

**Presbytery of San Fernando**  
**SESSION RECORDS CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW**  
**Revised February 2017**

CHURCH NAME\_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session\_\_\_\_\_ Review Date\_\_\_\_\_

**WHY DO WE REVIEW SESSION RECORDS?**

In reviewing the proceedings of the session, the presbytery shall determine, either from the records of those proceedings or from any other information as may come to its attention, whether:

- *The proceedings have been correctly recorded;*
- *The proceedings have been regular and in accordance with the Constitution;*
- *The proceedings have been prudent and equitable;*
- *The proceedings have been faithful to the mission of the whole church;*
- *The lawful injunctions of a higher council have been obeyed. [G-3.0108a]*

**HOW DOES THE REVIEW HELP THE PRESBYTERY, THE CLERK OF SESSION?**

It can help the Polity and Records Committee identify those areas in which several or all churches may need information or assistance from the presbytery in order to comply with the guidelines.

Our presbytery uses a one-on-one review, in which two Clerks of Session exchange and check the other's records, which are then approved by a member of the Polity and Records Committee. This allows Clerks to exchange information, often to their mutual advantage.

**HOW SHOULD A CLERK USE THE CHECKLIST?**

- a. The checklist serves as a planning or agenda guide for
  - Procedures at each session meeting (Page 2)
  - Actions taken and recorded annually or periodically at session meetings (Page 3-4)
  - Items to include in session minutes when applicable for your church (Page 4-5)
  - Procedures for meetings of the congregation, particularly the annual and/or election meeting(s) (Page 5)
- b. The checklist is a reminder of actions that must be taken at some time during the year.
- c. The checklist is the format for the annual review of records.

## HOW SHOULD A CLERK PREPARE FOR THE REVIEW OF RECORDS?

- a. Read your checklist early in the year, review it periodically, and double-check it in September to make sure your session will take all necessary actions before the end of December.
- b. **Leave space for the Presbytery stamp at the end of the last page of minutes for the year being reviewed.**
- c. Make every effort to present your records for review in March; save May for back-up.
- d. **Bring your current minutes book and this completed checklist to the review. Completed means you have gone through the checklist and indicated which page of your minutes book each item is located on. At review time, the completed checklist must be presented; otherwise the minutes book and registers may not be reviewed.**
- e. If you cannot be present on the review dates, please send a prepared substitute.
- f. Attend the Clerk of Session Training when it is offered by the Stated Clerk or Polity and Records Committee.

**Only an item that has a *Book of Order* reference will be considered an EXCEPTION, if not included in the session minutes.**

### ITEMS RECORDED AT EACH SESSION MEETING

**The Clerk's page references are all for one month, \_\_\_\_\_.**

| Item |  | Page |
|------|--|------|
| 1    | The following information is included for each meeting, stated or called: date, time, place, moderator; meeting opened with prayer; quorum present; full names and title of those present, absent or excused.  |      |
| 2    | The pages of the minutes are numbered consecutively from one meeting to the next. (i.e. Do not restart numbering each month.) Appendices for a particular meeting are identified by reference to the page in the minutes. Reference(s) to previous actions of session are referred to by page number(s). Corrections, when unavoidable, are initialed by the Clerk of Session.   |      |
| 3    | The Clerk of Session's report: Minutes of the previous meeting are approved as read, e-mailed, or corrected. All communications received are referred. A recommendation to receive or remove members is approved. A report of baptisms and marriages performed is received.  |      |
| 4    | Reports of standing committees and any special committees are properly made and received, with recommendations acted upon. The record contains only actions taken and that which is vital to the transactions of the meeting. Motions are recorded in simple fashion - "it was voted" or "the session voted" (to take action). There is a clear distinction between recommendations (which are adopted or approved) and reports (which are received). Minutes are succinct, but include enough information to provide an accurate record for future reference. |      |
| 5    | The meeting is closed with prayer [G-3.0105]. The time of adjournment may be noted.  |      |

