take the chair for the time being.
- (xx) In the committees appointed by this meeting the first is the convenor and is responsible for calling the committee together. If the first name is not present, the second name

may act for him, and so on.

- (xxi) At the conclusion of the meeting the Stated Clerk must carefully read the minutes of that meeting and the minutes must be approved by that meeting. Thereafter they must be recorded in the Minute Book.
- (xxii) At the end of the meeting, for the sake of emphasising its importance, the roll call of members must be taken once again.

CHAPTER IX REGULATIONS

- SECTION 58. Marriage regulations
- (i) Church members must observe monogamy.
 - (ii) According to scriptural teaching, both parties to the marriage should be of the same faith.
 - (iii) To emphasise the solemn nature of marriage, there must be a service. If both parties are baptised Christians, the marriage service can be conducted in the Church.
 - (iv) The Church must discipline anyone who commits bigamy and breaks the law.
 - (v) Those who are divorced and wish to remarry cannot have a marriage service in the Church unless they are innocent parties to the divorce. The minister who is to conduct such a remarriage must obtain Session's approval and agreement on the innocence of the party concerned.
- SECTION 59. Funeral regulations
- (i) A Christian funeral will be conducted in the Church for members and enquirers who die.
 - (ii) Their families must avoid all superstitious customs. The service must be conducted by a minister, elder or deacon.
 - (iii) In commemorating ancestors, church members may invite their friends, relatives and fellow Christians for a service at the customary time of sweeping graves or on the anniversary of the ancestors' death to extol their teaching and virtues and so remember them.
- SECTION 60. Regulations concerning the upbringing of children:
- (i) Church members must promote family worship in order to make use of the doctrines that they know to instruct their children.
 - (ii) Every Sunday the parents must bring their children to church for the worship of God. The church must also establish Sunday School and children's worship for their training and upbringing.

- (iii) Those baptised in infancy, when they reach the age of sixteen, must be encouraged by their parents to receive Christian instruction by the Church.

SECTION 61. Some regulations concerning forbidden things:

- (i) Idolatry, worship of ghosts or spirits, superstition and heresy are forbidden.
- (ii) It is forbidden to take a concubine or to be a prostitute. If such sins have been committed before believing and the offender is fully aware of his sin and truly repents, he may be received as a member but may not hold office in the church, to make a distinction.
- (iii) It is forbidden to engage in the sale or purchase of slaves.
- (iv) It is forbidden to take drugs by injection or orally, or to plant, grow, buy or sell morphine, opium and other similar deleterious drugs.
- (v) Any form of gambling is forbidden.

SECTION 62. Regulations concerning exhortation and discipline:

- (i) In the case of church members, elders or deacons who break the regulations in matters of faith or activities, they must be dealt with by the Session in accordance with the Constitution of the church. In the case of preachers and ministers breaking the laws of the church, they must be dealt with by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee or directly by the Presbytery.
- (ii) The procedure for exhortation and discipline is as follows:
 - (a) Exhortation to repentance and admonishment. When a church member has committed an offence the church must at once admonish him to repent, to enable him to understand his offence and the need to change.
 - (b) Suspension from Communion:

If the offending member does not admit his fault, the Session must appoint some members to exhort him again and warn him seriously. He may then be suspended from Communion. If a member truly repents, he may be received into fellowship and to partake Communion.
 - (c) Termination of membership:

If a member leaves the church and joins a church which is of a different faith, or if he is for many years not zealous in his attitude to the church, or for a long period has not attended the worship of the Church (See Section 12(vi) and (vii)), and if frequent exhortation has proved ineffective, the Session can terminate his membership. If he subsequently changes and returns to

the Church, the Session may restore his membership.

(d) Excommunication:

In the case of a Church member who commits an offence, and has been suspended from Communion, but still remains unrepentant, the Session must report the matter to the Presbytery and ask for permission to excommunicate him. However before applying to the Presbytery, the Session must inform the offender of this proposal.

