



846 State Route 18
Raccoon Twp, PA 15001

Policy Manual

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Preface

Jesus Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. It belongs to Christ alone to rule, to teach, to call, and to use the Church as He wills, exercising His authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of His Kingdom.

The purpose of this Manual is to summarize in one document the basic beliefs, values, and rules that govern Mt. Pleasant church. The material contained herein is based on Holy Scripture, the Book of Order, and the particular needs of Mt Pleasant church.

This manual is not all-inclusive or final. Additions and revisions may be made at any time by the session of Mt. Pleasant church, and the session welcomes and encourages any suggestions for its improvement.

What We Believe

Mt. Pleasant Church located in Raccoon Twp. Beaver County, PA is a body of believers that joins together to worship God and desires to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout our community and the world.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis of our faith.

We believe that it is our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior that binds us together as brothers and sisters in the family of God. This belief is demonstrated through our various ministries and programs that strive to serve all the members of our community in a way that leads them to a personal awareness of Jesus and gives them an opportunity to worship and serve him.

We believe that "The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world." Book of Order, G-102

We believe that God has graciously provided us with a facility to promote worship, study, fellowship, and outreach in our community. Furthermore we believe that it is our responsibility to use these resources to the best of our abilities to further His kingdom here in Raccoon Township.

Core Values

1. Worship: We will seek to bring honor and glory to God through our worship.
2. Service: We will seek to show the love of Christ to all people through lives of generous service and hospitality.
3. Evangelism: We will seek to make the good news of Jesus Christ known to all who have not yet experienced a saving relationship with Him.
4. Discipleship: We will seek to grow all of our members to not only profess faith, but also to grow in Christ-likeness.
5. Missions: We will seek to contribute to and participate in the world mission of the church, which is good news for every race, tribe, people and nation.
6. Fellowship: We will seek to fully reflect God's intention for the church to be a family of brothers and sisters united as the body of Christ.

General Rules

We desire to encourage and promote the use of our facilities by both our congregation and our community, therefore we believe that rules should only be established and enforced to protect and dignify these facilities.

1. Behaviors and activities that are contrary to the teachings in Holy Scripture are not permitted. However when interpreting scripture we must be careful to discern what teachings are specific to a particular place and time, and those that are universal.
2. Obscene or indecent (as determined by Session) language, dress, behavior, dance, or music is not permitted.
3. Smoking or other use of tobacco is not permitted in the building or entryway due to health and regulatory concerns. While not encouraged these activities will be permitted behind the building.
4. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the premises due to the problems that arise from their abuse.
5. Food and drink other than those used in Holy Communion are not permitted in the Sanctuary.
6. Children under 12 years of age must be supervised at all times. If they are not participating in a group-supervised activity, it is the responsibility of their parents or guardians to ensure that they are not in danger of harming themselves, other children or the facilities. While it is not necessary that they be in constant sight, they should be checked on periodically.
7. Any group using the facilities must have a responsible person to ensure that things are cleaned up, lights are turned off and the doors are locked when the event is over.
8. All events must be coordinated with the church office to eliminate conflicts. In the event that a scheduled event is canceled, the office must be notified in case others wish to schedule an event for that time.

Membership

Persons may enter into active church membership in the following ways: by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or transfer of certificate from some other church.

When persons baptized as infants reach an age when they are ready to make public their profession of faith and accept their responsibility in the life of the church, the Session invites, encourages and will help them prepare for their responsibility as active church members. The age at which young persons should make such public profession is not precisely fixed. It is left to the prudence of the Session to judge, after careful examination, the readiness of those who apply for active membership.

When persons who have not been baptized desire to profess their faith in Christ and be incorporated in the life of the church as members, they shall do so by making public their profession of faith and receiving baptism after appropriate instruction and examination by the session.

Persons who have made a profession of faith and have been received into membership in another church may be received by the session upon receipt of a certificate of transfer from the church in which they have been most recently members.

Baptized member: A person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the Session but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Active member: A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, voluntarily submits to the government of the church, and participates in the church's work and worship on a regular basis.

Inactive member: A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, but who does not voluntarily submit to the government of the church, or participate in the church's work and worship on a regular basis.

