

SAMPLE TEMPLATE for Stated Session Meeting Minutes

(January 1, 2016)

Name of Church:
City, State:
Minutes of Stated Session Meeting
Date & Time

Moderator:
Elders Present:
Elders Excused:
Guests:

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at _____(time) and a quorum was present. The meeting was **opened with prayer**. (This is a frequent omission even though there was prayer. If prayer concerns are shared, DO NOT record personal information, as session minutes are often NOT private.)

Approval of Minutes: Record approval of the minutes of the previous stated (regular) meeting as well as those of any special meetings that were held since the last stated meeting. The session has the authority to approve the minutes of congregational meetings as well, although some churches prefer to have the congregation approve them at the annual meeting. If minutes are approved as corrected, not as written, corrections are made before minutes are entered into the permanent register.

Clerk's Report:

Correspondence: Report on significant correspondence received/sent since the last stated meeting. (Do not report on miscellany such as other church newsletters, mass mailings, etc.)

Membership Actions: Record here:

- Reception of new members by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or letter of transfer
- Dismissal of active members by letter of transfer to another church
- Deletion of members from active roll because of death or at their request to be deleted
- Removal of members on active roll
- Restoration of members to the active roll

For all actions, record the full name of each person.

Communion: Record session approval to serve communion on selected dates, including communion at retreats or other special gatherings.

Baptisms: Record the prior authorization to perform a baptism AND record all baptisms performed. Information that must be recorded for every person baptized (infant, child and adult):

- Full legal name of person to be baptized (first, middle and last) Date and place of birth of person to be baptized
- Full legal name(s) of parent(s) presenting infant/child for baptism, including mother's maiden name, if known. The names of the parents of an adult to be baptized should also be recorded, even if they are not "presenting" the adult for baptism.

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NOTE: It sometimes happens that an authorized baptism is not performed. While it is not necessary to record the reason, session minutes should record that the scheduled baptism did not take place.

Pastor's Report: It's recommended that the pastor's report include

- Weddings at which the pastor has officiated on or off the church premises.
- Memorial services at which the pastor officiated on or off the church premises

Church Officers: Upon completion of a period of study and preparation, record the session approval to ordain and install incoming officers on a selected date. At the next stated meeting after that date, minutes must record that officers were actually ordained/installed on that date.

*The election of officers also needs to be recorded, but that will be recorded in the minutes of a congregational meeting since it is the congregation, not the session, that elects officers.

Presbytery Commissioners: Record the name(s) of person(s) elected to serve as ruling elder commissioners at Assembly meetings. Your church's custom will determine whether commissioners are elected on a rotating basis, or for a year. Commissioners must be ruling elders, but do not have to be currently serving on the session.

Omnibus Motion: Your session may choose to use an omnibus motion. It can be helpful in moving a meeting along and is best used for actions that do not require discussion. Items in the omnibus are voted on together, although if there is an item that has been extracted, it is voted on separately. **If you pass an omnibus motion, the text of the omnibus motion must be included in the minutes.** Please see sample omnibus attached to this template.

Committee Reports were received from (list each session committee that submitted a written report since the last stated meeting). Written reports do not need to be entered into the permanent register along with session minutes.

Presbytery Assembly Report: Reports of Assembly meetings are required. A *brief* summary by the commissioner(s) is fine; the report does not need to be extensive.

Old/New Business:

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at _____ with a **closing prayer** by _____. The next stated (regular) meeting will be _____(date).

Signature

Clerk of Session

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In addition, the following items should be recorded once a year:

- General Assembly Statistical Report: The summary pages of the report must be entered into the permanent register along with session minutes each year.
- Approval of Budget: The session, not the congregation, approves the annual budget, after which it is presented to the congregation. The budget is typically presented at the annual meeting and, if your church's fiscal year is different from the calendar year, the budget may be approved at some time other than January or February.
- Election of Treasurer: The session must do this annually.
- Election of Clerk: The session elects a clerk, who must be a ruling elder, but does not have to be currently active on the session, for a term that the session determines. Since the term may be longer than one year, please be sure that the minutes record the agreed-upon term so that a new clerk or the current clerk is (re-)elected as necessary.

Finally, while it is no longer required by the *Book of Order*, the Constitutional Procedures Work Group strongly recommends that the minutes also include the statement from the annual statistics regarding the composition of the session compared to that of the congregation. Does the session compare favorably to the congregation in the categories of gender, age, race/ethnicity and disabilities?

SAMPLE OMNIBUS MOTION

1. Approve the minutes of the stated meeting of ____ .
2. Authorize the baptism on ____ of ____, born ____ in ____ to ____.
3. Approve a letter of transfer to ____ for ____ and remove them from the roll of active members.
4. Approve the General Assembly Statistical Report for (year) as completed and submitted by the clerk.
5. Approve the election of ____ as treasurer (or clerk) for (year).
6. Approve holding Vacation Bible School the week of (date).
7. Accept the financial review of the (year) books as completed by (names).
8. Approve the service of communion on: (list dates.)

The session **voted to approve** the omnibus motion as presented