

Blackhawk Presbytery

Information for Ruling Elder Commissioners to Presbytery Meetings

Our Vision and Values

Grounded in the biblical image for human community, as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, we challenge and support congregations to be thriving faith communities by facilitating competent leadership and resourcing to energize ministry and mission.

As Christians, guided by the principles of love, trust, open communication, and genuine relationships, we value each other as sisters and brothers in faith in all our varied theological understandings. Therefore, we relish respectful discussions of differing opinions as a necessary part of discerning the will of God.

Who's Who

Here is who you will see running the presbytery meetings.

General Presbyter and Stated Clerk: Rev. Eric Heinekamp

Moderator: Pastor Mike Engle, Elwood Community

Vice-Moderator: Rev. Lauren Patrus-Betzel, Caledonia

Associate Stated Clerk and Parliamentarian: Rev. David Spaulding, HR

Office Administrator: Jeannette Sheehan

Recording Secretary: Dorene Tieche, Geneva Fox Valley

What to Expect

Presbytery meetings are governed by the PC(USA) *Book of Order*, the Blackhawk Presbytery Bylaws and Ecclesiastical Administrative Manual (both found on the Presbytery website) and *Roberts Rules of Order*. The Moderator or the Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery moderates the meeting. A recording secretary takes the minutes.

The docket and most meeting papers are posted on the presbytery website in advance of each meeting. You should have downloaded or been given these materials to review in advance and bring with you.

Normally there are four parts to a presbytery meeting

Opening: The moderator convenes the meeting with prayer, declares a quorum present, presents the day's docket (agenda) for approval, and requests approval of the minutes of the previous presbytery meeting. First time ruling elder commissioners and ministers of the Word and Sacrament are introduced. Ministers and ruling elders visiting from other presbyteries, the Synod, or the General Assembly (corresponding members) are seated. The host church welcomes the presbytery.

Worship: The worship service is usually planned and coordinated by the host church and often includes the sacrament of communion. This approach allows presbytery members to experience a variety of worship experiences that draw on the culture and talents of each host congregation.

Learning Opportunity: Every presbytery meeting includes a learning opportunity that helps the members of the presbytery live out its vision. Learning opportunities may be presentations, small group discussions, question & answer, or a combination.

Business Plenary: In this part of the meeting, commissions and committees present reports and request action through motions. Minister members and elder commissioners may also bring business to the floor during the business plenary. As an elder commissioner, you can make motions, second motions, and vote on motions. Normally, voting is by voice-vote. If the vote appears to be close, either the Moderator or a minister member or an elder commissioner can call for a show of hands. In some circumstances, ballots are used. In addition, there may be special reports, commissioning services, and retirement or other recognition ceremonies.

Your Responsibilities

- Ruling elders elected as commissioners participate and vote at presbytery meetings with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. This ‘parity’ is one of the things that makes us Presbyterian.
- Report back to your Session and congregation information from the presbytery meeting
- Get to know ministers and elder commissioners from other churches and the staff of Blackhawk Presbytery.
- Learn more about the other governing bodies of the PC(USA); the Presbytery of Blackhawk, the Synod of Lincoln Trails and the PC(USA) General Assembly.

What to Take Back to Your Congregation

You’ll want to share with your congregation:

- Decisions made at the meeting
- Key points from the learning opportunity
- Information about programs, projects, and events of interest to your congregation
- Your own impressions of the meeting

Want More Information?

To get connected to the presbytery through the Blackhawk’s *Connections* e-mail newsletter, indicate on the sign-in form provided. Or visit the website www.blackhawkpresbytery.org where you can subscribe and also find lots of information.

To learn more about the PC(USA), start by visiting the website www.pcusa.org.