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**Standing Rules
of
The Synod of the Trinity of
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

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ARTICLE I - THE SYNOD

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10.00 Jurisdiction

22 10.01 The Synod of the Trinity is a council of teaching and ruling elders of the Presbyterian
23 Church (U.S.A.), as defined by the *Book of Order*, comprised of representatives from the
24 Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Carlisle, Donegal, Huntingdon, Kiskiminetas, Lackawanna,
25 Lake Erie, Lehigh, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Redstone, Shenango, Upper
26 Ohio Valley, Washington, and West Virginia. The Governing Commission shall have
27 authority to approve the celebration of the Eucharist for the annual Synod Assembly,
28 Governing Commission meetings, regional gatherings, and other Synod events upon
29 recommendation of the Expanded Leadership Team. The Governing Commission shall have
30 authority to authorize the taking of an offering at any Synod event and the intended
31 purpose of the offering.

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10.10 Membership

33 10.11 The members of the Synod Assembly, both ecclesiastically and corporately, known as
34 commissioners, shall be elected by each presbytery for three-year terms. Commissioners
35 may be reelected. However, no commissioner may serve for consecutive terms, either full or
36 partial, aggregating more than six years. A commissioner having served a total of six
37 consecutive years shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of at least one year. Each
38 presbytery shall be represented by one teaching elder and one ruling elder. Commissioner's
39 terms shall coincide with the calendar year.

40 10.12 The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and The Synod of the Trinity are committed to and
41 shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership, and shall provide
42 means which will assure a greater inclusivity in its life and work. Presbyteries are urged to
43 strive for an appropriate representation among their commissioners in the same way they
44 would when securing members for presbytery committees, noting criteria such as male and
45 female, age, racial ethnicity, and current or previous service to Synod. There shall be six
46 additional racial ethnic commissioners, elected by their respective presbyteries, upon the
47 request of Synod's Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Committee on Representation,
48 selected to ensure compliance with this commitment. The provisions of Paragraph 10.11,
49 concerning terms, length of service, etc. shall apply to these additional commissioners.

50 10.13. The Moderator of Presbyterian Women of the Synod shall be an ex-officio member of
the Synod with voice and vote.

10.14 Synod Staff and Presbytery Executives, shall be ex-officio members with voice but
without vote. Should any of those persons not be a ruling or teaching elder, they shall be
invited as guests with the privilege of the floor.

10.15 Annually, all of the Synod's presbyteries may elect a Young Adult Advisory Delegate
(YAAD) between the ages of 17 and 23. The YAADs will have voice, but not vote.

51 **10.20 Meetings and Expenses**

52 10.21 The Synod Assembly may meet in regular session, up to four times per year.
53 **Advance notice of all meetings and supporting materials shall be sent to**
54 **commissioners and ex officio members of the Synod Assembly, not less than 10**
55 **calendar days if sent by USPS or 5 days if sent digitally, of the date of the meeting.**

56 Meetings shall be held in person, or may be held telephonically or digitally as long as all
57 may fully participate in discussions and voting. The Synod Assembly shall hold an “annual
58 meeting,” ordinarily in October, at which time the Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be
59 elected, installed, beginning their terms of service **the day first of January of the next**
60 **calendar year.**

61
62 10.22 Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the Moderator in
63 accordance with the provisions of the *Form of Government*, G-3.0405. Special meetings of
64 the Synod Assembly may be held via digital/electronic conferencing.

65
66 10.23 The room, board, and travel expenses of commissioners, ex-officio members and
67 Young Adult Advisory Delegates to Synod meetings shall be met from the funds provided for
68 Synod expenses.

69
70 10.24 All motions brought before commissioners at meetings of the Synod Assembly, shall
71 include, at least, the following information: who shall implement the motion, the timing of
72 when the motion shall be implemented, an estimate of the financial implications and the
73 expected source of income for the motion’s implementation.

