

Clerks' Tip of the Month
Proposed Changes to the Book of Order



The 223rd General Assembly approved a number of changes to the Book of Order. Presbyteries will now have the opportunity to approve or disapprove the changes. If a majority of presbyteries are in favor, the changes will be made and included in a new edition of the Book of Order to be published in the summer of 2019. National Capital Presbytery will likely vote on the changes during its meetings in early 2019.

The 2018 Proposed Amendments are now available at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga223-proposed-amendments-book-order/>. The proposed amendments include five to the Form of Government, one to the Directory for Worship, and four to the Rules of Discipline. The Rules of Discipline Task Force will be making a recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for a complete change to the Rules of Discipline.

Broadly, the proposed amendments to the FOG include

- clarifying the makeup of a congregational nominating committee
- limits around the participation in work of the church of a former Minister of Word and Sacrament who renounced while in the midst of judicial process as an accused, and procedures for restoration
- limits around councils endorsing or opposing a candidate running for political office
- clarification of validated ministry outside the geographic bounds of the presbytery of membership
- expansion of the responsibility of a presbytery to be pastor and counselor to its ministers, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators.

The proposed amendment to the DFW clarifies how a congregation can include baptized children in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The four amendments to the ROD include clarifying the definition of offense to include the definition of sexual abuse described elsewhere in the Rules of Discipline and amending the time limits for the filing of a charge of offense with a Permanent Judicial Commission.

Thank you to the Office of General Assembly for its summary of the changes. If you have a tip you think others could use or a topic you would like information on, please let me know at scoe@thepresbytery.org.

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