

KENTUCKY TRI-PRESBYTERY MEETING

226th GA Update and Overview of Church Discipline (ChD)

November 10, 2023

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Purpose Statement for this Workshop

1. *General Assembly Update*
 - a. *225th GA Actions and Implementation Processes*
 - b. *Plans for the 226th GA in Salt Lake City*
2. *Overview of Church Discipline (ChD), which replaced the Rules of Discipline (RoD) in the Book of Order effective July 9, 2023.*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

Actions taken at the 225th General Assembly:

- *G-2.0603, G-2.1002, G-2.1103, G-3.0106 – boundary training and new policies*
- *“Unification Commission”*

Form a commission to oversee and facilitate the unification of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) into a single agency, revise the Organization for Mission to reflect this change, and work to align the entities, boards, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly toward long-term faithfulness and financial sustainability of its mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). . .

i. Once unification is finalized, the commission shall determine the structure moving forward and present the new Organization for Mission to the 227th General Assembly (2026).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

Actions taken at the 225th General Assembly:

- *G-2.0603, G-2.1002, G-2.1103, G-3.0106 – boundary training and new policies*
- *“Unification Commission”*
- *Special Committee on GA Standing Rules*
- *Task Force to Explore the Theology and Practice of Ordination*
- *Adoption of revised “D” section (ChD)*


GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

226th General Assembly:

- *SLW Commissioner Orientation – April 21-22, 2024*
- *Opening Plenary and Committees – Electronically*
- *In-Person Plenaries in Salt Lake City*
- *Numerous proposals for significant changes in how the PC(USA) functions are in the works – both at the denominational level, as well as in terms of ordination/certification standards and qualifications.*
- *ChD Authoritative Interpretations Proposal*

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

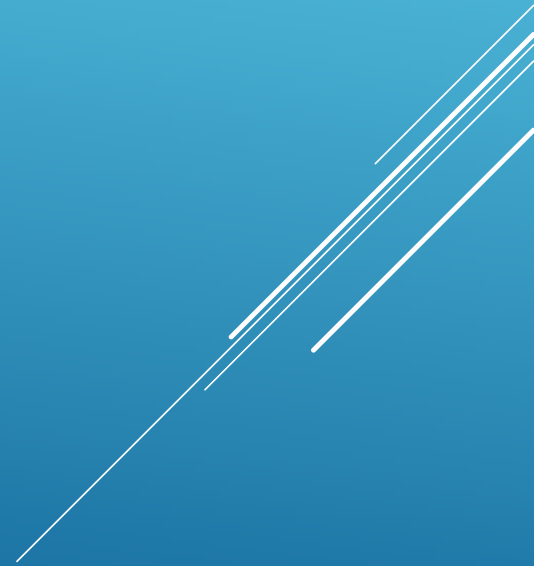
226th General Assembly:

- *Geographical Boundaries Project*
 - *Various new overtures are being developed in presbyteries*
 - *Election of a New Stated Clerk*
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE:

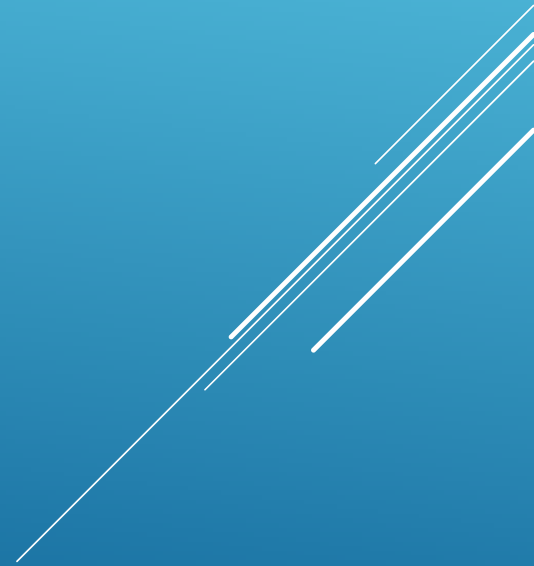
226th General Assembly:

Questions about the 226th GA ???