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75 10.25 Digital Meetings

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77 **I. Electronic/Digital**

78 An “Electronic/Digital Meeting” as used in these rules means a meeting at which all
79 participants are joined electronically/digitally. It is expected that each participant will attend
80 the meeting individually on a computer or device, rather than one being shared by multiple
81 members. Multiple attendees on a single device require approval of the chair in advance and
82 may limit members’ rights. Meetings of all boards and committees of the Synod of the
83 Trinity are authorized to meet electronically at the direction of the chair, provided that all
84 members have access to the necessary equipment.

85
86 **II. Equipment**

87 Electronic/digital attendance currently utilizes Zoom technology (www.zoom.us). Other
88 technologies may be used at the discretion of the Synod Executive as technologies evolve.
89 Participation requires high speed internet access on a computer or device. Audio is provided
90 either through the computer, which requires computer audio capabilities (microphone and
91 speakers – preferably earbuds or a headset), or connection by phone. Video capability is
92 optional, but strongly encouraged. While tablets and smart phones are acceptable, laptop or
93 desktop computers are preferred, because the screen content can become very small on
94 tablets and phones, and only certain portions of the content can be displayed at a time.
95 Immediate access to email is also a requirement.

96
97 **III. Sign-In Procedures**

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99 A. Prior to meetings, members will receive either a meeting id code or a link to a
100 webpage. Clicking on the link should open a web browser and go directly to the meeting. If
101 it does not do so, or if only the 9-digit meeting id (which is at the end of the link) was

102 distributed, the participant can go to the appropriate login page such as: www.zoom.us,
103 choose "join a meeting," and enter the id manually.

- 104
- 105 B. Members shall make every effort to sign into the meeting sufficiently in advance of
106 the time of the meeting to enable their connections to be verified and, if necessary,
107 assisted by troubleshooting. The following process shall be followed in entering
108 meetings:
 - 109 C. If using a laptop or desktop computer, complete a full "re-boot" just before entering
110 the meeting.
 - 111 D. Enter the meeting as described in Section III.A. If prompted, download the
112 appropriate software and choose to run or install. If prompted, enter your name and
113 choose to enter the meeting.
 - 114 E. Choose the method by which you will connect your audio and follow the prompts on
115 the screen. If connecting by computer, check your speakers and microphone to
116 ensure that you can hear and be heard.
 - 117 F. Mute your microphone when you are not speaking (on a computer, click on the
118 microphone icon to toggle mute. On a tablet or phone, touch the icon).
 - 119 G. Click on the videocam icon to activate, if using.
 - 120 H. Click on the "Participants" and "Chat" icons to make those items visible. If a screen
121 share has been initiated and a document is visible in the center of the screen, move
122 the "Participants" and "Chat" windows to the side of the screen, so that the
123 document is visible.

124
125 **IV. Connection Issues**

- 126 A. Each attendee is responsible for his or her connection to the Internet and the
127 meeting room; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor
128 quality of, a member's individual connection prevented him or her from participating
129 in the meeting, provided that at least a quorum of members remains connected and
130 adequately able to participate.
- 131 B. The chair may cause or direct the temporary disconnection or muting of an
132 attendee's connection if it is causing undue interference with the electronic meeting.
133 The chair's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be
134 made by any member, shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 135 C. The chair may rule that any meeting be recessed to allow the meeting room to be
136 reset; upon which ruling the meeting shall be ended and a new meeting shall be
137 established – with the new meeting identification being sent by email to all
138 participants who shall then enter the new meeting room.

139
140 **V. Recognition and Assignment of the Floor**

- 141 A. To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall activate the "raised hand" icon.
142 Upon recognition of a member, that member and any others with raised hands
143 activated shall lower them, which may also be accomplished by the facilitator if
144 members do not promptly do so.
- 145 B. Another member who claims preference in recognition shall thereupon promptly raise
146 (or raise again) his or her hand icon and the chair shall recognize the member for
147 the limited purpose of determining whether that member is entitled to preference in
148 recognition.
- 149 C. Upon being recognized, a member shall unmute his or her microphone. Upon yielding
150 the floor, the member shall mute his or her microphone.

