



The Reverend Nancy Talbot
Stated Clerk
The Synod of the Northeast PCUSA

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. ~ ISAIAH 43:19

The 2014 Synod Assembly adopted the revised Synod of the Northeast By-Laws and Standing Rules on October 25, 2104. They are available on the synod website.

G-3.0401 states, *“When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries. Each presbytery shall elect at least one ruling elder and one teaching elder to serve as commissioners to synod. A synod shall determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of presbyteries in the synod.”*

The 2014 Synod Assembly directed the Stated Clerk to send the following sections of the new by-laws and standing rules to presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes. No amendments are to be made. This is a straight yes or no vote. The deadline for submission of presbytery votes is May 28, 2015.

SYNOD BY-LAWS

2.000 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

2.100 Membership

2.101 Commissioners: The Synod Assembly shall consist of one teaching elder, one ruling elder, two members at large and one young adult member (age 17-22) elected as commissioners by each presbytery within the bounds of the Synod for the purpose of voice and vote. Their term shall be two years, commencing at their first Assembly meeting and continuing for all Stated and Called meetings until their successor’s first meeting.

2.102 Alternate Commissioners: Each presbytery shall also elect one presbyter or active church member to serve as alternate commissioners. The alternate commissioner shall serve when the commissioner is unable to attend a particular Synod Assembly meeting, and may complete the unexpired term of the commissioner when so designated by the presbytery.

2.103 Additional Members at Large: In order that the Synod Assembly may be a diverse community of gracious welcome, it may provide in its standing rules for additional members at large.

2.200 Unexpired Terms: In the event that commissioners' or alternates' terms conclude prematurely, their presbytery shall elect someone to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

2.300 Conduct of Elections: The Synod standing rules shall govern the conduct of elections.

2.301 Eligibility for Re-Election: Members of the Synod Assembly are eligible for re-election at their presbyteries' discretion, for not more than three consecutive terms.

SYNOD STANDING RULES

SR 2.000 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

SR 2.100 Elections: Elections of members of the Synod Assembly shall ordinarily be completed no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Stated Meeting of the Synod Assembly. The Synod Assembly shall consist of one teaching elder, one ruling elder and two members at large and one young adult member (age 17-22) elected as commissioners by each presbytery within the bounds of the Synod for the purpose of voice and vote. Presbyteries are encouraged to elect at least one commissioner age thirty-five or under on the date the Synod Assembly convenes.

SR 2.101 Synod Presbyterian Women: Presbyterian Women in the Synod shall elect a representative to serve as a member at large to the Synod Assembly.

SR 2.102 Caucuses: Each racial-ethnic caucus recognized by the Synod Mission and Ministries Commission shall elect a representative to serve as a member at large to the Synod Assembly.

SR 2.103 Elections: Elections of Synod Presbyterian Women and Racial-ethnic caucuses representatives and their alternates shall ordinarily be completed no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Stated Meeting of the Synod Assembly.

SR 2.104 Terms: The term of commissioners, young adult members, Presbyterian Women and Racial Ethnic members at large shall be two years, commencing at their first Assembly meeting and continuing for all Stated and Called meetings until their successor's first meeting. Each presbytery, Racial Ethnic Caucus, and the Synod Presbyterian Women may also choose to elect an alternate who shall serve if a Commissioner is unable to serve for a particular meeting or the remainder of his or her term. Members of the Synod Assembly are eligible for re-election at the discretion of the presbytery, Racial Ethnic Caucus or Presbyterian Women, for not more than three consecutive terms.

SR 2.105 Contact information: Each presbytery Stated Clerk, Racial Ethnic Caucus Moderator and Presbyterian Women Moderator shall promptly transmit to the Synod Stated Clerk such contact and demographic information concerning commissioners, alternate commissioners and members at large as the Synod Stated Clerk shall require.

SR 2.200 Corresponding Members: The following persons shall be seated as corresponding

members with voice but not vote: presbytery moderators; up to two leadership staff members designated by each of the presbyteries; members of the Synod Mission and Ministries Commission; and former Moderators of the Synod Assembly who continue to be members of congregations or presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod. The Synod Mission and Ministries Commission may invite other individuals to present themselves as corresponding members to be seated by vote of the Synod Assembly.

SR 2.201 Other Corresponding Members: The Synod Assembly may choose to seat other individuals as corresponding members.

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

SR 3.700 Committee on Representation Responsibilities: The Committee on Representation shall have the following responsibilities:

SR 3.701 Carry out the functions of a Committee on Representation as specified in the Constitution and in accordance with the Affirmative Action Plan of this Synod.

SR 3.702 Receive on behalf of the Synod annual reports of presbytery committees on representation and include a summary of these reports along with their report to the Administrative Working Group.

SR 3.703 Consult with presbyteries that have not achieved the Synod's goals for inclusiveness and advocate with the goal of fostering compliance.

SR 3.704 Six members from six different presbyteries shall be nominated by the Leadership Team into two classes of three. Their terms shall be staggered. No one shall serve on the Committee on Representation for more than six consecutive years.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In October 2013 the Synod Assembly adopted the New Way Forward document that included the appointment of a committee on by-laws and standing rules charged with developing a new set of documents consistent with the vision of the New Way Forward and its core values. Some members of this committee had also served on the Transition Working Group. They had been part of multiple discernment discussions and had listened intently to comments of people within the synod including youth and emerging leaders. These discussions became the backdrop for developing the New Way Forward document and the new by-laws and standing rules.

The intent of the New Way Forward and the by-laws and standing rules is to create as much open space as possible for new ways to engage with each other and in mission across the synod. This includes the way we govern and who the synod includes around the table. Beginning with the 2013 Synod Assembly there has been much discussion concerning the membership of the Synod Assembly and the Synod Council, now called Synod Mission and

Ministries Commission. The change in language that calls for one teaching elder and one ruling elder as commissioners and two members at large is intended to allow for the possibility of presbyteries electing one or two people as commissioners who are active church members but are not ordained.

The synod is committed to opening pathways to leadership for both emerging leaders and racial ethnic voices. The sections above in the by-laws and standing rules are a way to live into the call to full participation and access to representation in decision-making.

