

Sessional Records Review Team Report

99th Stated Meeting of Metropolitan New York Presbytery, March 28th, 2017

I. KEEP FOR REFERENCE

IMPORTANT URLs

<http://bit.ly/srrt-guidelines> – Download guidelines for keeping sessional records

<http://bit.ly/clerkupload> – Upload sessional records securely – redirects to Citrix ShareFile

<http://metronypres.com/srrt/> - past SRRT reports, notes to clerks, clerk's self-evaluation, and templates

<http://bit.ly/MNP-Clerks-Forum> - Discussion forum for clerks of session to ask questions, find help, or offer advice and suggestions

<https://stat.pcanet.org/ac/presbyterys/secure/login.cfm> – Keep your clerk/church information up to date

II. SUBMIT YOUR PAST DUE 2014, 2015 AND/OR 2016 RECORDS

Reminder: churches that had not submitted 2014 minutes were directed by Presbytery at the 92nd Stated Meeting to submit their 2014 records along with their 2015 records by January 31, 2016; churches that had not submitted either 2014 minutes or 2015 minutes were directed by Presbytery at the 97th Stated Meeting to submit their missing records along with their 2016 records by January 31, 2017. Sessional minutes for the year 2016 were to be submitted to the Sessional Records Review Team no later than January 31, 2017.

- **Churches that have not submitted 2014 Records**

1. Comunidade Crista Presbiteriana, Mineola, NY
2. Grace Church of Greenwich, Greenwich, CT
3. Living Faith Community Church, Manhasset, NY

- **Churches that have not submitted 2015 Records**

1. Comunidade Crista Presbiteriana, Mineola, NY
2. Grace Church of Greenwich, Greenwich, CT
3. Redeemer Hoboken, Hoboken, NJ

- **Churches that have not submitted 2016 Records**

1. All Souls Community Church, Suffern, NY
2. Ascension Presbyterian Church, Forest Hills, NY
3. Comunidade Crista Presbiteriana, Mineola, NY
4. Comunidade Crista Presbiteriana, Newark, NJ
5. Covenant Presbyterian Church, Short Hills, NJ
6. Crossroads Community Church, Hillsborough, NJ
7. Grace Church of Greenwich, Greenwich, CT (other than statistical report)
8. Grace Community Church, Bridgewater, NJ
9. New Hope Christian Church, Monsey, NY

10. Queens Presbyterian Church, Astoria, NY (other than Commission Minutes for Astoria Community Church)
11. Redeemer Hoboken, Hoboken, NJ
12. Uptown Community Church, New York, NY

Submit your records through the URL above. It redirects to a Citrix ShareFile portal that will allow you to upload your records (files up to 10GB) securely and privately and receive a receipt that they were submitted. If you have any trouble, contact TE Stephen Leung - stephen@ascensionforesthills.org.

The submission of minutes should include all the following through the URLs above:

CLERK'S SELF-EVALUATION: form now available at <http://metronypres.com/srrt/>

SESSION MINUTES: complete records for 2015, all particular and mission churches

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES: complete records for 2015

BUDGET: the annual budget approved by the Session

STATISTICAL REPORT: annual statistical report approved by the Session

PICTURES: scans or images showing that the minutes are printed, bound, signed by the clerk of Session, with printed pages consecutively numbered, and with no blank pages in or between the minutes. If it is impractical to show this as scans or images, a clear affirmation by the clerk that all minutes for the year are printed, bound, signed, and consecutively numbered, with no blank pages in or between the minutes will be accepted by the committee

The committee's set of guidelines for keeping, submitting, examining, and reporting on sessional records can be downloaded at the URL above.

III. **SUBMIT PAST DUE RESPONSES TO EXCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE**

Reminder that Presbytery required the following churches to reply no later than this 99th Stated Meeting (March 2017) to the exceptions of substance found in their 2015 records. See docket and minutes of 97th Stated Meeting.

- **Exceptions of Substance in 2015 Records Awaiting Replies to Presbytery**

1. Ascension Presbyterian Church, Forest Hills, NY
2. Comunidade Crista Presbiteriana, Newark, NJ
3. Covenant of Faith Church, Flushing, NY
4. Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, New York, NY
5. Grace Community Church, Bridgewater, NJ
6. New Hope Christian Church, Monsey, NY
7. Queens Presbyterian Church, Astoria, NY
8. Trinity Presbyterian Church, Rye, NY

- **Exceptions of Substance in 2014 Records Awaiting Replies to Presbytery**

1. Hope Presbyterian Church, Lawrenceville, NJ
2. Redeemer Hoboken, Hoboken, NJ

The reply should take one of two forms:

- A. Session agrees with the exception and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its actions (if possible) and promises to be more careful in the future. Or,
- B. Session respectfully disagrees with Presbytery, states its grounds, and refers the exception back to Presbytery.

