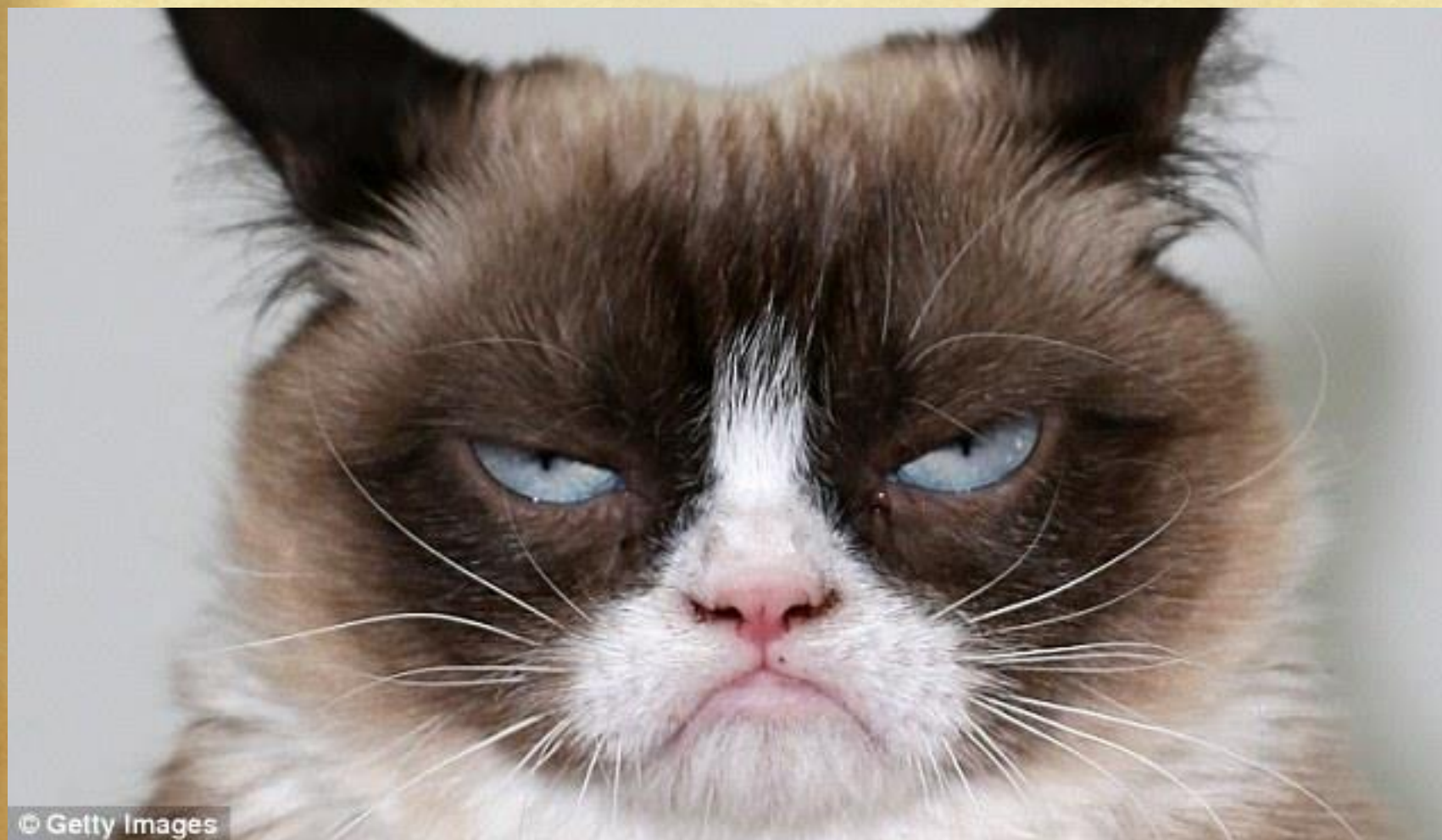


Clerk of Session Training

*Donegal Presbytery: Leadership Development Day
February 2017*



We live in an era of intense conflict and massive institutional failures, a time of painful endings and of hopeful beginnings. It is a time that feels as if something profound is shifting and dying while something else, as the playwright and Czech president, Vaclav Havel, puts it, wants to be born, “I think there are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has ended. Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is being painfully born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying, and exhausting itself – while something else, still indistinct, were rising from the rubble.”

