

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution and Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries (Abridged version)

The following document contains the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the PC(USA). The complete information booklet produced by the PC(USA) can be found [here](#). It contains the rationale and advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and other advisory and advocacy entities. **The information contained herein is an abridged version for use as a voting guide for the presbytery meeting.**

FROM THE STATED CLERK OF THE PC(USA)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved and recommended to the presbyteries, for their affirmative or negative votes, [proposed changes in the language of the *Book of Order*](#) that, if approved, will amend the Constitution. In addition, the 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved and recommended to the presbyteries pursuant to G-5.0203 for their affirmative or negative votes the Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries.

Here are a few notes as you prepare for the vote of the presbytery:

- It is recommended that prior to voting, presbyters and clerks review each proposed amendment and its related information.
- Each amendment has an item number, which is how the General Assembly tracked the business in both committee and in plenary. The entire record for each item is available in [PC-Biz](#).
- Presbyteries may use a consent agenda or omnibus motion to vote on amendments as long as each proposed amendment is identified separately.

Thank you for your time and careful attention as you prepare to vote on these proposed amendments and this agreement with The Episcopal Church.

Jihyun Oh

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(U.S.A.)

Table of Contents

<u>Proposed Amendment</u>	<u>Book of Order Reference</u>	<u>Brief Description</u>
24-A	F-1.0403	Adds <i>gender identity, sexual orientation</i> to protected classes
24-B	G-1.0104	Other Forms of Corporate Witness
24-C	G-2.0104b	Candidates affirming principles of participation and representation
24-D	G-2.0504b	Change in length of temporary pastoral relationship
24-E	G-2.0504b	Disallow non-disclosure agreements for temporary relationships
24-F	G-2.0610	Communicating an alternative means or waiver for a candidate

24-G	G2.0901	Disallow non-disclosure agreements for installed relationships
24-H	G-3.0106	Adding “adults with vulnerabilities” to protection policies
24-I	G-3.0302d	Eliminate the need for concurrence of an overture to GA
24-J	G-3.0501	Number of Commissioners to General Assembly
24-K	D-7.0501	Mandatory reporting to civil authorities
24-L	D-7.0902b	Paid administrative leave for the accused
24-M		Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries

Presbytery Vote Totals as of Feb 24, 2025

Amendment	Book of Order Reference	Have voted	Yay	Nay	Presbyteries yet to vote	Needed to pass
24-A	F-1.0403	64	57	7	103	27
24-B	G-1.0104	63	59	4	104	25
24-C	G-2.0104b	62	41	21	105	43
24-D	G-2.0504b	63	62	1	104	22
24-E	G-2.0504b	62	62	0	105	22
24-F	G-2.0610	61	58	3	106	26
24-G	G-2.0901	63	62	1	104	22
24-H	G-3.0106	64	63	1	103	21
24-I	G-3.0302d	64	56	8	103	28
24-J	G-3.0501	65	64	1	102	20
24-K	D-7.0501	60	59	1	107	25
24-L	D-7.0902b	61	60	1	106	24
24-M	Episcopal	62	60	2	105	24

24-A — F-1.0403 Openness to The Guidance of The Holy Spirit

Shall F-1.0403 in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity be amended as follows? (Added text is in *italics*.)

F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity ...

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, *gender identity, sexual orientation*, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

24-B – G-1.0104 Other Forms of Corporate Witness (Worshiping Communities, Etc.)

Shall G-1.0104 be added to Congregations in the Form of Government as follows? (Added text is in *italics*.)

G-1.0104 Other Forms of Corporate Witness (Worshiping Communities, etc.)

In circumstances where the formation of a traditional ecclesiastically and legally organized congregation is not desired or deemed appropriate, and a worshiping community has been formally recognized by a presbytery according to its own definition, presbyteries and congregations may work together with such a group to provide supervision and support. Such recognized groups shall be under the mutually agreed upon oversight of a minister of the Word and Sacrament approved by the presbytery, shall include at least one ruling elder in their chosen leadership, and shall function under the financial, legal, and disciplinary sponsorship of an ecclesial council (either a session or a presbytery). The sponsoring council shall, in consultation with the worshiping community, authorize any celebrations of the sacraments within the group in accordance with the Directory for Worship. Membership records for group participants desiring to be formally enrolled as baptized, active, or affiliate members in the PC(USA) shall be maintained by the sponsoring council. Such groups shall not hold property, and may not undertake any financial, legal, or contractual obligations, apart from their sponsoring council. They shall adhere to the sponsoring council's required policies on sexual misconduct, harassment, child and youth protection, and antiracism. Presbyteries shall determine appropriate means of representation and participation of such groups in and through the sponsoring councils (session and/or presbytery).