Exceptions of substance require an official response from the Session to Presbytery as soon as possible before Presbytery can finally dispose of the matter. **This means the committee should see a record in the future of the Session's adopting an official response to any exceptions of substance.**

Official replies from Sessions to Presbytery should be addressed to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery, TE Jeffrey Choi, at statedclerkmetronypres@gmail.com.

IV. RESPONSES RECEIVED BY PRESBYTERY TO EXCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE AND SESSION RECORDS REVIEW TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of All Souls Community Church, Suffern, NY, to their exceptions of substance in their 2015 records:

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record of the stated dates or intervals for communion/the Lord's Supper to be observed during the year in accordance with BCO 58-1.

Response: The Session agrees with this exception, noting that this was corrected beginning with the minutes of Session on November 3, 2015. Since that time, the minutes of Session have recorded the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session reviewed the minutes of the Board of Deacons in accordance with BCO 9-4.

Response: The Session respectfully disagrees with this exception. This exception does not apply, as All Souls Community Church does not have ordained deacons.

Exception: There is no record of the approval of a docket or agenda for the congregational meetings of May 29, 2015, July 12, 2015, and November 20, 2015.

Response: The Session agrees with this exception for May 29, 2015, meeting. The Session agrees with this exception for July 12, 2015, meeting. While the minutes of May 19, 2015, state that there will be a congregational meeting to take place on July

12, 2015 to elect officers, there is no clear statement of this being approved by the Session. The Session respectfully disagrees with this exception with respect to the November 20, 2015, meeting. On October 13, 2015, the Session voted to call a congregational meeting to be held on November 20, 2015. The minutes record the meeting's purpose as a "Vision Dessert during which various ministry leaders would provide updates." The Session believes this is sufficient to satisfy its duties pursuant to BCO 12-5d.

Exception: There is no record of the ordination service of August 30, 2015, being conducted as a called meeting of the Session in the presence of the congregation.

Response: The Session respectfully disagrees with this exception, as the Minutes of September 1, 2015, record that the Session was convened in the presence of the congregation in accordance with BCO 24-6. Thus, the Session believes that it satisfied its duties, with the ordination and installation being conducted according to the order prescribed.

- **Recommendation that the following response from the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Short Hills, NJ, be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Acknowledgement from Session to session of dismissing churches for seven new members received by letter of transfer not noted.

Response: The Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church agrees with the exception of the committee and will correct the records where appropriate. We will endeavor to follow the correct procedure in the future.

- **Recommendation that the following responses from the Session of Crossroads Community Church, Hillsborough, NJ, be found satisfactory:**

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session examined the accuracy of the record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.

Response: Though maintaining the roles of baptisms, members, deaths and dismissals, in 2015, we did not record them. We apologize and have corrected this practice in our 2016 minutes.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session approved and adopted a budget in accordance with BCO 12-5b.

Response: While a budget was approved, we apologize for not recording this in the official meeting minutes and have corrected this practice in our 2016 minutes.

Exception: The church's annual statistical report was not submitted with the records.

Response: We apologize and will endeavor to correct this practice.

Exception: The church's annual budget approved by the Session was not submitted with the records.

Response: We apologize for not submitting our budget with the record.

Exception: The minutes do not record the names of those absent, and whether those absent are previously excused.

Response: We apologize and will endeavor to correct this practice.

Exception: The minutes do not record the time of adjournment.

Response: We apologize and will endeavor to correct this practice.

Exception: When approved, minutes were not recorded as being approved as read/submitted, corrected, or amended.

Response: We apologize and will endeavor to be more in line with the BOCO.

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of Grace Presbyterian Church, Water Mill, NY, to their exceptions of substance in their 2015 records:

Exception: While pulpit supply needs were met for TE Middlekauff's sabbatical, credentials, qualifications, or relationship to Presbytery were not recorded for guest preachers, in accordance with BCO 12-5e.

Response: The Session agrees and regrets neglecting to record our oversight. All guest preachers for 2015 satisfy the requirements of BCO 12-5e. We will correct this in the future.

Exception: In removing members from the rolls as recorded in minutes of September 22, 2015, reasons and means by which members were removed, in accordance with BCO 46-2, were not recorded.

