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Rivers & Lakes Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church:

Whereas it belongs to synods and councils to make provision for the better administration of the government of the Visible Kingdom through the Order of the church (WCF 31.2); and

Whereas that earthly government must be maintained through diligence since it may err and need to be corrected or improved upon (WCF 31.3); and

Whereas *The Book of Government* grants the authority and responsibility of Presbyteries “to overture the General Assembly on those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church,” (BOG 194.C.2);

Therefore, be it resolved that Rivers & Lakes Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church regarding three matters as enumerated below:

- Overture #1 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 5-10.
(Approved with a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed)
- Overture #2 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 9-5.
(Approved with a vote of 23 in favor, 14 opposed)
- Overture #3 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 19-3.
(Approved with a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed)

Approved by Rivers & Lakes Presbytery at its 46th Stated Meeting, January 23, 2026.


RE George Kalemkarian, Moderator


TE Annie Rose, Stated Clerk

Overture #1

Original Text	Proposed Revisions
<p>G.5-10 The dismissal of a local church to another body or to independence</p> <p>A. The Church Session shall notify the Presbytery of its desire to be dismissed. Once a Church Session has notified the Presbytery of its desire under this section, the Presbytery shall take no action to dismiss, dissolve, or divide the local church and its elders until all proceedings under this section 5-10 are fully completed. This provision shall not be construed to prohibit the Presbytery from reasonable means of access to the Session or church members in order to present its position. Nor shall this provision be construed to prohibit the presbytery from taking action under the <i>Book of Discipline</i> on matters unrelated to the request for dismissal.</p> <p>B. At a duly called meeting of the congregation, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, the motion to request dismissal shall be put and discussed. The meeting shall recess for no less than three months and no more than six months, to a date determined at the meeting.</p> <p>C. At the time set, the congregation shall reconvene, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, and the request to dismiss shall again be put to the congregation and the floor opened for discussion. The congregation shall then vote on the motion by written ballot. If it passes by a two-thirds majority, the Presbytery shall dismiss the congregation as requested with all of its property and assets. Those not desiring to participate in the dismissal shall</p>	<p>G.5-10 The dismissal of a local church to another body or to independence</p> <p>A. No congregation shall be dismissed to another body or to independence except by the procedures set forth in this section G.5-10.</p> <p>B. The Church Session shall notify the Presbytery of its desire to be dismissed; this notice shall include the Active Roll of the congregation as an attachment. Once a Church Session has notified the Presbytery of its desire under this section, the Presbytery shall take no action to dismiss, dissolve, or divide the local church and its elders until all proceedings under this section 5-10 are fully completed. This provision shall not be construed to prohibit the Presbytery from reasonable means of access to the Session or church members in order to present its position. Nor shall this provision be construed to prohibit the presbytery from taking action under the <i>Book of Discipline</i> on matters unrelated to the request for dismissal.</p> <p>C. At a duly called meeting of the congregation, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, the motion to request dismissal shall be put and discussed. The meeting shall recess for adjourn until no less than three months and no more than six months, to a date determined at the meeting.</p> <p>D. At the time set, the congregation shall reconvene, with representatives from</p>

<p>notify the Presbytery, which will assign them to other congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.</p> <p>D. If a request for dismissal fails to achieve the required two-thirds majority,⁴¹ the process of dismissal (G.5-10) may not be repeated until at least 12 months have elapsed following the vote.</p>	<p>the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, and the request to dismiss shall again be put to the congregation and the floor opened for discussion. The congregation shall then vote on the motion by written ballot, provided that only those listed on the Active Roll attached to the notice given in G.5-10.B may vote. If it passes by a two-thirds majority, the Presbytery shall dismiss the congregation as requested with all of its property and assets. Those not desiring to participate in the dismissal shall notify the Presbytery, which will assign them to other congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.</p> <p>E. If a request for dismissal fails to achieve the required two-thirds majority, the process of dismissal (G.5-10) may not be repeated until at least 12 months have elapsed following the vote.</p>
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Rationale:

- Proposed addition section “A” clarifies that under no circumstances may a congregation renounce jurisdiction since that is inconceivable in a presbyterian form of government; it must follow the procedures established in G.5-10.
- The addition of the Active Roll (G.8-3.B) has the mutual benefit of encouraging the Session to ensure the rolls of the congregation are in order prior to the request for dismissal, as is their responsibility (G.8-1, 3; 18-3), and allowing the Presbytery knowledge of who has standing to vote in the congregational meeting, and who may need to be assigned to other congregations of the church in application of current provision §C and proposed provision §D.
- The G.5-10 process is an initial congregational meeting, followed by a time period of 3-6 months, concluding with a meeting in continuation of the initial meeting. In the updated 12th Edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) this is considered an “Adjourned Meeting” (RONR 9:17-19). The present parliamentary verbiage of “recess” is in conflict for procedures for adjourned meetings. The proposed language would bring our procedures into conformity with parliamentary procedure.

Overture #2

Original Text	Proposed Revisions
<p>G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder</p> <p>D. Administrator A court of the Church or one of its agencies may call a Teaching Elder to serve in some administrative capacity. An organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may also issue a similar call. In such cases, it is always the responsibility of the Administrator to seek opportunity to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments.</p> <p>E. Chaplain A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder</p> <p>D. Administrator A court of the Church church or one of its agencies, or an organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may call a Teaching Elder to serve in some administrative capacity provided that the nature of the work is appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination. In such cases, it is always the responsibility of the Administrator to seek opportunity to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments.</p> <p>E. Chaplain A court of the Church church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.</p>

Rationale:

- From the “Notes For The 2024-2025 Edition” of the EPC Constitution: Volume One, “Church – when capitalized, refers to the universal church (defined in *Book of Government*, Chapter 1). The reference in G.9-5.D seems to be to the Universal Visible Church and should be ‘church’ rather than ‘Church.’ There may be additional instance of this terminological inconsistency (ex: G.9-5.E; G.9-6.A) that should be sought out.
- The proposed revision condenses the three spheres of Administrative work: EPC church courts and agencies, or an organization deemed proper by the Presbytery.
- The proposed addition mirrors the language of G.10-8.B.2.a – calls approved by the Presbytery from a church or agency outside the bounds of the Presbytery.

Overture #3

Original Text	Proposed Revisions
<p>G.19-3 Officers of the Presbytery</p> <p>A. Moderator The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected by that court. The person elected must be a Ruling or Teaching Elder. A Ruling Elder, once elected, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p> <p>1. Length of Term Election may be for that stated meeting of the court or, at the discretion of the Presbytery, for one year. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p>	<p>G.19-3 Officers of the Presbytery</p> <p>A. Moderator The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected by that court. The person elected must be a Ruling or Teaching Elder. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p> <p>1. Length of Term Election may be for that stated meeting of the court or, at the discretion of the Presbytery, for one year. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p>

Rationale:

- This eliminates and clarifies a present redundancy.