Members who have not regularly attended worship services in the previous year will be contacted and encouraged to resume their attendance.

Those that chose not to do so and don't have a valid reason such as illness, disability, or military service, will be placed on the list of inactive members.

Baptism

Baptism is the Sacrament of the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ.

In Baptism, we participate in Jesus' death and resurrection.

In Baptism, the Holy Spirit binds the Church in covenant to its Creator and Lord.

The body of Christ is one, and Baptism is the bond of unity in Christ.

Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims.

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love.

Children of believers are to be baptized without undue delay, but without undue haste.

The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.

The Baptism of those who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness.

Baptism is received only once. As there is one body, there is one Baptism. The Presbyterian Church (USA) recognizes all Baptisms with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit administered by other Christian churches.

When a child is being presented for Baptism, ordinarily the parent(s) or one(s) rightly exercising parental responsibility shall be an active member of the congregation. The Session may also consider a request for the Baptism of a child from a Christian parent who is an active member of another congregation.

The Lord's Supper

Mt. Pleasant Church celebrates the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of every month.

The Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of the sign and seal of eating and drinking in communion with the crucified and risen Lord.

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized and who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love.

Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord's Supper, recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity.

In preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor, and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal.

Funerals

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

Mt. Pleasant desires to provide comfort and support including flowers and visitation for all members during their time of bereavement. In order for this to happen, please notify the church office whenever a family member dies. Don't assume that we know.

If you would like a dinner for the funeral party following the service, please contact the Church office.

Weddings

Mt. Pleasant Church supports the belief that the Christian wedding is an act of worship wherein a man and a woman come before God seeking his blessing on their union. Dignity, reverence, joy and especially love should characterize the preparation as well as the wedding service.

Mt. Pleasant Church has been blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and we desire to share it with those in our community who attend a church that does not meet their needs for a wedding ceremony. However Mt. Pleasant Church does not permit the sanctuary to be used as a "Wedding Chapel" by non-believers. While those who are not active members of Mt. Pleasant Church may hold a marriage service in our sanctuary, they must profess their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and should be active members in a Christian church or be willing to become active members of Mt. Pleasant Church prior to their wedding.

Those desiring to be married in Mt. Pleasant Church should contact the Wedding Coordinator through the Church office, who will give them the necessary information and arrange for a meeting with the minister to determine if it is appropriate for them to be married at Mt. Pleasant Church.

The complete wedding procedure is found in [Appendix A](#).

Hall Reservations

Mt. Pleasant permits the use of the fellowship hall for various activities that promote fellowship, such as wedding receptions, showers, birthday parties etc. Reservations for the use of the fellowship hall may be made **only by active members** of the church.

1. There is a nonrefundable fee of \$100.00 for active members. In addition there is a \$100.00 refundable cleaning fee. Both must be paid at least 2 weeks in advance.
2. Church groups wishing to reserve the hall for nonscheduled activities must reserve the hall by contacting the church office. Arrangements for individuals to rent the hall must be made through the church office.
3. The person reserving the hall is responsible for cleanup, adherence to rules, damages etc.
4. Those renting the hall and all their guests must obey all the general church rules.
5. Activities in the hall must be over by midnight.
6. The hall may not be used for commercial purposes other than fundraising by church groups.
7. Decorations may not be affixed by any means that will damage the walls.
8. Hall reservation does not include use of the sanctuary or any other part of the building excepting the entry hall and restrooms.
9. If dancing is proposed at the hall function, the active member seeking the use of the hall shall appear before session for an explanation of session's concerns.
10. Outside DJ's are not permitted.

Reservation	\$100.00
Cleaning Fee (Refundable)	\$100.00
Total	\$200.00

Fundraising

In order to finance the programs and activities of the church beyond that which can be accomplished with tithes and offerings, fundraising can be a significant addition.

Whenever possible fundraising should also advance other aspects of the church, such as fellowship and outreach. However fundraising should be kept entirely separate from worship (i.e. no appeals during the Sunday worship service).

Fundraising should offer those participating a fair value in goods or services for their money. For example washing cars for an amount comparable to that charged by a local carwash is acceptable, but selling items such as candy bars for several times what a similar item could be purchased for in a local store is not.