Response: The Session agrees and regrets neglecting to satisfy this requirement. We will correct this in the future.

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of Grace Redeemer Church, Teaneck, NJ, to their exceptions of substance in their 2015 records, appreciative of the Session's recognition of the importance of recording the nature of all meetings, acknowledging the date of August 16, 2015 was a typographical error, and also noting that docket for congregational meetings should be recorded as approved, although not necessarily listed in the minutes of a Session meeting:

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record of the stated dates or intervals for communion/the Lord's Supper to be observed during the year in accordance with BCO 58-1.

Response: the Session respectfully **disagrees** with the Presbytery. First, the Session points out that the dates the Lord's Supper was observed were duly noted in the 2015 Statistical Report. Second, BCO 58-1 simply states that the stated times of observing the Lord's Supper are to be determined by Session; it does not state that the record of such determination must appear in the minutes of Session meetings. Third, neither BCO 12-7 nor 12-8, both of which speak to the "accurate record" of Session, mentions this requirement.

Exception: The congregational meeting of April 26, 2015, is not recorded as stated or called.

Response: the Session *agrees* with the Presbytery as to the form of the minutes. The Session respectfully **disagrees** with the Presbytery that this arises to the level of an exception of substance. BCO 25, which speaks to congregational meetings, does not contain the term "stated meeting", and nowhere in that chapter explicates a distinction between a stated meeting and a called meeting. Nevertheless, the Session promises to be more careful in the future and indicate whether a congregational meeting is stated or called.

Exception: There is no record of the approval of a docket or agenda for the congregational meetings of August 16, 2015 and December 6, 2016.

Response: the Session assumes that the meetings referred to are actually those of April 26, 2015 and December 6, 2015, and respectfully **disagrees** with Presbytery. BCO 25-2 states that "No business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice." BCO 12-5.d charges the Session with the responsibility "To call congregational meetings when necessary." Neither chapter explicitly requires the listing of the meeting docket in the minutes of a Session meeting.

Exception: Credentials, qualifications, or relationship to Presbytery were not recorded for guest preachers discussed in the May 21, 2015 minutes, in accordance with BCO 12-5e.

Response: the Session *agrees* with the Presbytery as to the form of the minutes, but respectfully **disagrees** with the Presbytery as to the substance of the minutes. The three men mentioned in those minutes were considered as pulpit supply, but were not all approved as pulpit supply. The Session takes seriously its obligation under BCO 12-5.e "to ensure that the Word of God is preached only by such men as are sufficiently qualified." The Session *does not agree* that its proper discharge of this obligation further requires that the "credentials, qualifications, or relationship to the Presbytery" of every man who ever fills the pulpit must be memorialized in the minutes of Session meetings.

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of Redeemer Church of Montclair, Montclair, NJ, to their exceptions of substance in their 2015 records:

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record of the stated dates or intervals for communion/the Lord's Supper to be observed during the year in accordance with BCO 58-1.

Response: we agree and will make these corrections in the future.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session examined the accuracy of the record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.

Response: we agree and will make these corrections in the future.

- **Recommendation that the following responses from the Session of Hope Presbyterian Church, Randolph, NJ, be found satisfactory:**

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record of the stated dates or intervals for communion/the Lord's Supper to be observed during the year in accordance with BCO 58-1.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session reviewed the minutes of the Board of Deacons in accordance with BCO 9-4.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: The February 19, 2015, March 26, 2015, April 16, 2015, May 17, 2015, and June 24, 2015 meetings of the Session are not identified as stated or called.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception, has corrected its record and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: The minutes do not record the presence of a quorum.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception, has corrected its record and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: For new members received by profession of faith, whether baptism was needed or previously administered was not recorded.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception, has corrected its record and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: There is no record of the approval of a docket or agenda for the congregational meeting of February 1, 2015.

Response: HPC Session agrees with the exception, and promises to be more careful in the future.

- **Recommendation that the following response from the Session of Knowlton Presbyterian Church, Knowlton, NJ, be found satisfactory:**

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record of the stated dates or intervals for communion/the Lord's Supper to be observed during the year in accordance with BCO 58-1.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session reviewed the minutes of the Board of Deacons in accordance with BCO 9-4.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session examined the accuracy of the record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.

Exception: Meetings of the Session from May 2015 onward are not identified as stated or called.

Exception: The minutes do not record the presence of a quorum.

Exception: Minutes of meetings from January to June of 2015 were not approved by the Session at a subsequent date.

