

NEW COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION
Presbytery of Santa Fe
October 18, 2025

Welcome to this new type of ministry – commissioner to a presbytery meeting.

Introductory Information:

The structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) includes four different councils: session, presbytery, synod and general assembly.

Like the other three higher councils, Presbytery is made up of roughly equal numbers of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also known as “teaching elders”) and ruling elder commissioners.

As commissioners, you are entitled to freely speak or ask questions (privilege of the floor or “voice”) and to vote on all matters coming before the presbytery (“vote”). The short-hand for commissioners is that you have “voice and vote”.

Highlights of This Meeting:

- We will hear reports and approve motions from commissions and committees of the Presbytery.
- We will consider ways in which church ministries are transforming.
- We will elect new leadership and members of commissions and committees.
- We will approve the 2026 proposed budget.
- We will receive the Annual Reports.
- We will worship together as the body of Christ.

What to Expect:

- **Docket** (or Agenda) (Report #1) is like a worship bulletin and will keep you organized and help you follow the activities of the meeting and what is coming up next.
- **Written Reports** are posted on the Presbytery’s website under the tab “Presbytery Meetings” and are identified and numbered both on the Docket and on the Reports themselves to help you locate them and review these reports as they are presented.

- **Consent Agenda:** The Consent Agenda (Report #1b) is a listing of multiple actions that are believed to be non-controversial and are not anticipated to require discussion or debate and are proposed to be passed all in one motion by the body for efficiency. Any Presbytery commissioner has the right to object to or remove any matter listed in the Consent Agenda and then that matter will automatically be removed from the Consent Agent and raised separately for discussion and a vote later in this meeting.
- **Decorum:** The business portion of the meeting is conducted in a formal style as set forth in our Book of Order and Robert's Rules of Order. You should review the Rules of Decorum attached to your Docket as Report #1a for the general rules for discussion, questions and debate.
- **Speaking:** You have full voice and vote. This means that you have the right to make a motion if you are led to do so or ask a question or make a comment during any debate. Please always go to the microphone to speak so everyone can hear. Always start every time you stand to speak by introducing yourself by name and congregation.
- **Oral Reports:** Chairs of various commissions, committees, networking committees, teams and other groups and Presbytery officers will be providing oral reports of their work in the mission and ministry of the presbytery. You can find their names and timing in the Docket.

Who Are the Leaders of this Meeting?

Moderator – Teaching Elder, Ginna Bairby, pastor of Taos, First PC

Moderator Elect – Ruling Elder/CCE, Libby Whiteley, Albuquerque, Immanuel

Presbytery Staff

Stated Clerk – Ruling Elder Stephen Rhoades

Administrator – Ruling Elder Tiffany Lo-Finch

Chairs of Commissions/ Committees/ Networking Committees/

Teams: These chairs are local ruling elders and ministers of word and sacrament elected to serve by the Presbytery.

You may notice a difference between Commission Reports and Committee/ Team Reports.

Commissions are authorized by presbytery to take action on certain business within their authority on behalf of presbytery without seeking a vote of the entire presbytery.

Committees, teams and other groups are required to bring their action items to presbytery for a vote.

Common Acronyms:

The leadership of the Presbytery often talk in acronyms which can be confusing and frustrating. Here is a short list of common acronyms that you might hear today:

LT -- Leadership Team (made of current, future and past moderators and Presbytery staff)

CT – Coordinating Team (the commission with chairs from all of the various groups within the Presbytery)

F & P -- Finance & Property Commission (dealing with finance and property issues)

COM – Commission on Ministry (deals with church pastoral transitions and other pastor/ congregation issues)

CPM – Commission for Preparation on Ministry (deals with candidates to the ministry and commissioned pastors (CP) (Ruling Elders with special certification) from this Presbytery)

CORP – Committee on Representation and Participation (nominating committee for the Presbytery)

MNC – Mission Networking Coordinators

WNC – Worship Networking Coordinators

ENC – Education Networking Coordinators

MWS – Minister of Word and Sacrament (also called Teaching Elder)

RE – Ruling Elder

CP – Commissioned Pastor (also called Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP)
or Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE))

CCE – Certified Christian Educators

PW – Presbyterian Women

HR – Honorably Retired

YAV – Young Adult Volunteer

OGA – Office of the General Assembly including the Stated Clerk of the GA
located in Louisville

PMA – Presbyterian Mission Agency (a national PC(USA) mission arm of
the denomination)

PDA – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (a national PC(USA) disaster relief
arm of the denomination)

What Should You Be Doing?

- Listening carefully and critically
- Bring your comments, questions and ideas (motions) to the floor for consideration
- Vote with the same power and authority of any other commissioner, whether minister of word and sacrament or ruling elder
- Get to know other ministers of word and sacrament and ruling elders who are attending and search for common areas of interest with other churches and ways to connect with them in partnership and service.

What to Take Back?

- Report back to your congregation or Session about what took place – the decisions that were made today and your own impressions of the meeting
- Ideas for strengthening of the mission of your congregation in your community

- Information about programs, projects and events which could be of interest to your congregation

What's Next?

- Presbytery ordinarily meets three times a year: in February; either in June (in odd numbered years with no General Assembly) or July (in even numbered years where there is a General Assembly); and ordinarily the third weekend of October for the annual meeting.
- The presbytery can always use your help on any of our committees, commissions, teams and other groups. Please let me or Tiffany know if you are interested in serving and in what area you would like to serve.
- Is your church interested in hosting a presbytery meeting? If so, please contact Tiffany by email at admin@santafepresbytery.org.

Want More Information?

- Take the time to explore our website at www.santafepresbytery.org. Do you have any stories about your congregation that you wanted posted on the website? If so, please contact Tiffany.
- Sign up on our website to receive the “Nuevas Noticias” email newsletter or provide me or Tiffany with your email address and we will sign you up.

Now sit back and enjoy the wonderful worship, the handling of the “ecclesial” (church) business of the presbytery, the many opportunities for prayer and discernment.

We are pleased that you are here to serve in this ministry.

Stephen Rhoades

Stated Clerk

Presbytery of Santa Fe

Presbyterian Church (USA)

statedclerk@santafepresbytery.org