



The Presbytery of Nevada

Synod of the Pacific Presbyterian Church (USA)

Call for a Meeting of Nevada Presbytery

A regular meeting of the Presbytery of Nevada has been called for **March 18–19, 2025**, at **Henderson United Presbyterian Church**, Henderson, Nevada as determined by stated clerk **Christy Ramsey** and council chair **Peggy Hall**.

Details will be posted on nevadapresbytery.org as they become available. **Registration, meal reservations, hotel information, and proposed amendments to the Book of Order are available now.**

Included in this call are proposed standing rule changes and a policy addition.

STANDING RULE PROPOSALS

These standing rule changes will be reviewed at our March meeting. The current wording is in black, new additions are in red, and removed text is crossed out.

5.0203 Between Stated Meetings, presbytery has authorized the Committee to review Calls issued by churches, approve and present Calls for service of Teaching Elders, approve the examination of ministers transferring from other presbyteries, dissolve pastoral relationships in cases where the congregation and the Pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the presbytery, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries.

The Committee is also authorized to modify, dissolve, or move between congregations or validated ministries the commission of those currently serving as Commissioned Ruling Elders when the Commissioned Ruling Elder and congregation or validated ministry concur. with the provision that

[A]ll such actions be reported to the next ~~Stated~~ meeting of presbytery.

7.0000 Permanent Judicial Commission

~~7.0100 The composition and duties are those dictated by the Book of Order and Presbytery Policy.~~

The Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) shall consist of nine (9) members. Three (3) members shall be elected at a Presbytery meeting held in odd-numbered years, with elections occurring every two years. The Nominating Committee will present nominations, with the floor open for additional nominations.

- 7.0001 **Balance of Representation** -The PJC shall strive to maintain an equal representation of Ruling Elders and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
- 7.0002 **Filling Vacancies** If a vacancy occurs, the Moderator may appoint a temporary member to serve until the next Presbytery meeting, where the appointment can be affirmed or a new member elected.
- 7.0100 **Annual Meeting and Officer Elections** The PJC shall hold an annual meeting to elect the following officers: Moderator, vice-moderator, clerk, and assistant clerk. In the absence of the Moderator or clerk, the vice-moderator and assistant clerk shall perform their respective duties.
- 7.0101 **Response Committee Appointment** Annually, during the annual PJC meeting, the Moderator shall appoint a response committee, typically composed of one current PJC member and two former PJC members selected from the roster of former PJC members.
- 7.0200 **Book of Order Compliance** -The PJC's composition and duties shall follow the Book of Order and Presbytery policy, including appointing a special investigating committee when necessary. In cases of conflict, the Book of Order shall take precedence over these by-laws.

POLICY ADDITION

Each year, council reviews and revises policies as needed to ensure we remain faithful and effective in our work. This year's review results can be found in the stated clerk's report under council actions, which are official actions of the Presbytery of Nevada. These updates are also reflected in the latest edition of the *Manual of Administrative Operations*.

When a completely new policy is needed, it is our practice to defer final adoption to the presbytery. This year, the presbytery will consider adding a **Youth Protection Policy**, which has been required by the PC(USA) since 2014. We are incredibly grateful to Elder Jean Rey for her diligent work on this and other essential policies.

If adopted, this policy will bring the Presbytery of Nevada into compliance with the *Book of Order* for the first time in a decade. For congregations without a youth protection policy, we strongly commend this policy for your consideration. It is not only required by the PC(USA) but is also likely required by your insurance provider. We encourage congregations to check with their insurance agent to ensure they meet specific coverage requirements.

Thank you for your faithful service and attention to these important matters.

PROPOSED POLICY 28 YOUTH PROTECTION IS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Proposed POLICY 28 CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and youth entrusted to our care. Presbytery of Nevada adopts the policy and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent child abuse from occurring within the community, but also to guide and protect volunteers and employees from false allegations of child abuse.