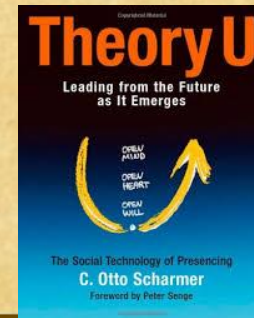
Otto Scharmer, Theory U, pg. 1



The crisis of our time isn't just a crisis of a single leader, organization, country, or conflict. The crisis of our time reveals the dying of an old social structure and way of thinking, an old way of institutionalizing and enacting social forms.

Frontline practitioners – managers, teachers, nurses, physicians, laborers, mayors, entrepreneurs, farmers, and business and government leaders – share a sense of the current reality. They can feel the heat of an ever-increasing workload and the pressure to do more. Many describe this as running on a treadmill or spinning in a hamster wheel.

Otto Scharmer, Theory U, pg. 2



F-1.02 JESUS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH

F-1.0201 The Authority of Christ

Almighty God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, has given to him all power in heaven and on earth, not only in this age but also in the age to come. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body. The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work.

F-1.0202 Christ Calls and Equips the Church

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.



4.001

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

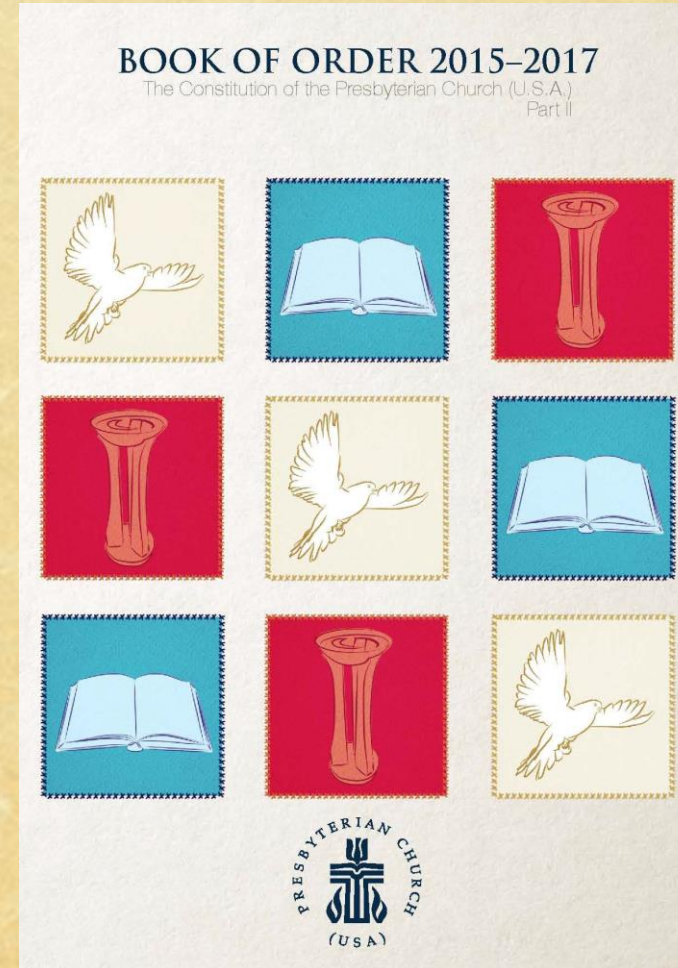
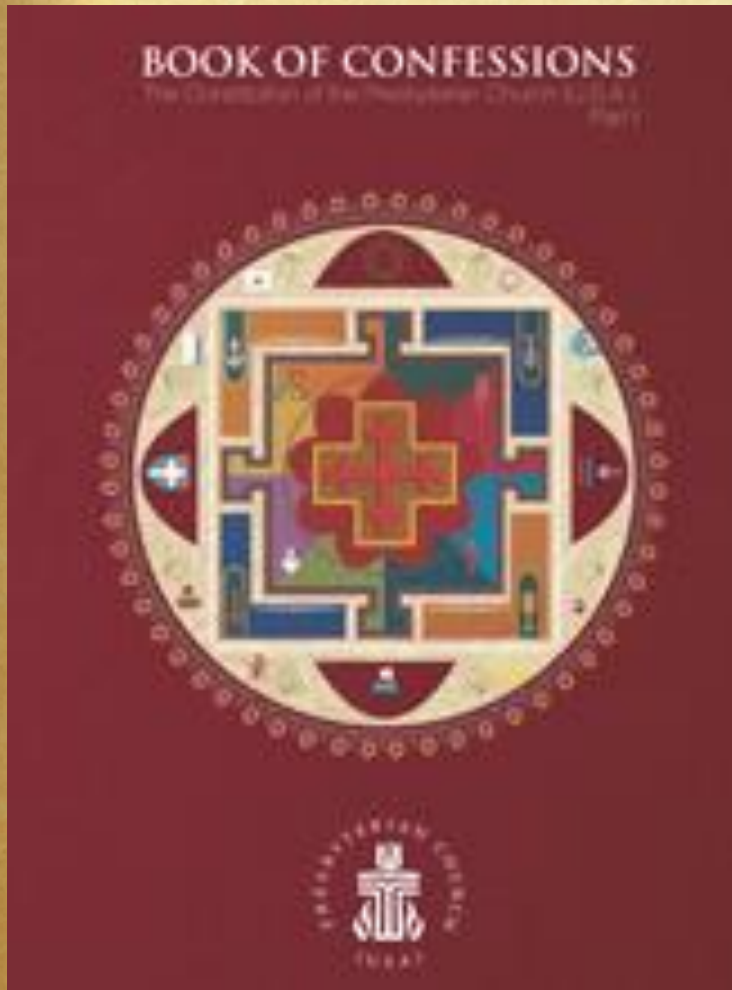
Heidelberg Catechism, Question 1