Fund raising should teach and emphasize productive work and the added value that it can provide rather than merely soliciting contributions. Donations to the church or its groups by outsiders, are acceptable and appreciated, but should never be coerced.

Gambling in the form of raffles, lotteries etc. is not good stewardship of what God has blessed one with and promotes reliance on chance or luck rather than on hard work and Gods providence and thus is not permitted for fundraising.

Door prizes or games of chance that do not require a purchase, and have prizes that are of little significant value are permitted.

All fundraising must be approved in advance by the Session.

Church Sign

1. The sign must have Sunday School and Worship services listed.
2. The sign is not to be used as a calendar for community events or non religious holidays.
3. No personal messages such as birthday's anniversaries etc. are to be posted on the sign.

Deacons

The congregation at the annual meeting chooses deacons. Qualifications as set forth in Scripture and the Constitution shall be the standard. The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, warm sympathies, and sound judgment should be chosen for this office.

It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. They shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them from time to time by the session.

The deacons shall be organized as a board with the pastor as an advisory member. The board should elect a moderator and a secretary from among its members.

As the whole church is under the jurisdiction of the session, the board of deacons shall be under its supervision and authority. This includes a joint annual meeting of both session and the board of deacons.

The board should meet regularly and shall meet at least quarterly.

Elders

The congregation at the annual meeting chooses elders. Qualifications as set forth in Scripture and the Constitution shall be the standard. Together with ministers of Word and Sacrament, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a particular church as well as the church at large, including ecumenical relationships.

They shall serve faithfully as members of the session. If elected as commissioners to higher governing bodies, elders participate with the same authority as ministers of Word and Sacrament.

In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, elders should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, good judgment and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and in the world.

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 assist in worship and cultivate their ability to teach the Bible. 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.

Appendix A: Wedding Procedure

1. The couple must contact the wedding coordinator for a copy of this procedure and arrange a meeting with the minister.
2. If neither partner is an active member of Mt. Pleasant, and they do not chose to join our congregation, the minister will contact their minister to determine their suitability for Christian marriage in our sanctuary and, if necessary, make the arrangements for conducting the marriage ceremony.
3. **All couples** married at Mt. Pleasant Church must complete a series of pre-marital counseling sessions prior to marriage. This is not optional.
4. There is a \$100.00 for members or \$200.00 nonrefundable deposit if neither partner is an active member of Mt. Pleasant. This payment must be made to the Wedding Coordinator **before** the plans for the wedding can proceed.
5. A nonrefundable payment of \$100.00 for the minister, \$50.00 for the organist, \$75.00 for the wedding coordinator, and \$50.00 for the custodian, a total of \$275.00 is due two weeks prior to the wedding date.
6. Use of the sanctuary for a wedding rehearsal is included in the fee. The officiating minister with assistance from the wedding coordinator will direct the rehearsal. The marriage license will be given to the minister at this time.
7. All parties are responsible for any damage including inordinate cleaning that results from their use of the sanctuary. Candles may be used, but the wedding party is responsible for any damage including wax drippings that they cause. This is in addition to the standard fee.
8. Decorations may not be attached to pews or walls with tape, staples, and tacks or in any way that can cause damage.
9. The wedding party and guests must obey all the general church rules.

	MEMBERS	NON MEMBERS
Hall Reservation	\$100.00	\$200
Minister	\$100.00	\$100.00
Organist	\$50.00	\$50.00
Coordinator	\$75.00	\$75.00
Custodian	\$50.00	\$50.00
Total	\$275.00	\$375.00

Appendix B: Presentation Guidelines

Guidelines for Individual or Group Presentations in the context of a worship service

1) Advanced planning.

If you desire to make a presentation for a mission trip or a testimonial of some kind, it is important to bring this desire to the pastor and worship committee as early as possible. Short notice is often not adequate to allow all of the pieces of the worship apparatus of the church to adjust as needed. If you desire a 2-5 minute block of time for a minute for mission type presentation, two full weeks of notice are required before such a time can be scheduled. If you would like to make a longer presentation (one that would last something more on the order of 20-30 minutes or more) you will need to consult with the pastor to find a time which will essentially stand in the place of the sermon. This could happen on a Sunday morning or on a Sunday evening, but will require significant advance planning (worship services are generally planned two months or more in advance). We would ask for a minimum of four to six weeks notice to plan for such a presentation, particularly for a Sunday morning worship service. Advanced planning is also necessary for any media presentations. It is important the audio-visual team have been contacted and have the opportunity to properly arrange these materials by at least the Wednesday prior to the scheduled presentation.