Terms and Definitions

Child abuse – An act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust which is not accidental and which harms or threatens harm to a child's physical or mental health or welfare. Types of abuse may include physical abuse, including physical injury or threat of injury; physical neglect, such as failure to provide necessary care to a child; sexual abuse; mental abuse or neglect; emotional abuse; and spiritual abuse. Specifically, child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

Neglect of Basic Needs – A form of abuse. Denial of food, water, cleanliness, clothing, and sleep are not appropriate means of discipline.

Physical Abuse – Physical force applied by an adult or older youth in a position of care or authority to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Physical force (hitting, spanking, shaking, shoving, etc.) shall not be used by leaders in our programs.

Sexual Abuse – Any sexual contact or sexual interaction between a child (under the age of 18 years) and an adult; any use of a child for the sexual stimulation of an adult or a third person, or the child; any risqué jokes, innuendo, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome casual touch, unwelcome or inappropriate hugs and kisses, and sexually suggestive pictures between an adult and a child, as deemed inappropriate by any reasonable adult. Even if a child, youth, out of ignorance, innocence, or fear, does not resist, it is still abuse.

Emotional Abuse – Inappropriately belittling, hateful, or angry words and/or actions directed toward a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Discipline by humiliation is also emotional abuse.

Spiritual Abuse – Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a child into a particular action or behavior.

Employee – Any person who works for salary or wages.

Volunteer – Any person not employed who, at any time during the year, teaches, supervises, or helps with children and youth activities.

Leader – An adult designated by Presbytery of Nevada to have responsibility for children and/or youth. The adult must be a minimum of 18 years of age. Leaders of overnight trips must be at least 21 years of age. It is recommended that leaders be a minimum of four years older than the children or youth they are supervising.

Sponsored Activity - Includes all gatherings that arise from any worship, educational, childcare, fellowship, administrative, pastoral, mission, or recreational event generated or organized by Presbytery of Nevada.

Volunteer Ministry – Includes any Presbytery of Nevada sponsored activity engaged in by a volunteer.
Child or Youth – Persons under 18 years old and considered a minor under the law. This term shall also include individuals over the age of 18 with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Screening: Background Requirements

- Applicants for full-time or part-time paid employment are required to provide, complete, or undergo the following:
- An Employment Application, which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes.
- A reference check covering, where possible, the two immediate past employers, or personal references unrelated to the applicant if no information can be obtained from past employers.
- Prior to hiring an applicant, a background check report for that individual from the State of Nevada, State of California, or the state they are coming from will be obtained. After employment, periodic checks will be completed.
- Each new employee will be provided with orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.
- Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of, or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of, child abuse or neglect cannot be employed.

All documents related to background checks are considered confidential and will be securely maintained by the Stated Clerk per the Book of Order.

Volunteers: Background Requirements

- Volunteers working with youth or children in any volunteer ministry are required to provide, complete, or undergo the following:
- Prior to becoming a volunteer, volunteers will provide needed information and permission for a background check. Background checks will be completed every year for volunteers.
- Each new volunteer will be provided orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention, as well as on the terms and conditions of this policy.
- Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of, or pending proceeding related to, an allegation of child abuse or neglect will not be allowed to work with children and youth. Refusal to complete the volunteering process will automatically disqualify an individual from volunteer service with children and youth.

All documents related to background checks are confidential and will be securely maintained by the Stated Clerk per the Book of Order.

Training

Within thirty-six (36) months of completion of the initial Boundary Training, all members of the Presbytery of Nevada are required to complete updated/review training. Tracking fulfillment of initial and subsequent training will be reported to the office of the Stated Clerk per the Book of Order and the Procedures and Policies of the Presbytery of Nevada.

Supervision: Two-Leader/Open-Door Policy

- *Two Adult Rule:* To the greatest extent possible, the presence of two unrelated employees and/or volunteers are required when ministry activities involve contact with, or supervising, children.
- *Open Door Policy:* Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while people are inside the room unless for experiencing an emergency or emergency drill with procedures that dictate otherwise.