Welcome and Introductions

- ♦ Have you previously, or are you currently serving as a Clerk of Session?
- ♦ How would you define the work of the Clerk of Session?
- ♦ What questions do you have walking into this training today?

Intro to Book of Confessions, Book of Order



BOOK OF ORDER

The Constitution of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

BOOK OF ORDER

The Constitution of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Part II

2011 / 2013

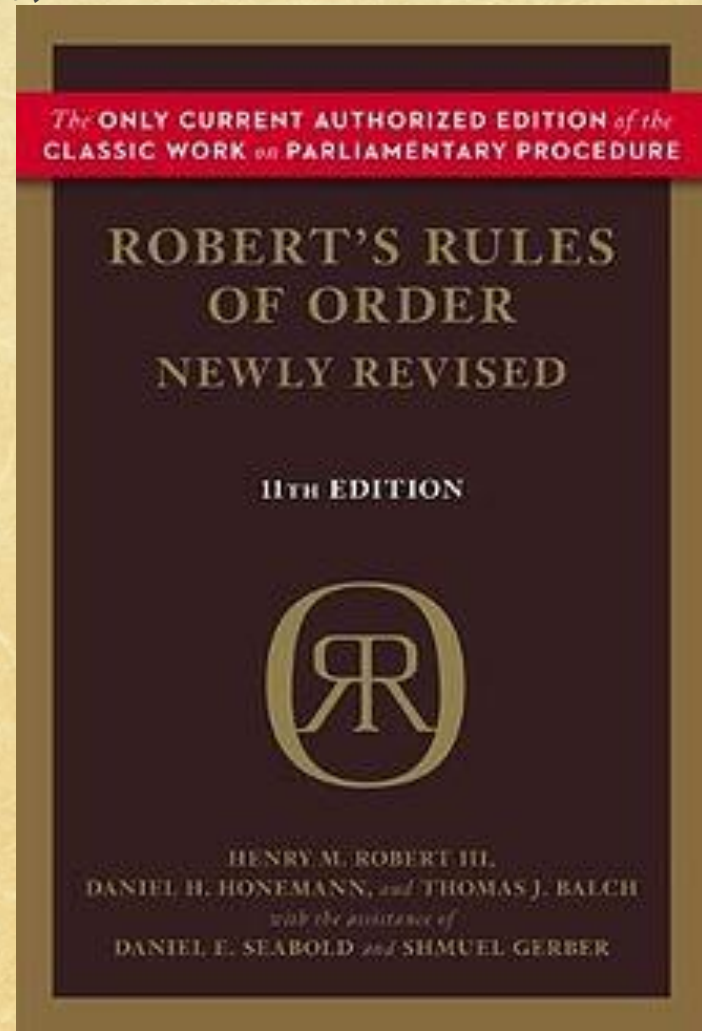
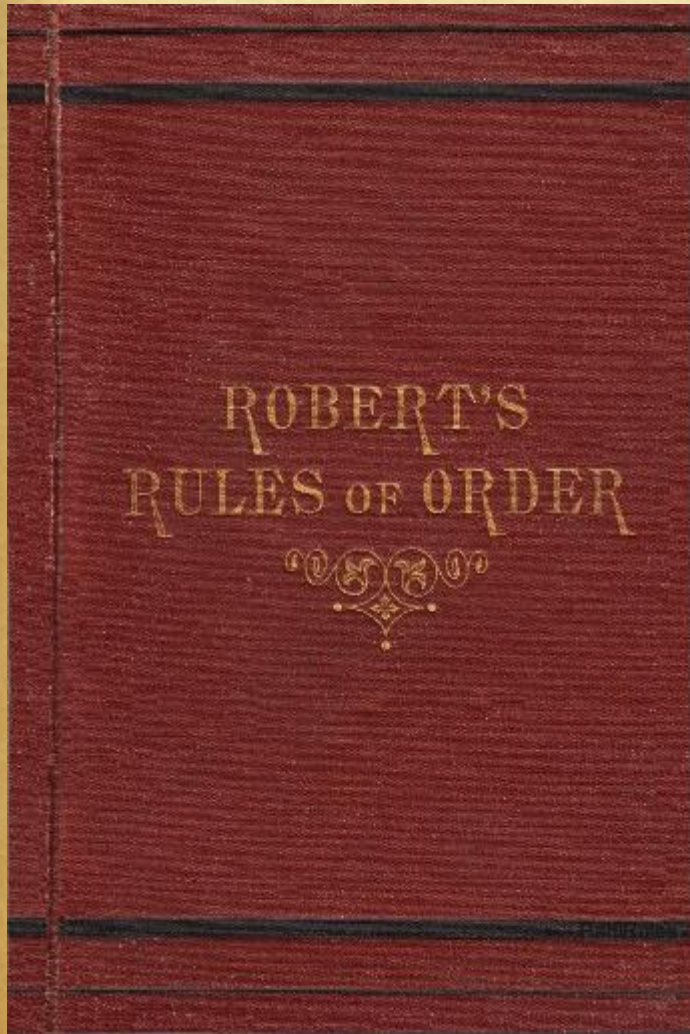
BOOK OF CONFESSIONS

