

*Supplemental Resources for Salem Presbytery*

**New Form of Government  
What does it mean for Congregations?**

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(Advice from the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta)  
Acting Stated Clerk, Donna Wells

I have tried to put together a document that will help you as a congregation. This document hopes to outline the changes to the Book of Order that will affect you as well as the things that essentially remain the same. This is not exhaustive, but will hopefully provide you with some guidance. I have tried to reference the old citations with the new citations.

The general sense is that the new book is more flexible regarding numbers for quorums, committees, delegates and time lines. Because the new book does not designate specifics, it **will be necessary** for each congregation to look at your existing bylaws and determine if things need to be rewritten. If your present bylaws defer to the Book of Order, you will have to rewrite your bylaws. A point to remember is that the congregation must meet to approve any changes to your bylaws. If you presently do not have any bylaws, you will need to create some. I also suggest (if you do not presently have any by-laws) you call for a congregational meeting and adopt the old Book of Order guidelines until you have had an opportunity to study and reflect how you wish to go forward...this way, you have something that everyone is used to in effect for this transitional period.

The last word is that I highly encourage congregations to begin working quickly, in order to get procedures established. It is not necessary to approve the entire work at once but you can approve pieces of bylaws as you go along. As indicated in the attached FAQ from the General Assembly, your present by-laws are still in force until you make the changes. If you do NOT presently have any bylaws that address quorums, etc, I suggest you call for a congregational meeting and adopt the old Book of Order guidelines until you have had an opportunity to study and reflect how you wish to go forward...this way, you have something that everyone is used to in effect for this transitional period.

This may feel like a very cumbersome process!! But it is a very important one. Rule of thumb...keep it simple if possible.

Attached are two charts: One New Form of Government highlighting “Changes” and another New Form of Government highlighting “No Changes” These may be helpful as you work through the process.