Parental/Guardian Consent

- Children and youth shall obtain parental or guardian permission to participate in Presbytery of Nevada activities or programs that involve travel.

Activity Release Policy

- All children will only be released to a parent, guardian, or designated custodian, unless a signed waiver has been received.

Administration

- The Child and Youth Protection Policy shall be administered by the Stated Clerk.

Policy Review

- The Policy shall be reviewed per the Book of Order.

Parental Notification

- If an incident occurs on church property during a church-sponsored event, the parents of any minor involved in any allegation of abuse shall be immediately notified.

Response to Allegations

- Upon the receipt of any report of potential or alleged child abuse by an employee or volunteer, the individual accused of such conduct shall be temporarily relieved of any duties involving youth or children pending an appropriate investigation. An allegation of abuse/misconduct would result in suspension with pay of the employee, or suspension of volunteer, pending results of investigation. If the investigation reveals no abuse or misconduct, the person accused will be reinstated in good standing. An employee/volunteer will be immediately terminated if the investigation reveals abuse or misconduct. An employee may appeal to the Stated Clerk which, after review, will make a final, binding decision. Church officials shall follow procedures outlined in the Principles of Church Discipline, D-10.0000 et seq. (Book of Order).

Off-Site Trips and Events Permission

- Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms are required prior to all trips for youth and children. The two-adult rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances will one adult be allowed to be alone when taking, transporting, or accompanying minors on an overnight outing.

Rooming Arrangements

- Rooming arrangements should provide for children and youth of the same sex to room together and adults of the same sex to room together.
- When possible, adults' rooms shall be next to youth rooms, and youth may be checked on during the night.
- Ordinarily, adults should not share rooms with children. An individual minor may share a room with an individual adult if the two are related (parent/child), or if written permission has been granted prior to the event by a parent or guardian (in such cases as Intergenerational Mission Trips).
- In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, two adults of the same sex shall accompany children or youth of the same sex.

Medical

- Each child, youth, adult volunteer, and staff must submit a completed medical/insurance form for trips away from the church building and grounds. Each minor's form must have a parent or guardian's signature.
- Whenever possible, all activities with children and youth shall have a staff or volunteer adult leader with current-certification CPR training.
- Group leaders shall have a copy of all medical forms for overnight or off-site events. These forms will be kept on the event site for the duration of the event.
- First Aid supplies will be available on the event site. All workers will be informed of the location of First Aid supplies/equipment and shall have access to information concerning specific medical conditions and concerns of participants.
- A written report will be completed in case of any accident, medical emergency, or injury.

Driving Rules/Travel

- Drivers of children and youth should be over 21 years of age.
- When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-leader rule still applies unless parental permission is obtained prior to the trip. When several vehicles are taken for an event and two leaders are not available for every vehicle, keeping the other vehicle in sight at regular intervals is an acceptable substitution for the two-leader rule.
- A valid driver's license and proof of insurance is required for all drivers.
- All vehicles should remain parked throughout the duration of the activity except for transporting children and/or obtaining supplies.
- Seat belts shall be worn by all vehicle occupants.

Reporting

Any individual having a reasonable suspicion or knowledge that abuse has occurred is legally obligated to report it immediately.

- "In accordance with Nevada Child Welfare & Child Protection Services, The Nevada Revised Statute, Chapter 432B, Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect (Nevada Division of Child and Family Services) and California Child Protection Services, The California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting ACT (CANRA) can be found in California Penal Code Sections 11164 - 11174.3
- Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child may be subjected to abuse or neglect is legally required to report all information regarding the incident to the NV-DCFS or CA-CPC.
- In Nevada, failure to report child abuse or neglect is a criminal offense. A first violation is a misdemeanor offense, while subsequent offenses are gross misdemeanors. Mandatory reporting

of child abuse and neglect is required by law in Nevada. Failure to report could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment and possible criminal charges

