

Steps to Organization of a Particular Church

Eastern Canada Presbytery

by Moses Lee, Stated Clerk, latest revision May 31, 2017

AT LEAST 2 MONTHS BEFORE PRESBYTERY STATED MEETING

- 1) Receive nominations for elders and/or deacons, reminding your congregation that an officer must be "an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 & Titus 1" (*BCO 24-1*).
- 2) Once nominations close, prepare your nominees for their exams according to the requirements found in 24-1, a-e.

AT LEAST 6 WEEKS BEFORE PRESBYTERY STATED MEETING

- 1) Send notice to the Stated Clerk asking the Presbytery to examine your nominated ruling elder/deacon candidates.
- 2) The Stated Clerk will then ask the moderator to appoint the regional Candidates & Credentials (C&C) committee to serve as an ad-hoc committee for the examination of ruling elder/deacon candidates from your Mission Church.
- 3) Get in touch with the chairman of the said C&C Committee to arrange for the examination of your nominated candidates. The exams must be completed at least one month before presbytery meets.
- 4) The committee will submit their recommendations to the Stated Clerk at least two weeks before presbytery.
- 5) At the Stated Meeting of Presbytery, the commissioners will approve or disapprove the candidates based on their assessments of the recommendations. Please be sure that the candidates are present at the meeting.

AT LEAST 5 WEEKS BEFORE PRESBYTERY STATED MEETING

- 1) Hold a congregational meeting (with at least one week notice to the members) in order to
 - a) present and approve a written call to you, the organizing pastor, to be their pastor, by majority vote (*BCO 20-2, 5-9.f.*).

- i) Be sure to refer to *BCO* 20-6 & 20-7 for the form of the call and procedures for signing and certifying the call.
 - b) approve a petition to presbytery to organize the congregation as a particular church (5-9.g., see the attached template).
- 2) Be sure to keep minutes of this meeting, so that you can forward the proceedings of the congregation to the Stated Clerk. See *BCO* 25 for how to conduct a congregational meeting and *BCO* 5-9f and *BCO* 20 for the specifics of electing a pastor.

AT LEAST 3 WEEKS BEFORE PRESBYTERY

- 1) After collecting signatures, send me the completed petition, along with the congregation-approved call for the consideration of the presbytery. Please indicate when the congregation met to approve the call. This can be the minutes of the congregational meeting or a simple report with the relevant details.

AT THE PRESBYTERY MEETING

- 1) Presbytery will receive and (presumably) approve the petition and the call for you to be the pastor of your church.
- 2) The Presbytery will appoint a commission to organize the congregation, consisting of its regional elders.
- 3) The convener of the organizing commission will work with the organizing pastor to set a date for the service, which will be arranged and led by the commission.

AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE ORGANIZATION SERVICE

- 1) Call (with at least one week notice) and conduct another congregational meeting to elect the presbytery-approved candidates as ruling elders and/or deacons of your church. Follow the procedures in *BCO* 24 for electing ruling elders and deacons.
- 2) Keep in mind that "the effective date of service for the newly elected officers shall be upon the completion of the organization service" (*BCO* 5-9.d.).

AT THE ORGANIZATION SERVICE

- 1) The commission will call the members of the congregation to answer the appointed question, *BCO 5-9i(3)* with raised hands and declare its constitution as a PCA church *BCO 5-9i(4)*.
- 2) The commission will ordain and install the approved ruling elders (and deacons) (*BCO 24-6*).
- 3) The commission will install you as the pastor of your church (*BCO 21*).

AFTER THE ORGANIZATION SERVICE

- 1) After the organization service the temporary government is replaced at that time by the newly installed session.
- 2) The minutes of the commission should be sent right away to the Stated Clerk, at which time, the status of the mission will be changed to a particular church and the names of the new ruling elders will be entered on the roll of presbytery.
- 3) Upon organization, the session must meet as soon as possible to elect a stated clerk and formulate standing rules. Please let me know the name of the clerk of session as soon as it is determined.