24-C — G-2.0104b Gifts and Qualifications

Shall G-2.0104b be amended as follows: (Added text is in *italics*.)

b. Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404), *the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01)*, and in the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403. Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

24-D — G-2.0504b Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Shall Section G-2.0504b, Temporary Pastoral Relationships, be amended as follows: (Deleted text is in ~~strikethrough~~; added text is in *italics*.)

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed ~~twelve~~ *thirty-six* months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. ...

24-E — G-2.0504b Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Shall G-2.0504b in the Form of Government be amended as follows? (Added text is in *italics*.)

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued, and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

When the temporary pastoral relationship ends, no non-disclosure agreement shall be allowable.

A non-disclosure agreement, also known as a confidentiality agreement, is an agreement that outlines confidential material, knowledge, or information that is to remain confidential. Such an agreement binds the party or parties who have signed it and prevents them from discussing any information included in the contract with anyone not authorized by the agreement.

24-F — G-2.0610 Preparation for Ministry - Accommodations To Particular Circumstances

Shall G-2.0610 in the Form of Government be amended as follows? (Deleted text is in strikethrough; added text is in *italics*.)

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. ~~A full account of the reasons for a~~ *The existence of any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness, with confidential details omitted, shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and* communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

24-G — 2.0901 Dissolution of Pastoral Relationships

Shall G-2.0901 in the Form of Government be amended as follows? (Added text is in *italics*.)

An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution. *No non-disclosure agreement shall be allowable.*

A non-disclosure agreement, also known as a confidentiality agreement, is an agreement that outlines confidential material, knowledge, or information that is to remain confidential. Such an agreement binds the party or parties who have signed it and prevents them from discussing any information included in the contract with anyone not authorized by the agreement.

24-H — G-3.0106 General Principles of Councils - Administration Of Mission

Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 be amended as follows: (Deleted text is in strikethrough; added text is in *italics*.)

All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child, ~~and~~ youth, *and adults with vulnerabilities* protection policy, and an antiracism policy. Each council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months.

24-I — G-3.0302d The Presbytery - Relationships with Synod and General Assembly

Shall G-3.0302 in the Form of Government be amended as follows? (Deleted text is in strikethrough; added text is in *italics*.)

The presbytery has a responsibility to maintain regular and continuing relationship to synod and General Assembly by:

d. proposing to synod such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church, ~~and/or~~ proposing to General Assembly overtures ~~that have received a concurrence from at least one other presbytery,~~ *and/or concurring with proposed overtures,* and

24-J — G-3.0501 The General Assembly - Composition and Responsibility

Shall G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities be amended as follows: (Deleted text is in strikethrough; added text is in *italics*.)

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church, and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

~~8,000~~ *6,000* members or less: 1 ruling elder and 1 minister of the Word and Sacrament
~~8,001–16,000~~ *6,001–12,000*: 2 ruling elders and 2 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~16,001–24,000~~ *12,001–19,000*: 3 ruling elders and 3 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~24,001–32,000~~ *19,001* or more: 4 ruling elders and 4 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~32,001–40,000: 5 ruling elders and 5 ministers of the Word and Sacrament~~
~~40,001–48,000: 6 ruling elders and 6 ministers of the Word and Sacrament~~
~~48,001 or more: 7 ruling elders and 7 ministers of the Word and Sacrament~~

24-K — D-7.0501 Investigation - Referral to Investigating Committee

Shall D-7.0501 Referral to Investigating Committee be amended as follows: (Added text is in *italics*.)

When a clerk of session or the stated clerk of a presbytery receives an allegation, without undertaking further inquiry, that clerk shall then report to the council only that an offense has been alleged without naming the *person* accused or the nature of the alleged offense and *shall* refer the statement of allegation promptly to an investigating committee, which shall conduct an inquiry as defined below. *Pursuant to G-4.0302, the clerk shall report to civil legal authorities any knowledge of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or adult lacking mental capacity.* The clerk of session or stated clerk shall also inform the accuser of the disciplinary process and their rights and responsibilities in the process.

24-L — D-7.0902b ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE - ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

Shall D-7.0902B Administrative Leave be amended as follows: (Added text is in *italics*.)

Regardless of the employment status of the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the members designated in accordance with D-3.0102, shall determine as quickly as possible, after receiving the written allegations and providing the accused an opportunity to be heard, whether the risk to a congregation and/or to other potential victims of abuse requires *paid* administrative leave or other restrictions upon the minister's service when considered in light of the nature and probable truth of the allegations. Such *paid* administrative leave or restrictions will continue until either the matter is resolved in one of the ways prescribed in the disciplinary process or until the leave or restrictions are altered or removed by members of the commission. *The cost shall be borne by the employing entity whenever possible or be shared by the presbytery as necessary.*