- In California, failure to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect as required by this section is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months confinement in a county jail or by a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by both imprisonment and fine.
- “In accordance with state law, anyone acting pursuant to this Act in making a report in good faith shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such person shall have the same immunity with respect to testimony given in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.
- The individual reporting shall immediately report the suspicion to the Stated Clerk, in addition to reporting the incident to the correct state agency. If the alleged offender is an employee of the Presbytery of Nevada, the report shall be made to the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and the Stated Clerk. If alleged offender is a pastor, a report must be made to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Nevada.
- In each case of alleged child abuse, the Stated Clerk shall contact and involve Presbytery of Nevada’s liability carrier and verify that the correct agency has been notified and that proper documentation of the allegations and the proceedings is maintained.
- The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining contact with the agency that the report was made to. and with all individuals and/or families involved. Additionally, the Stated Clerk shall speak on behalf of the Presbytery of Nevada in the event an allegation requires speaking to the community.
- Reports must be made immediately, or as soon as possible, by phone. A written report must be forwarded within 36 hours of receiving the information regarding the incident (PC 11166[a]). The written report must be submitted on a Department of Justice form (SS 8572), Forms can be obtained from your local police or sheriff’s department (not including a school district police or security department) or a county welfare department (PC 11168).

TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE IN NEVADA:

Statewide Crisis Hotline: 1-800-992-5757

Carson City Hotline: 1-775-687-4943

Clark County Hotline: 1-702-399-0081

Elko Hotline: 1-775-753-1300 Washoe County Hotline: 1-775-784-8090

Fallon Hotline: 1-775-423-8566

TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE IN CALIFORNIA:

Eldorado County – 530-573-3201

Nevada County – 530-273-4291 (24hrs)

Momo County – 760-924-1770

800-340-5411 Hotline

Lassen County – 530-251-8177

530-260-8131 after hours

For more information please visit:

<https://www.dcf.state.nv.us/>

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/reporting>

What happens when I call the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline?

The hotline is answered by trained caseworkers who know how to respond to reports of child abuse/neglect. This caseworker may ask you about:

Who: The child and parent/caregiver's name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person's relationship to the child

What: Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.

When: When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.

Where: Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.

How: How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.

What happens after I make the call?

When a report indicates that a child may be at risk, the Nevada Child Welfare and Child Protection Services/California Child Protective Services will promptly investigate the allegations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

Appendix A:

A Vision for Children and the Church Adopted by the 205th General Assembly, 1993

Because we affirm that all children are a gift of God, created by God and created good;

all children are a gift to the whole of the human community;

all children have a real faith, and gifts for ministry;

all children have the right to be children;

and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today;

Because we believe that all children depend upon adults for safety and security in a world that does not always value children;

all children are affected first and most deeply by those things that work against health and wholeness;

where there is disease, children sicken and die;

where there is homelessness, children sleep on the streets and in other dangerous places;

where there is war, children are frightened and without a safe place;

where their air and water are polluted, children feel the effect in their bodies and on their futures; where

there is shame, children's spirits are wounded.

Therefore, we hope for a world where all children can find a safe place.

where all ages, races, genders, creeds, and abilities are recognized, valued, and celebrated;

where all adults hear the voices of children and speak with as well as for them;

where all children have "first call" on the world's resources and first place in the minds and hearts of the world's adults.

Because Jesus welcomed children and encouraged us to welcome them in his name; Jesus lifted up a child as an example of what the realm of God is like;

Therefore, we hope for a church where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children committed to our care;

where we bring good news to all those places where children are in need;

where adults and children alike share in ministry.

We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children, now and in times to come.

Resources: State of Nevada Child Welfare and Child Protection Services
State of California Child Protection Services

**Bible Fellowship Child Protection Policy
Camp Safe Writing A Child Protection Policy
205th General Assembly 1993**

Acknowledgment of Child and Youth Protection Policy

This is to acknowledge that I have read and understand the Child and Youth Protection Policy of the Presbytery of Nevada.

Printed Name

Date

Signature