151
152 **VI. Interrupting Motions**

- 153 A. A member who intends to make a motion that under the rules may interrupt a
154 speaker (Point of Order, Appeal from the Ruling of the Chair, etc.) shall activate the
155 member's "No" icon (red X). The member shall be recognized to determine the
156 purpose for which he or she is seeking recognition.
- 157 B. In the event that a member intends to make an interrupting motion during a vote
158 when the "No" icon is in use to indicate a negative vote; the member may unmute
159 and make the motion orally. A member may also make interrupting motions orally if
160 not immediately recognized by the chair.

161
162 **VII. Motion Processing**

- 163 A. A member intending to make a main motion, offer an amendment, or propose
164 instructions to a committee, shall, immediately after being recognized and assigned
165 the floor, post the motion in writing to the chat window.
- 166 B. The stated clerk is responsible for the display of meeting materials, including all such
167 motions, in the document that is displayed in the shared screen.
- 168 C. When any motion has been stated by the chair, the stated clerk shall copy and paste
169 it into the document and shall be responsible for accurately displaying any proposed
170 amendments under consideration, as well as the final version as adopted or rejected.

171
172 **VIII. Voting**

- 173 A. When the chair seeks unanimous consent on a matter, a raised hand shall constitute
174 an objection to unanimous consent, and voting shall then proceed by another
175 method.
- 176 B. Voice votes shall be taken by means of the "Yes" or "No" icons and shall be
177 considered a Division (not a counted vote). A motion for a division shall therefore not
178 be in order following such a vote.
- 179 C. Counted votes, when ordered by the chair or the assembly, shall be taken by an
180 additional "Yes" or "No" vote using the icons.
- 181 D. A roll call vote may be ordered by the assembly.
- 182 E. No secret ballot votes are in order.

183
184 **IX. Roles**

- 185 A. There shall be three designated roles with specific duties, any or all of which may be
186 accomplished by one individual, at the discretion of the chair: the host/facilitator, the
187 chair, and the secretary.
- 188 B. The host/facilitator shall initiate the meeting, and therefore have control of the
189 various features for meeting management such as the ability to manually mute one
190 or more participants and clear status icons (raised hand, Yes, No, etc.).
- 191 C. The chair shall preside at the meeting. In addition to normal duties, the chair shall
192 direct the facilitator and secretary as necessary related to their duties in these rules.
- 193 D. The secretary shall keep a record of meeting. In addition to normal duties, the
194 secretary shall open a document on his or her computer (such as a blank document
195 or the meeting agenda), change the "zoom" level to no more than 85%, and share
196 the document in the meeting via screen share. The secretary shall then assist in
197 processing the motion as stated in Section VII.
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199 **10.30 Quorum**

- 200 10.31 A quorum of the Synod Assembly shall be twelve commissioners, at least six of whom
201 shall be ruling elders and at least six of whom shall be teaching elders representing at least
202 six presbyteries.

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10.40 Officers, Terms, and Election

10.41 The officers of the Synod shall be a Moderator, Vice Moderator, Synod Executive, Stated Clerk and Treasurer, and shall be known as the Synod Expanded Leadership Team.

10.42 The term of service of the Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be one year, and they shall be eligible for re-election. They shall be elected by the Synod Assembly and installed at the annual meeting of the Synod Assembly.

10.43 The Stated Clerk shall be elected for a term of five years and be eligible for re-election. The Stated Clerk may name a journal clerk and assistant clerks, who need not be commissioners, to serve during the meeting of the Synod Assembly to assist in the recording of minutes, registration, recording leaves of absence, and to carry out such other duties and responsibilities as will facilitate the efficient functioning of the meeting.

10.44 The Synod Executive and any Associate Executives shall be elected for a term of five years and be eligible for re-election.

10.45 The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of five years and shall be eligible for reelection.

10.50 Governing Process

The governing process for the Synod of the Trinity shall be the Policy Governance^R Manual of the Synod, in its most recent edition as approved by the Synod Assembly.