- (e) When the Session receives permission from the Presbytery to excommunicate, in addition to informing the offender of this approval, the Session must also publicly declare on a given Sunday his name, the nature of the offence and the procedure that has been followed. They must also ask the congregation to pray for him. If the offender genuinely repents, the Session may report the circumstances to the Presbytery and ask for permission to receive him back.
- (f) If an elder or a deacon breaks the regulations of the church he must be admonished and disciplined by the Session in accordance with the proper procedure. He may be suspended from office or deprived of the right to be re-elected. Those who repent may be restored to office again.
- (g) A preacher or a minister who breaks the regulations of the Church must be admonished and disciplined by the Preachers' and Personnel Committee or the Presbytery or the Synod in accordance with the proper procedure. They may deprive him of the right to be elected or suspend him from office.

SECTION 63. Regulations concerning settlement of disputes.

- (i) If a matter of dispute occurs it must be dealt with progressively at each level and may not bypass any level.
- (ii) The Session constitutes the first level for the settlement of disputes and all matters involving a Church member, or matters between Church members are to be settled at this level.
- (iii) The Presbytery constitutes the second level, and all matters between church members and preachers, ministers, one congregation and another, and such matters as a Session cannot settle are to be settled at this level.
- (iv) The Synod is the third level and all matters of dispute between one minister and another, between one Presbytery and another, and such matters as the Presbyteries cannot settle are to be settled at this level.
- (v) A communicant member in good standing who does not accept the decision of the first level may within ten days

declare his unwillingness to accept the said decision of the first level and prepare two copies of a letter to present to the Session, one to be retained by the Session and the other, with the seal of the Session affixed and returned to him, to be presented to the Presbytery. If the Session is unwilling to affix its seal but if the support of one-third of the communicant membership in good standing is obtained, it may also be presented to the Presbytery.

- (vi) A communicant member in good standing who does not accept the decision of the second level may within ten days declare his unwillingness to accept the said decision of the second level and prepare two copies of a letter to present to the Presbytery, one to be retained by the Presbytery and the other, with the seal of the Presbytery affixed and returned to him, to be presented to the Synod. If the Presbytery is unwilling to affix its seal, but if the support of one-third of the Presbytery membership in good standing is obtained, it may also be presented to the Synod.
- (vii) If a congregation does not accept the ruling of the Presbytery, it may within ten days declare its unwillingness to accept the ruling of the Presbytery and prepare two copies of a letter to present to the Presbytery, one to be retained by the Presbytery, and the other, with the seal of the Presbytery affixed and returned to the congregation, to be presented to the Synod. If the Presbytery is unwilling to affix its seal but if the support of three congregations of that Presbytery is obtained, it may also be presented to the Synod
- (viii) While the matter is under consideration and a settlement is being sought it is not permitted to appeal to the secular courts nor to print and publish reports in magazines or newspapers.
- (ix) The people involved in the dispute, if holding a position in the church meeting which is judging the case, do not have a vote in deciding the matter, and if it is considered necessary must withdraw from the meeting.
- (x) If any dispute occurs within the local Church, scriptural and constitutional laws should be applied to resolve them. There should be no appeal to secular courts. If a local Church refuses to submit to the decision of the Synod, its representatives will not be allowed to attend the Annual General Meeting or be appointed to any Synod committee or sub-committee.

CHAPTER X AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- SECTION 64. What is recorded in this Synod Constitution may not be added, deleted or amended except by decision of the Synod.
- SECTION 65. No additions, alterations or deletions or amendments shall be made to the Constitution unless the same shall have been previously submitted to and approved by at least two thirds of the votes of the members present at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary Synod Meeting of the Synod. All additions, alterations, deletions or

amendments shall not come into force without the prior sanction of the Registrar of Societies and Commissioner of Charities.

- SECTION 66. In the event that it should become necessary that the Synod be dissolved, the agreement of the members shall first be obtained at the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary Synod Meeting, of the Synod where not less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members present shall vote in favour. It shall on dissolution discharge all its debts and liabilities (legally incurred), and all its remaining properties, funds, bank deposits, and cash shall be distributed, in such a manner as the Synod may determine, to charitable organisations which are registered under the Charities Act, Cap 37.
- SECTION 67. A Certificate of Dissolution shall be given within seven days to the Registrar of Societies and Commissioner of Charities.

[This edition is prepared by Changi Bethany Church (ES) for internal circulation among church members only.]