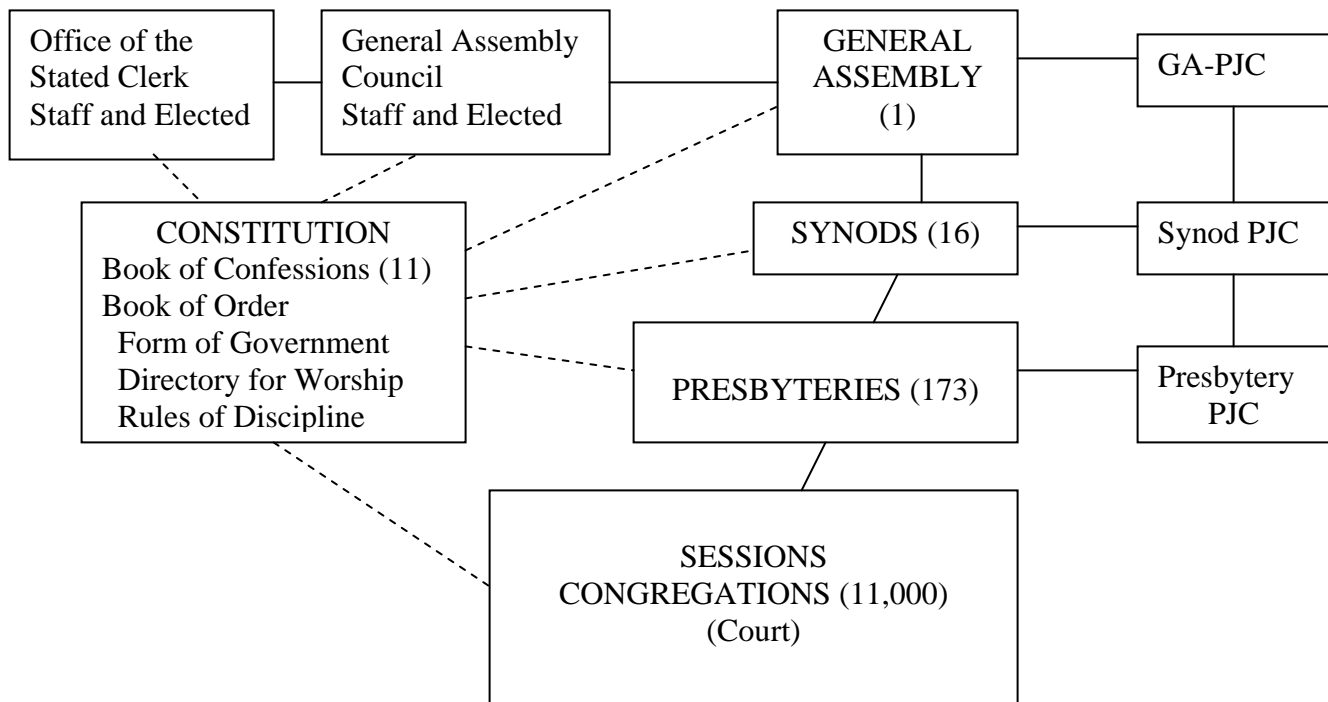


## Presbyterian Church (USA) Structure



### **Principles of Presbyterian Government (G-4.0300)**

- a. The particular churches of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church;
- b. This church shall be governed by presbyters (elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, traditionally called ruling and teaching elders);
- c. These presbyters shall come together in governing bodies (traditionally called judicatories or courts) in regular gradation;
- d. Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ;
- e. Decisions shall be reached in governing bodies by vote, following opportunity for discussion, and a majority shall govern;
- f. A higher governing body shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal;
- g. Presbyters are ordained only by the authority of a governing body;
- h. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in governing bodies;
- i. Governing bodies possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church.

Facts about the denomination: [http://www.pcusa.org/research/statistics\\_faq.htm#1](http://www.pcusa.org/research/statistics_faq.htm#1)

“Ordinary and Extraordinary Discipline,” by Charles Wiley:

<http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/issues/discipline.pdf>

Presbyterian Coalition: [www.presbycoalition.org](http://www.presbycoalition.org)

### Member Responsibilities (G-5.0102)

A faithful member accepts Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of his Church. Such involvement includes

- a. proclaiming the good news,
- b. taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church,
- c. praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church,
- d. supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- e. participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
- f. demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- g. responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- h. living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- i. working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment.

### Member Rights (G-5.0202)

An active member of a particular church is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church's work and worship. An active member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church, including the right to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to present children for baptism, to take part in meetings of the congregation, and to vote and hold office. (F-7.0304 includes electing elders, deacons, and trustees, and calling pastors and other matters of pastoral relationships, matters related to buying, mortgaging, or selling real property, and matters related to the permissive powers of a congregation, such as lodging all administrative responsibility in the session, or requesting exemption from particular requirements because of size.)

### Pastor Responsibilities (G-6.0202)

The permanent pastoral offices of ministers of the Word and Sacrament are pastors and associate pastors. When a minister of the Word and Sacrament is called as pastor or associate pastor of a particular church or churches, she or he is to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commend the gospel to all persons and that communicate its joy and its justice. The **pastor** is responsible for **studying, teaching, and preaching** the Word, for **administering Baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**, for **praying** with and for the congregation. With the elders, the pastor is to **encourage the people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable** them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise **pastoral care**, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying; to participate in **governing responsibilities**, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision making of the church, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole. With the deacons the pastor is to **share in the ministries of sympathy, witness, and service**. In addition to these pastoral duties, he or she is responsible for **sharing in the ministry of the church in the governing bodies above the session and in ecumenical relationships**.

### Elder Responsibilities (G-6.0304)

**It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge.** Together with the pastor, they should **encourage** the people in the worship and service of God, **equip and renew** them for their tasks within the church and for their mission in the world, visit and comfort and **care** for the people, with special attention to the poor, the sick, the lonely, and those who are oppressed. They should **inform** the pastor and session of those persons and structures which may need special attention. They should **assist in worship**. (See W-1.4003, W-2.3011-3012, W-3.1003, W-3.3616, and W-4.4003.) They should **cultivate their ability to teach the Bible** and may be authorized to **supply** places which are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In specific circumstances and with proper instruction, specific elders may be authorized by the presbytery to **administer the Lord's Supper** in accord with G-11.0103z. Those duties which all Christians are bound to perform by the law of love are especially incumbent upon elders because of their calling to office and are to be fulfilled by them as official responsibilities.