10.60 Duties of Officers and Trustees

10.61 Moderator and Vice-Moderator

10.62 Functions:

a. The Moderator presides over all meetings of the Synod Assembly and the Governing Commission until a successor is elected and installed. The Moderator performs all duties assigned in the *Form of Government* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall see that business is conducted in accordance with the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* and the Standing Rules of the Synod Assembly. The Moderator shall appoint committees and commissions authorized by action of the Synod Assembly not otherwise provided for.

b. If, because of the absence of a quorum, a special meeting of the Synod Assembly cannot be held, the Moderator, after consultation with the Synod Executive and the Stated Clerk, may name a committee or commission to carry out responsibilities assigned to the Synod in Form of Government, G-3.0405. Such committee or commission shall conduct Special Administrative Review in accordance with Form of Government, G-3.0108. If in the opinion of those officers, the appointment of a commission is warranted, due diligence shall be exercised to ensure that the provisions of Form of Government G-3.0109 are carried out.

c. In the case of complaints against actions or decisions of the Synod Assembly to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of Synod shall have authority to appoint a Committee of Council.

d. The Moderator may attend a meeting of the General Assembly during his/her term of office. The Synod will provide reasonable expense reimbursement for such attendance.

254 e. The Vice Moderator fulfills the duties of the Moderator in the absence of the
255 Moderator, or when the Moderator deems it necessary. Should the Moderator become
256 ineligible to serve, the Vice Moderator shall become Moderator for the remainder of the
257 term.

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259 f. Expenses incurred by the Moderator or Vice Moderator in the performance of their
260 duties on behalf of the Synod will be paid from budgeted Synod funds.
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262 **10.70 The Stated Clerk**

263 10.71 The Stated Clerk shall perform all duties required in the Form of Government of The
264 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Stated Clerk shall give official notice of the time and
265 place of Synod Assembly meetings and, when the Synod Assembly convenes, shall form the
266 roll and report it to the Synod Assembly. The Stated Clerk, with the cooperation of the
267 Synod Executive and the Moderator, shall prepare the docket for the Synod Assembly
268 meeting. The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of Synod
269 Assembly meetings, and for the timely transmission of these minutes to commissioners.
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271 10.72 If the office of Stated Clerk should become vacant, the Moderator shall appoint a
272 teaching or ruling elder to be acting Stated Clerk, who shall serve until Synod shall elect a
273 Stated Clerk.

274 **10.80 The Synod Executive**

275 10.81 The Synod Executive and any Associate Executives shall perform those duties
276 specified in the position description as prepared by the Governing Commission and
277 approved by the Synod Assembly.
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279 **10.90 The Synod Treasurer**

280 10.91 The Treasurer shall fulfill his or her duties described in: the position description
281 approved by the Synod Assembly and provided in the personnel policies; these Standing
282 Rules; fiscal or financial policies adopted by the Synod Assembly or Governing Commission.
283

284 **11.00 Trustees**

285 11.01 The commissioner members of the Governing Commission shall act as the Board of
286 Trustees for the Corporation which shall be authorized under the charter of the Synod to
287 receive, hold and transfer property, and to facilitate the management of the corporate
288 affairs of the Synod in such manner as to realize the "Ends of the Synod" and in accord with
289 the Executive Limitations in the Policy Governance^R Manual of the Synod.
290

291 11.02 The Corporation officers shall be the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the Synod, the
292 Stated Clerk and the Treasurer of the Synod who shall serve respectively as President, Vice
293 President, Secretary (Stated Clerk) and Treasurer of the Corporation. The Synod Executive
294 shall serve as the chief executive officer for the Corporation. A quorum of the Governing
295 Commission/ Board of Trustees shall be a simple majority of the commissioner members.
296

297 11.03 The Synod Assembly shall meet as the Corporation annually, and at such other times
298 as shall be deemed necessary. The meeting of the annual meeting of the Corporation shall
299 be the same as the ecclesiastical meeting of the Synod Assembly.
300

301 **ARTICLE II - SYNOD ENTITIES**

302
303 The Synod carries out its duties and responsibilities through:

304 The Governing Commission and the Synod Executive
305 Book of Order Required Committees and Commissions
306 Permanent Judicial Commission
307 Committee on Representation and Nominations

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309 Advisory and Operational Task Groups as appointed by the Synod Executive.
310