2) Time.

On the one hand, we should be open to limitless occasions of worship and praise. On the other hand, we are to worship in an orderly way, and we must respect those gathered to worship and be mindful of how what we do will affect others who have a part to play in the worship service. So, we should ask ourselves questions like:

- 1) How much time is allotted to me or to my group to make a presentation?
- 2) How do I need to plan in order to stay within these time parameters?
- 3) What is my place in the overall ordering of this worship service?

3) Content.

It is critical that we not “wing” a presentation. Great care should be exercised to consider exactly what it is that the Lord is calling us to say to his people on a given day. It is not fair to those gathered to simply improvise our thoughts, or to ramble. We should prayerfully and carefully organize our thoughts around a central theme, asking ourselves questions like these:

- 1) What did God teach me? How did he use me? What did I learn about him?
- 2) What one message do I have to share?
- 3) Are my thoughts clear and well organized? Can I summarize my message in just one sentence?
- 4) Is there a particular scripture that I should share with the people to lend authority to the message God has given to me?

4) Dos and Don'ts.

Don't: Give an itinerary (not interesting!) “On the first day the alarm clock went off at six. Then we got up...”

Do: Give thematic highlights. “God showed us that he wanted to teach us about provision. We were out of roofing nails and were feeling discouraged, but...”

Don't: Tell everyone's name (the congregation doesn't know these people and doesn't care about their names).

Do: Use names selectively – telling a particular story about an individual to highlight your central message or theme.

Don't: Show every picture you have taken.

Do: Use media selectively and creatively to advance your specific message.

Public speaking is a skill, to do it well takes planning and practice. If you need help organizing your thoughts, please speak to the pastor for help!

By Laws

PREAMBLE

The Mount Pleasant Church of Raccoon Township, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, being a particular congregation of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., recognizes the Constitution of said church is in all its provisions obligatory upon it and its members. The church will be referred to henceforth as the congregation/corporation.

ARTICLE I. MEETINGS

Section 1.01. *Meetings of the Congregation/Corporation.* The congregation/corporation shall hold an annual meeting in February. The annual meeting will consider all congregation/corporation business that is appropriate to such a meeting.

A Congregational/Corporation meeting shall also be held in October to hear the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect new officers. This will enable newly elected officers to attend Officer Training Classes prior to taking office in January. The Minister's terms of call will also be evaluated at this meeting.

Section 1.02. *Calling of Meetings.* Special meetings of the congregation/corporation shall be called:

- a. By the Session whenever it determines such a meeting necessary.
- b. By the Presbytery whenever it determines such a meeting is necessary.
- c. By the Session when requested in writing by one fourth of the members on the active roll of the particular church.

Public notice of the meeting shall be given on two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting. The business to be transacted shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting.

Section 1.03. *Place of Meetings.* All meetings shall be held in the church building of the congregation/corporation unless it is not available. In such an event, the place of the meeting shall be in the Township of Raccoon as designated by the Session and stated in the notice of the meeting.

- Section 1.04. *Organization of Meetings.* The Moderator of Session shall preside, and the Clerk of Session shall act as secretary. In the absence of the Clerk of Session, the congregation/corporation shall elect a secretary. In the event an ordained minister cannot be obtained, the Session shall appoint one of its members as moderator.
- Section 1.05. *Quorum.* The quorum of a meeting of the congregation/corporation shall be as follows: If the number of members is one hundred or less, one fourth of the members; or if the number of members is more than one hundred, twenty-five members, or one tenth of the members, whichever is greater.
- Section 1.06. *Procedure.* All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer and shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE II. OFFICERS