CHURCH DISCIPLINE (ChD):

Introduction and Overview



Introduction and Overview

The Charge to the Rules of Discipline Task Force

- Make the rules of discipline more accessible to the church
- Preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals to the church
- Expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution
- Provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, particularly in light of recent learnings in ethical and social development and experiments by the secular legal system with alternative sentencing.

Introduction and Overview

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Rules of Discipline:

Chapter 1 – Preamble

Chapter 2 – Judicial Process Defined

Chapter 3 – Jurisdiction in Judicial Process

Chapter 4 – Reference

Chapter 5 – Permanent Judicial Commissions

Chapters 6 – 8 Remedial Process (Preliminary, Trials, Appeals)

Chapter 9 – Requests for Vindication

*Chapters 10 – 13 Disciplinary Process (Prelim, Trials,
Censure/Restoration, Appeals)*

Chapter 14 – Evidence (including witnesses)

Church Discipline:

Chapter 1 – Preamble

Chapter 2 – Judicial Process Defined

Chapter 3 – Permanent Judicial Commissions

Chapters 4 – 6 Remedial Process (Preliminary, Trials, Appeals)

*Chapters 7 – 10 Disciplinary Process (Prelim, Trials,
Censure/Restoration, Appeals)*

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Introduction and Overview

So, what is “judicial process,” and why do we need it?

- In a word, judicial process is “accountability.”
- D-2.0101

“Church discipline in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is accomplished through judicial processes of accountability. Accountability of councils is accomplished through remedial process. Accountability of individual is accomplished through disciplinary process.”

Introduction and Overview

- Accountability of **councils** is through **remedial process**.
- Accountability of **individuals** is through **disciplinary process**.

Notes:

- Congregations are not “councils.”
- A judicial process has only **one** respondent (remedial) or accused (disciplinary).

Introduction and Overview

Some tools you will need in your toolbox:

- Scripture / Constitution: *Book of Confessions*, and *Book of Order*
- Annotated *Book of Order*

G-6.02

“The General Assembly may provide authoritative interpretation of the *Book of Order*, which shall be binding on the councils of the church when rendered in the manner described in this section or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.”

Introduction and Overview

Access the Annotated Book of Order:

- *pcusa.org*
- *At bottom of screen, choose: Office of the General Assembly*
- *On Right of next screen, choose Annotated Book of Order*
- *Toward top of next screen, choose Annotated Book of Order*
- *Bookmark this page on your browser!*

Introduction and Overview

Some tools you will need in your toolbox:

- Scripture / Constitution: *Book of Confessions*, and *Book of Order*
- Annotated *Book of Order*
- Association of Stated Clerks Judicial Process Handbook (not yet available for ChD)
- Office of Constitutional Interpretation:
 - Laurie Griffith, Associate Director
 - Flor Vélez-Diáz, Manager, Judicial Process and Social Witness

Introduction and Overview

Some changes in ChD resulting from our charge:

- Incorporation of language from a number of authoritative interpretations
- Duplication of certain rules/processes in order to create fully separate and distinct processes for remedial and disciplinary processes that flow from start to finish
- Added flexibility to accommodate smaller councils with limited resources, while maintaining the integrity of the process

Introduction and Overview

Some changes in ChD resulting from our charge

- Significantly expanded section on Alternative Resolution and added statements indicating that these are available options at any point in judicial process
- Simplified process for withdrawals of appeals when agreed upon by the parties
- Removal of as much “legalese” as possible
- Some new deadlines added to ensure that cases move along, and others adjusted to ensure adequate time to prepare for hearings and trials

Introduction and Overview

Some changes in ChD resulting from our charge

- Many clarifications of wording to remove ambiguity
- Download pdfs (including one that contains this presentation as well as the document “ChD Overview and Rationale” that provides a listing of all significant changes (according to Greg) from the synod’s website:

www.synodlw.org/resources

Introduction and Overview

Questions ???