311 **20.00 Mission Networks**

312 20.01 The Synod will facilitate and support the development of a system of Mission
313 Networks among presbyteries and affinity groups. These Mission Networks will focus on
314 areas of common interest, need, and mission. Because of the diversity of needs throughout
315 the Synod, these Mission Networks will focus the Synod's mission resources and energies
316 where the people and needs dictate. Mission Networks are not limited by intra nor inter
317 Synod geographical boundaries. Mission Networks provide responsive and flexible shared
318 ministry opportunities. Mission Networks may help to identify those needs that should be
319 addressed through a sustained program.
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321 **21.00 Committee on Representation & Nomination**

322 21.01 The Committee on Representation & Nomination shall carry out the duties prescribed
323 by the Form of Government F-1.0403.

324 21.02 The Committee on Representation & Nomination will recruit, or seek, candidates for
325 future election as commissioners, through its connections with presbytery Committees on
326 Representation, various racial ethnic people of color constituencies, constituencies of
327 women, disabled persons, youth, or other minorities, as well as "persons designated by
328 national racial ethnic membership to discover potential racial ethnic members, "people of
329 color."

330 21.03 The Committee on Representation and Nomination shall also be available to serve as
331 an advisory group to the Synod Executive on matters of social and racial justice within the
332 boundaries of the Synod.

333 21.04 The tasks of the Committee on Representation & Nomination for elections for Synod
334 positions are:

335 a. Nominate a Moderator and Vice Moderator to the Synod, with regard for diversity and
336 inclusiveness. The nomination of a Vice Moderator should ensure teaching/ruling elder
337 balance;

338 b. Nominate commissioners to serve on the Governing Commission to fill expired terms
339 or vacancies.
340

341 **22.50 Presbytery Records**

342 22.51 The stated clerks of the presbyteries shall conduct an annual peer review of
343 presbytery records as prescribed by the *Form of Government*, G-3.0107 and G-3.0108.
344 They shall review the minutes of the presbyteries and a statement attesting to the review
345 shall be signed by the Convener, who shall be annually elected by the presbytery stated
346 clerks. The report shall be circulated to each presbytery annually for reaction on the part of
347 the presbytery. Any request from a presbytery to remove or modify an exception shall be
348 directed to the Stated Clerk of the Synod for further consideration by the Synod Assembly.
349

350 22.52 The official action of the Synod with regard to the presbytery minutes shall be
351 communicated to each presbytery through its Stated Clerk and the action of the Synod
352 Assembly recorded in the minutes of the next stated meeting of the presbytery.
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22.60 Permanent Judicial Commission

22.61 The Permanent Judicial Commission is the court of judicial process for the Synod. It shall function according to the provisions of the *Rules of Discipline, in the Book of Order*.

22.62 The Permanent Judicial Commission shall consist of twelve members elected for six-year terms, serving in three equal classes. Each class will contain two teaching and two ruling elders. Members shall be nominated by the respective presbyteries and elected by the Synod Assembly, giving due attention to the principles of inclusivity set forth in Form of Government Chapter 4.0400 and elsewhere, as well as to a rotation of members among the various presbyteries of the Synod. The Permanent Judicial Commission shall elect from among its members a moderator and a clerk.

22.63 The Permanent Judicial Commission is staffed by the Synod Stated Clerk.

22.64 The Permanent Judicial Commission shall meet to consider the cases brought before it. If there are no cases, it shall meet for education and training, at least annually.

22.65 No person having served on the Permanent Judicial Commission for a term of up to six years shall be eligible for re-election until four years have elapsed.

22.66 In case a time should arise when the Permanent Judicial Commission has no Moderator, the Stated Clerk shall be authorized to convene the Commission and preside for the election of a Moderator.

22.80 Self Development of People (SDOP)

22.81 The Self Development of People Committee shall consist of not fewer than six and not more than twelve members, elected by their presbytery, in three equal classes serving three-year terms.

22.82 The SDOP awards grants to groups of poor, oppressed and disadvantaged persons seeking to make significant and long-term, sustainable changes in their particular situations.

22.83 SDOP utilizes three primary criteria for groups submitting proposal for grants:
1. The project must originate from within the group writing the proposal.
2. The group must control the project.
3. The members of the group must directly benefit from the project.