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Part I



Intro to Robert's Rules

(G-3.0105)



What do Clerks of Session Do?

- ♦ Maintain the records of the Church (G-3.0107)
 - ♦ Session Minutes (G-3.0204)
 - ♦ Congregational Meeting Minutes (G-1.0505)
 - ♦ Rolls and Registers (G-3.0204a,b)
 - ♦ Manual of Administrative Operations (G-3.0106)
 - ♦ Sexual Misconduct Policy and Child Protection Policy (G-3.0106)
- ♦ Keep this information secure and readily available for use by:
 - ♦ The Pastor (G-3.0201)
 - ♦ Higher Councils of the Church (G-3.0202)

What Else Do You Do?

- ♦ Preserve the records of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees
- ♦ Inform the Session and Congregation of Special Meetings
- ♦ Complete the Annual Statistical Form
- ♦ Bring all official correspondence to the attention of the Session and Pastor
- ♦ Respond to questions of parliamentary procedure
- ♦ Communicate with other governing bodies
- ♦ Assist in creating the agenda for Session meetings
- ♦ Assist in church officer training
- ♦ Remind moderator of required annual actions of the Session
- ♦ Prepare a statement of Session highlights for the newsletter
- ♦ Other duties as assigned.

Where to Focus?

- ♦ The Session Minutes
- ♦ The Congregational Meeting
- ♦ The Keeping of Rolls and Registers
- ♦ Manual of Administrative Operations
- ♦ Child Misconduct Policy
- ♦ Sexual Misconduct Policy
- ♦ Required annual actions – who and how?

Session Minutes

- ♦ Nuts and Bolts of the Session Minutes
 - ♦ Clerk takes notes at the meeting
 - ♦ Clerk types up minutes based on the notes
 - ♦ Clerk distributes minutes to the Session members
 - ♦ The minutes are corrected and/or approved at the next Session meeting



Guidelines for Session Minutes

- ♦ Each clerk must use her or his own best discretion about what and how much information is included in the minutes.
- ♦ The goal is to produce an accurate, informative record of proceedings which can be of use to the congregation, other councils of the Church, and generations that will follow after us.
- ♦ All motions, even those that fail, are to be recorded in the Session Minutes.
- ♦ Discussion, unless imperative to the understanding of the decision, is not to be included, nor are the names of those seconding motions.

Guidelines for Session Minutes

- ♦ Of particular importance is the keeping of any records related to the hiring, compensation, evaluation, disciplining, or termination of any non-ordained staff
- ♦ It is also important to cross reference past actions of the Session when they are referenced in the minutes. Any reference to the Session's past action should include a date of that action's occurrence or a reference to a page number in the permanent minute book.
- ♦ It is very important to familiarize yourself with the procedures and practice of taking good minutes. Your work will be subject to review annually, but more than this, your responsibility is critical to the story of our congregations, and the continuing ministry of our Church.