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| 6 | Minutes are signed by the Clerk of Session, a temporary clerk appointed for a particular meeting, or the Moderator, attesting to the session's approval of the minutes. [G-1.0505] |  |
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### **ITEMS TO BE RECORDED ANNUALLY OR PERIODICALLY IN SESSION MINUTES**

| Item |   | Page |
|------|---|------|
| 7    | There is a period of study and preparation for newly elected ruling elders and deacons, and an examination as to their personal faith, knowledge of the doctrine, government and discipline contained in the constitution of the Church, and of the duties of the office. For those approved, session appoints a day for ordination and/or installation. [G-3.0201c]  |      |
| 8    | There is a process of education and mutual growth of members of the session – devotionals, prayer at session meetings, training classes, retreats.  |      |
| 9    | Clerk of Session is a ruling elder elected by the session for a specific term. [G-3.0104]   |      |
| 10   | The Treasurer is elected by the session for a specific term. [G-3.0205]   |      |
| 11   | A financial report is received, at least annually. [G-3.0205c] (It is recommended that a report be received more frequently.)   |      |
| 12   | The full text of a financial committee's (or auditor's) report of the previous year's financial review is recorded annually in the minutes. [G-3.0113]  |      |
| 13   | The committee of the session responsible for personnel matters of the church held an annual review for each Teaching Elder and employee of the church. Session reviews in person the adequacy of the compensation of the pastor(s) and staff prior to the adoption of the church budget, recommending any changes to the pastoral terms of call to the congregation. [G-2.0804, G-3.0201c]  |      |
| 14   | The annual budget is prepared and adopted by the session, included in the session minutes, and reported to the congregation. [G-3.0205]   |      |
| 15   | Study leave plans for the pastor(s) are approved by the session and reported to the session after they are taken. [PSF Guidelines 01/27/81]   |      |
| 16   | A schedule of dates and times for observance of the Lord's Supper, is approved by session.<br>Public notice (if not observed weekly) is given for each observance. The date of each observance (not less than quarterly) is reported. [W-3.3609]<br>Persons serving communion, if not ordained officers, are approved by session. [W-3.3616d]<br>Dates of communion served to shut-ins, with name of persons who served, are reported separately. [W-2.4010]<br>There is training of the laity to serve communion to shut-ins. [W-2.4010] |      |
| 17   | Sexual Misconduct Policy has been adopted and implemented (Adoption date: _____). [G-3.0106] Each year list the names of those who have taken the sexual misconduct training during that year.  |      |
| 18   | Child Protection Policy has been adopted and implemented (Adoption date: _____). [G-3.0106]   |      |

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| 19  | The Manual of Administrative Operations has been adopted. (Last updated: _____) [G-3.0106]  |  |
| 20  | Property and liability insurance coverage: list provider, policy number, term, amount of coverage. [G-3.0112]   |  |
| 21  | Session minutes contain the minutes of any joint meetings of session with the Board of Deacons and/or Trustees. [G-3.0204]  |  |
| 22  | Commissioners (and alternates) to presbytery were elected for a specified time and reports were received. [G-3.0202a]   |  |
| 23  | <p>Clerk of Session confirms to session that each of the following rolls and registers are maintained [G-3.0204a &amp;b] and are up to date.</p> <p><b>Rolls</b><br/> Baptized Members Roll,<br/> Active Members Roll,<br/> Inactive Members Roll (if kept), and<br/> Affiliate Members Roll.</p> <p><b>Registers</b><br/> Registers of Baptisms (Children, Adults) authorized by Session,<br/> Ruling Elders, Deacons, and Trustees,<br/> Installed Pastors with dates of service,<br/> Other Registers deemed necessary by Session (such as Deaths, Marriages).</p> |  |
| 24  | All additions and deletions from the rolls and registers are approved by session, recorded in session minutes, and the Clerk of Session confirms the changes are entered in the rolls and registers. [G-3.0201c, G-3.0204a]   |  |
| 25  | The minutes of session reflect that the roll of active members has been reviewed at least annually, and the church has counseled with those “who have neglected the responsibilities of membership.” [G-3.0201c]  |  |
| 26  | The minutes indicate that the Session Annual Statistical Report has been approved by session and submitted electronically to presbytery, and a copy of the two-page report was recorded in session minutes. [G-3.0202f]   |  |
| 27  | Results of presbytery's review of the previous year's session minutes were reported to session and included in session minutes. [G-3.0108a]   |  |
| 28  | The session has designated responsibility for observing Cal OSHA standards to the _____ Committee. [California law]   |  |
| 29. | The Session has approved changes to the Pastor(s) housing allowance for the following year no later than the December meeting. (Even though this has not yet been approved by the congregation.) IRS requirement.   |  |

