GUIDELINES FOR SESSION MINUTES

Minutes of each session meeting must include:

1. Whether the meeting is a regular (stated) or special (called) meeting.
2. The name of the church, the place, date and time of the meeting.
3. The name of the moderator of the meeting.
4. The opening and closing of each meeting with prayer.
5. The roll, listing elders present, elders absent and any who are excused (if that is your practice); the clerk, moderator, and any staff present; others present and their identity. (Always use first and last names.)
6. The affirmation of a quorum as provided by rule of the session (G-3.0203). A quorum of the session shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session. The session may set a lower quorum requirement for the reception and dismission of members, when for example, the quorum may be the moderator and as few as two ruling elder members of the session.
7. The approval of the agenda. (In case of a special meeting, the call to the meeting stating the purpose becomes the agenda.)
8. The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. (Any corrections of previous meeting minutes should be made on the original minutes before putting them in the book permanently.)
9. Clerk's report: may include correspondence, announcements, and report of the serving of the Lord's Supper, in addition to listing of baptisms, marriages, changes in membership rolls.
10. Reports of pastor, other staff, the treasurer, and committee chairpersons should be summarized in the minutes along with the record of any actions taken regarding them.
11. All main motions and amendments, if any, and whether they passed or failed. (Details of discussion should not be recorded, except when needed to give a sense of the action.) It is not required that you record failed motions – use your discretion.
12. When a previous action of the session is referred to it is helpful to note the page on which it is recorded, or the date of the meeting at which it occurred.

When appropriate, include the following:

13. The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be reported at the next succeeding regular meeting. When the sacrament has been administered

to those unable to attend public worship, the name of the minister officiating and the name of the ruling elder(s) assisting should be noted. (This may be part of the clerk's report or the report of the worship committee or pastor.)

14. The administration of the Sacrament of Baptism at the next succeeding regular meeting, giving the full name of adults baptized including the maiden name of married women; the record of infants baptized, noting the name of the child, date of birth, and the names of the parents or the one rightly exercising parental responsibility (W-2.3014), and including the mother's maiden name. (This may be part of the clerk's report, the pastor's report or that of the appropriate committee.)

15. The full name of applicants for church membership (in the case of married persons, include previous names if different) and the manner of their reception:

    a) by profession of faith and baptism;

    b) by re-affirmation of faith (previously baptized);

    c) by letter of transfer, giving the name of the church from which received.

16. The full title of the church to which a certificate of transfer is granted and the full name of the person transferred with the date of transfer.

17. Record the job descriptions for all employed personnel, including pastors and all staff, as they are approved.

18. Name of ruling elders elected to be commissioners to meetings of presbytery, and the period for which they are elected, "preferably for at least a year" (G-3.0202a).

19. Record that commissioner(s) to presbytery reported to session. The report may be summarized.

20. When the session finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline should be carefully studied by a committee of the session and if discipline is administered, the minutes of the session must contain a record of the proceedings which will enable the presbytery to know who was disciplined, why and how. The Stated Clerk is a resource to the session in this process.

21. In case of a sale, encumbrance/mortgage, gift or lease of property, the session records must show:

    a) Name, address and legal description of the property;

    b) Name of buyer/lessee;

    c) Sale price/terms;

    d) Loan amount, purpose and terms, including the name of the lender;

    e) Lease terms and liability insurance; and,

    f) Concurrence of presbytery where necessary (G-4.0206) .

Be sure the following is included each year:

22. Approval of the annual budget.
23. Approval of the distribution of the church's benevolences.
24. Record the annual review of the adequacy of compensation of each pastor and all employees.
25. Record the recommendation to be made to the congregation for changes in the terms of call for each pastor.
26. Note whether new officers have received training and been examined (G-3.0201c).
27. Report the ordination and/or installation of ruling elders and deacons at the next succeeding meeting.
28. Report the recognition of trustees (if any) at the meeting following their elections.
29. Report that property and liability insurance has been obtained. (Insert photocopy of the church's certificate of insurance (G-3.0112).

CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT

At the last meeting of each calendar year, include the following in the Clerk's Report:

30. Record changes during the year in the session, the Board of Deacons and the Trustees through death, resignation, or removal.
31. State the composition of the session with regard to racial ethnic members, women/men and age groups, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation.
32. If congregation has a Board of Deacons and/or Trustees, report in the minutes where their records are kept.