Preservation of Minutes

- ♦ Electronic means of preservation are unacceptable due to the inability to attest by signature their accuracy, and because of a lack of any permanent archival electronic format. This is changing as “PDF/A” becomes accepted for archiving.
- ♦ Records are to be preserved by use of a laser printer or copier on acid free paper, or on microfilm.
- ♦ Presbyterian Historical Society is a great resource – <http://www.history.pcusa.org/>

Case Study #1

- ♦ In the Presbyterian Church at Ritov Center, Indiana, a vacancy occurred on the session when John Movinonup was transferred to Big City. John's term had two more years to run. At the next stated meeting of the session, the elders elected Bill Goodfellow to fill out the remainder of John's term.
- ♦ Was this proper?

Congregational Meetings

- ♦ Signed minutes of all congregational meetings shall be included in the session record book along with session minutes in one chronological order.
- ♦ Types of congregational meetings:
 - ♦ Regular
 - ♦ Special
 - ♦ Rolling
- ♦ Items for inclusion in meeting minutes

Case Study #2

- ♦ At a meeting of the congregation of the St. Calvin Presbyterian Church called for the purpose of electing officers, the chair of the Nominating Committee presented its slate. The moderator routinely called for nominations from the floor and, to her surprise, heard two. She declared that these additional nominations were out of order since the people had not been contacted prior to the meeting and thus had not agreed to serve. Her ruling was challenged and she was overruled by the congregation. The election proceeded, and one of the two additional nominees was elected.
- ♦ Was this handled rightly?

Rolls

- ♦ The Rolls of the church should contain information about those who are members of the local church. It is the responsibility of the Clerk of Session to maintain, or to oversee the maintenance of the Rolls as required in G-3.0204a. Names of members shall be placed upon, removed, or deleted from the rolls of the church only by order of the Session (G-3.0204a).
- ♦ Active members
- ♦ Baptized members
- ♦ Affiliate members

Active Member

- ♦ One who has:
 - ♦ made a profession of faith in Christ
 - ♦ has been baptized
 - ♦ has been received into membership of the church
 - ♦ has voluntarily submitted to the government of the particular church
 - ♦ and participates in the church's work and worship.

Baptized Member

- ♦ One who has:
 - ♦ received the Sacrament of Baptism
 - ♦ but has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.



Affiliate member

- ♦ One who is:
 - ♦ an active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body
 - ♦ who has temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is located.

What about “inactive members?”

- ♦ This used to be a Book of Order category.
- ♦ What options do you have?
- ♦ What questions do you have?

Registers

- ♦ Registers are historical records and need to be carefully maintained.
- ♦ It is the responsibility of the clerk of session to maintain or oversee the maintenance of registers as required in G-3.014 which says it is the duty of the Clerk to “maintain all required registers” (which would include “baptisms authorized by the session, ruling elders and deacons, installed pastors with dates of service and such other registers as the session may deem necessary”) G-3.0204.

Most Sessions Maintain the Following Registers

- ♦ Marriages
- ♦ Baptisms
- ♦ Elders
- ♦ Deacons
- ♦ Pastors



Case Study #3

- ♦ A gentleman who is a lifelong member of your church and a resident of your community chooses to attend another Presbyterian church with his daughter. He attends and participates faithfully at the other church, however, he wants to remain on the rolls of your church and be an affiliate member of the church of his daughter.
- ♦ What would your response to this person be?

Manual of Administrative Operations

- ♦ A great place to take care of the “hit by a bus worry.”
- ♦ Wonderful way to train incoming officers
- ♦ An opportunity to talk about “what do we do?” and “why do we do it that way?”

Annual Actions

- ♦ Wow there is a lot to do!
- ♦ What is it?
- ♦ What's missing?
- ♦ Who helps?

And the rest...

- ♦ Liability Insurance (G-3.0112)
- ♦ Property Insurance (G-3.0112)
- ♦ Sexual Misconduct Policy (G-3.0106)
- ♦ Child (and Youth) Protection Policy (G-3.0106)

Human Resources

- ♦ We are here to help!
 - ♦ Erin Cox- Holmes, Executive Presbyter
 - ♦ Michael Wilson, Stated Clerk
 - ♦ Sarah Kneier, Assistant Stated Clerk
 - ♦ Scott Szabo, Assistant Stated Clerk

Information Resources

- ♦ <http://www.donegalpby.org/docs-forms/clerks-of-session/>
- ♦ <http://www.history.pcusa.org/services/records-management/records-congregations>
- ♦ <http://www.donegalpby.org/docs-forms/policies-procedures/childyouth-policies-mandatory-reporting-information/>
- ♦ <http://www.donegalpby.org/docs-forms/policies-procedures/sexual-misconduct-prevention/>
- ♦ <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2016/1/15/regarding-ruling-elders-ruling-elders-and-clerks/>

Questions?

- ♦ Thank you!
- ♦ What will help you function best?