Exception: In the May 4 2015 minutes, whether baptism was needed or previously administered was not recorded for new members received by profession of faith.

Exception: In the December 8, 2015 minutes, the credentials, qualifications, or relationship to Presbytery of the guest preacher, TE Romaine, were not recorded in accordance with BCO 12-5e.

Exception: There is no record of the approval of a docket or agenda for the congregational meeting of May 3, 2015.

Response: The Session agrees with the exceptions and has directed the Clerk of Session to correct the records where possible and promises to be more careful in the future.

- **Recommendation that the following responses from the Session of North Shore Community Church, Oyster Bay, NY, be found satisfactory:**

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session reviewed the minutes of the Board of Deacons in accordance with BCO 9-4.4.

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Response: Although NSCC has elected deacons, there is no official board with stated meetings in order not to burden these officers and thus no minutes for review. Some matters typically assigned to the Board of Deacons are either addressed by the Session during stated meetings, by emails, or during staff meetings. A board of deacons will be formally set up in 2017 and minutes will be provided.

Exception: Meetings of the Session and congregational meetings are not identified as stated or called.

Response: The 2015 minutes were revised to include the terms "stated" or "called." The minutes from 2016 will also be edited in the same manner.

Exception: The minutes do not record the presence of a quorum.

Response: The minutes for 2015 were revised to state that each meeting had a quorum. Minutes from 2016 will also be edited in the same manner.

Exception: For the May 14, 2015 minutes, acknowledgement from Session to Session of dismissing church, in accordance with BCO 46-3, for new members received by letter of transfer not recorded.

Response: We are in the process of sending and receiving transfer correspondence and will strive to manage transfers of NAPARC membership in good order and record dismissals and transfers in our minutes and Clerk's Report.

Exception: Minutes of meetings from January 20, 2015, February 24, 2015, and September 29, 2015 were not approved by the Session at a subsequent date.

Response: The minutes were revised to include a statement that the previous meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Exception: There is no record of the ordination service of RE Yong Kim on July 26, 2015 being conducted as a called meeting of the Session in the presence of the congregation.

Response: Our failure to record the minutes was an oversight. The minutes have been recorded and inserted into the 2015 minute record. We will in the future seek to conformance closely to the BOCO 24-6 and ensure a session meeting is clearly called during the worship and noted in minutes.

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, to their exceptions of substance in their 2015 records, noting that reports and records of commissions should also be included in sessional records for review:

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session reviewed the minutes of the Board of Deacons in accordance with BCO 9-4.

Response: Session agrees with the exception and began the practice of receiving the record of the minutes of the Board of Deacons in 2016.

Exception: In the minutes of 2015, there is no record that the Session examined the accuracy of the record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.

Response: Session respectfully disagrees with the exception. Session affirms the instruction in BCO 12-7 and believes it keeps an accurate “record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions” in accordance with BCO 12-8 via three standing commissions (Congregational Elder Teams) that provide reports to the Session on a monthly basis, the receipt of which is recorded in Session minutes.

Exception: The minutes do not explicitly note the presence of a quorum.

Response: Session respectfully disagrees with the exception. Session minutes clearly state the name of each Session member and whether they attended, which not only clearly indicates a quorum is present but also the individual members that constitute the required quorum in accordance with BCO 12-1.

Exception: How new members were received is not recorded.

Response: Session respectfully disagrees with the exception for the same reason as stated above to the exception regarding a “record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.”

Exception: Name and location of church to which members are dismissed by letter of transfer are not recorded.

Response: Session respectfully disagrees with the exception for the same reason as stated above to the exception regarding a “record of baptisms, members, deaths, and dismissions in accordance with BCO 12-7.”

- Recommendation that Presbytery accept the response from the Session of Uptown Community Church, New York, NY, to their exception of substance in their 2015 records:

Exception: In June 11, 2015, August 13, 2015, and October 8, 2015 minutes, acknowledgement from Session to session of dismissing church, in accordance with BCO 46-3, for new members received by letter of transfer is not recorded.

Response: We have reviewed the Exception of Substance from Presbytery of failing to record in our 2016 minutes our Session’s acknowledgment to dismissing churches of new members having been received by transfer, per BCO 46-3. Every effort will be made to include this record in future minutes.

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Submitted on behalf of the Session Record Review Team
TE Stephen Leung, Chairman

Committee Members:

TE Janas Caruncho
TE Jeffrey Choi
TE Phillip Dennis
TE John Hanna
TE Dongsu Kim
TE Mark Middlekauff
RE Joao Soares
RE Wilson Wai