- Section 2.01. *Qualifications of Officers.* Only active members as defined in the Book of Order shall qualify as officers. Qualifications as set forth in Scripture and the Constitution shall be the standard.
- Section 2.02. *Designation.* Officers of the congregation are Ministers, Elders, and Deacons. The Trustees are officers of the corporation.
- Section 2.03. *Ministers.* The Minister shall be a member ex-officio of each congregational committee. The Minister shall act as moderator of the Session.
- Section 2.04. *Elders.* The Minister and nine (9) Elders shall constitute the Session. The Session shall carry out all of the governmental responsibilities of the congregation/corporation as set forth in the Constitution.
- Section 2.05. *Deacons.* The Board of Deacons shall consist of nine (9) members. They shall assume such duties as may be delegated to them by the Session. Their powers and duties shall not be limited by anyone except the Session. The Deacons shall make reports of their actions directly to the Session as Session asks for such reports.
- Section 2.06. *Terms.* No Elder or Deacon shall be elected for a term of more than three (3) consecutive years, nor shall an Elder or Deacon serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. An Elder or Deacon having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for re-election for a period of at least one year.

- Section 2.07. *Trustees.* The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) current Session members including the Clerk of Session and shall be responsible as the congregation/corporation's legal representatives in its civil relations and shall conduct its legal affairs. The Session shall designate the Trustees annually. The Clerk of Session shall be designated the Secretary of the Corporation. The remaining two Trustees shall be designated the President and Vice-President of the Corporation.
- Section 2.08. *Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall be designated annually by the Session. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all funds and shall perform other financial responsibilities on behalf of the congregation/corporation as directed by the Session.

ARTICLE III. COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHICH ARE ELECTED BY THE CONGREGATION

- Section 3.01. *Nominating Committee.* The nominating committee shall be composed of at least four (4) representatives from the active membership of the congregation/corporation elected at the October congregational/corporation meeting for a term of one year. Their respective boards shall appoint two representatives from the Session, and one representative from the Deacons. No member of the nominating committee shall serve more than three years consecutively. The slate of nominees, together with nominations from the floor, shall be voted upon at the October congregational/corporation meeting.
- Section 3.02. *Budget Committee.* The Budget Committee shall be composed of three (3) representatives from the congregation/corporation to be elected at the October congregational/corporation meeting for a term of one year, along with the Treasurer, and one (1) representative from the Session. The Budget Committee shall present a realistic budget (considering last year's expenditures) to the Session for its amendment and approval in November. The budget is then to be presented to the congregation/corporation at the annual congregational/corporation meeting in February. The proposed budget can only be changed by the Session. No member of the Budget Committee shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- Section 3.03. *Auditing Committee.* Committee members should be versed in accounting procedures, and should not be related to the Treasurer. The Auditing Committee shall be composed of three (3) members elected from the congregation/corporation at the October congregational/corporation meeting. This committee shall be responsible to audit all records of the Treasurer (except for the individual giving records), and any other books and records the Session assigns to them.

The committee shall submit a report to the congregation/corporation at the annual congregational/corporation meeting in February. No member of the Auditing Committee shall serve more than three years consecutively.

ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATIONS

Section 4.01. *The Sunday School.* The Sunday School shall be under the control and direction of the Session. All Sunday School superintendents and other officers shall be responsible directly to the Session. The Session shall approve all those who wish to be Sunday School teachers.

Section 4.02. *Other Organizations.* Such other organizations as the Session shall approve may be formed in the congregation/corporation and shall exist as long as the Session deems they promote the purpose of the congregation/corporation. All organizations shall report to the Session or at the annual congregational/corporation meeting all financial holdings as well as the past functions of the organization.

Section 4.03. *Use of the Building.* Regularly scheduled events (monthly or weekly meetings) need no further approval. All organizations shall get approval from the Session for the use of the church buildings for special events. In order to avoid potential conflicts, all events must be scheduled through the church office. If an event is canceled the church office must be notified as soon as possible in case another group wished to use the building at that time.

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS

Section 5.01. *Changes.* Any changes to these by-laws can be made in the form of amendments, repeals, or additions that are approved at a congregational/corporation meeting. Such intended change or changes shall be announced on the two Sundays prior to the meeting at which the proposed action is to be taken. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership present shall be required.

Revised 11/19/87
Revised 11/10/91
Revised 10/06/02

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