### **ITEMS INCLUDED IN SESSION MINUTES WHEN APPLICABLE**

If these items are not applicable to your congregation this year, mark N/A in space for page number.

| Item |   | Page |
|------|---|------|
| 30   | The record indicates that written permission by the presbytery was secured before any sale, acquisition with loan, or leasing of real property. [G-4.0206a & b] |      |

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| 31 | Administrative Commissions of session are made up of at least two ruling elders and the moderator of session or an installed teaching elder. [G-3.0109b(6)]   |  |
| 32 | Any disciplinary action(s) taken by the session is (are) properly recorded.   |  |
| 33 | The session received approval of presbytery in securing an interim pastor, stated supply, designated pastor, parish associate. [G-2.0504b] (Committee on Ministry minutes, November 3, 2011)  |  |
| 34 | The procedure for calling a new pastor in accordance with the Book of Order included conferring with the presbytery Committee on Ministry. [G-2.0803]   |  |
| 35 | The position description for a new pastor, and for any other new employee approved by the session, is included in full in the session minutes or is made an appendix to the minutes, and/or is contained in the Manual of Administrative Operations. The minutes show that equal opportunity guidelines are observed. |  |
| 36 | The session consults with prospective inquirers seeking ordained ministry as teaching elders and then makes recommendations to the presbytery. [G-2.0602]   |  |
| 37 | The session consults annually with inquirers and candidates seeking ordained ministry as teaching elders and then makes recommendations to the presbytery.  |  |
| 38 | The session appoints a liaison between the inquirer or candidate and presbytery, and the liaison reports back to the session regarding the annual consultation.   |  |
| 39 | The minutes note any dissents or protests. [G-3.0105]   |  |

### **MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION/CORPORATION**

**Minutes for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation begin on Page \_\_\_\_.**

**Minutes for the Election Meeting of the Congregation begin on Page \_\_\_\_.**

| <b>Item</b> |  | <b>Page</b> |
|-------------|--|-------------|
| 40          | Pastor is moderator, or an alternate is selected. [G-1.0504]   |             |
| 41          | The annual and all special (called) meetings are properly called. [G-1.0502]<br>The exact purpose of any special congregational meeting is stated, and no other business may be transacted at that special meeting. [G-1.0501] |             |
| 42          | A quorum of those eligible to vote is present (provided by rule, G-1.0501), the meeting is opened with prayer, and the clerk of session shall serve as secretary. [G-1.0505]   |             |
| 43          | The number for and against is recorded for a ballot vote.  |             |
| 44          | Annually, session receives reports from all organizations, including financial reports, and presents them to the congregation. All organizations reporting are listed, together with a summary of their reports.               |             |
| 45          | The budget (as previously approved by session) is <u>presented</u> at the annual meeting for information. [G-3.0205]   |             |
| 46          | Any changes in the compensation for each pastor (as previously approved by session) are individually approved by the congregation. [G-1.0503c]   |             |

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| 47 | The nominating committee is properly constituted, elected annually [G-2.0401], and presents candidates for the office of ruling elder and deacon, and the nominating committee. Opportunity is provided for nominations from the floor. [G-2.0401] |  |
| 48 | The minutes of the congregational meeting to elect officers show the names of ruling elders, deacons, and trustees elected. [G-1.0503]   |  |
| 49 | Minutes of all congregational meetings are approved by session and entered into the minute book of the session. [G-3.0204]   |  |
| 50 | Congregational meetings are closed with prayer. [G-3.0105]   |  |