22.84 Meetings:

1. Once a year, normally in May to review proposals.
2. SDOP may meet by conference call or digital/electronic conferencing, as needed.

ARTICLE III - SYNOD STAFF

30.00 Administrative

30.01 The Synod Administrative Staff consists of a Synod Executive and such other exempt and non-exempt staff as determined by the Synod Executive.

30.02 The Governing Commission shall provide for annual comprehensive reviews of the work the Synod Executive and Stated Clerk. The Synod Executive shall review the work of other members of the Synod staff.

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31.00 Synod Executive

31.01 The Synod Executive shall be elected as provided for in *Form of Government*, G-3.0110. The duties of this office shall only be limited as set forth in the Executive Limitations, as stated in the Policy Governance manual, and the application of the principle "any reasonable interpretation."

31.02 The Synod Executive shall be selected by the Governing Commission upon the concurrence of the Synod Assembly.

31.021 Termination of the service of the Synod Executive shall follow the same procedures as for the selection of the Synod Executive.

31.022 Annually, at the first meeting of the Governing Commission, the Synod Executive shall name a person to serve as an emergency successor for up to 90 days, renewable by the Governing Commission.

32.00 Other Staff

32.01 Other staff shall be employed for terms stipulated in their position descriptions.

32.02 They shall fulfill their duties and their performance will be reviewed, as provided for in the Synod personnel policies.

ARTICLE IV – CODE OF CONDUCT

40.01 The Synod shall adopt a Code of Conduct applicable to all elected Commissioners, Officers of the Synod, employed Synod staff, Synod Commissions, Synod Mission task groups, and includes some customers, vendors, organizations, and any others doing business with or on behalf of The Synod of the Trinity.

40.02 The Synod Stated Clerk shall have lead responsibility for the development of policy, distribution, implementation, and maintenance of records relating to the Synod’s Code of Conduct.

40.03 Distribution of the Code of Conduct shall be made in accord with the criteria specified in the Code with records distribution and acknowledgment of receipt maintained in the Synod Stated Clerk’s office where the records shall be available for review as may be necessary and appropriate.

40.04 Commissioners shall not be seated and persons elected to various positions in the Synod shall not be permitted to participate until a signed Acknowledgment and Acceptance Form from the Code of Conduct, including a conflict of interest provision, has been received and is on file.

ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS

50.01 The Standing Rules may be suspended temporarily, for a definite purpose and a definite length of time, by two thirds vote of the Commissioners present at either a stated or a called Synod Assembly meeting.

50.02 These Standing Rules may be amended at any meeting provided that at least a ten-day written notice has been given to all Commissioners and by a two-thirds vote of the members present. A special meeting may be called for the purpose of amending these Standing Rules with the same provision as the called meeting.

454 **ARTICLE VI – Hierarchy of Governing Authority**

- 455 60.01 The hierarchy of governing authorities shall be:
456 Scripture
457 The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
458 Part One: Book of Confessions
459 Part Two: Book of Order
460 Federal and State Law
461 Articles of Incorporation of The Synod of the Trinity
462 Bylaws of The Synod of the Trinity
463 Policy Governance Manual of The Synod of the Trinity
464 Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, most recent edition
465 Standing Rules of The Synod of the Trinity
466

467 60.02 If there should be a conflict between the Policy Governance Manual and the Standing
468 Rules, the Policy Governance Manual shall be considered primary until the conflict shall be
469 reconciled by either an amendment to the Policy Governance Manual and/or to the standing
470 rules.
471

472 **APPENDIX**

473
474 The Synod of the Trinity includes all of the State of Pennsylvania; all of the State of West
475 Virginia except the following counties: Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire, Mineral,
476 Hardy, Grant, Pendleton; and the following counties in Ohio: Belmont, Harrison, Jefferson,
477 Monroe, the southern sector of Columbia. One congregation in New York and two
478 congregations in Maryland belong to the Synod, but their counties are associated with other
479 synods.
480

481 **AMENDED**

482 SYNOD ASSEMBLY 10.16-17.2020
483