

2.0 The ECO Presbytery of Texas is shaped by ECO Polity

In ECO polity, the role of the presbytery is to support, encourage, and be a resource for local congregations to pursue their Kingdom purposes.

ECO presbyteries are designed to be flexible and to cultivate connection and community among member churches.

2.0101 The Mission, Responsibilities, and Tasks of Presbyteries under ECO Polity

The following are selections taken directly from ECO Polity that define and mandate the mission, responsibilities, and tasks of an ECO Presbytery.

(See Appendix “A” for a listing of all provisions of ECO Polity related to presbyteries)

Purpose – mission

- “The presbytery, as a covenant community, exercises apostolic authority by and for the nurture and benefit of its congregations, that the communities they serve may know the love and invitation of Christ.” – 3.0101
- Promote the health of the covenant community to the end that its congregations and members may bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. –3.0103a.

Responsibilities and Tasks – Congregations, Pastors, Deacons, and Elders

- Charter and receive new congregations into the presbytery; enter into membership agreements with congregations – 1.0103; 3.0103b.; 1.02
- The presbytery shall prepare, examine, ordain and install newly elected pastors, deacons, and elders in new congregations – 1.02
- “Promote and encourage the missional effectiveness of its congregations. Each presbytery shall develop an instrument to assist its congregations in their annual review and narrative report of their ministry and mission. These annual reports shall be reviewed and discussed by the presbytery with each congregation’s session.” – 3.0103m.
- Ensure that all congregations within its jurisdiction are appropriately participating in Mission Affinity Groups, which may go beyond presbytery boundaries – 1.0104
- Receive annual, individual financial reviews from the session of each congregation – 1.0603g.
- Receive an annual report to the presbytery from the session of each congregation that evaluates the “congregation’s ministry and mission.” – 1.603h.

Ordained Pastors and Lay Commissioned Pastors

- “All pastors (Pastor/Head of Staff, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastors) serving an ECO congregation must hold their ordination in ECO or be received as affiliate pastors by the presbytery of jurisdiction.” – 2.04

- Pastors are ordained and installed by presbytery – 2.0101. 3.0103g.
- Presbytery is responsible for examining and credentialing pastors – 2.0401
- The presbytery shall ensure that all pastors are participating in a pastoral covenant group, through its Ministry Partnership Team.
 - “These pastoral covenant groups are self-selective. Under its Committee on Ministry, the presbytery shall ensure that all pastors are participating in a pastoral covenant group.” – 2.0402
- Presbytery has the authority and pastoral responsibility to:
 - Provide pastoral care for, and discipline pastors. – 3.0103g.
 - Enroll, dismiss, and examine candidates and ordain them to called service. – 3.0103h.
 - Validate the call of ministers to service beyond a congregation. – 3.0103i

Discipline

- The responsibility and authority for discipline of pastors and lay pastors belongs to the presbytery. The responsibility and authority for remedial cases and appeals is the presbytery and the synod.” – 2.2 of the Rules of Discipline

Presbytery Governing Council

- The presbytery may delegate to the council any function of the presbytery, except the chartering or dissolution of congregations. – 3.0104, 3.0106

Required Committees

- Committee on Ministry (referred to as the Ministry Partnership Team or MPT in this document)
 - “Each presbytery shall elect a Committee on Ministry (MPT) which shall have broad responsibility for the pastoral relationships of the presbytery.
 - The presbytery shall, by its own rule, delegate and determine the authority and functions of the Committee on Ministry (MPT). Included in this authority that may be delegated to the Committee on Ministry (MPT) is the ability to approve ordination of candidates, transfer of pastors to and from its jurisdiction, and approve commissions for installation and ordination.” – 3.0105
- Permanent Judicial Committee/Commission
 - “Each presbytery shall elect a Permanent Judicial Committee as specified in the Rules of Discipline.” – 3.0105

Records

- “The presbytery shall keep full and accurate records of its proceedings and make them available on request to any session or pastor of the presbytery.
- Each presbytery shall annually arrange for an independent financial review and shall publish the report in its minutes.” – 3.0106

Policies and Procedures

- “Each presbytery shall establish processes and procedures for recruiting, training, and encouraging candidates to the ministry.” – 3.0109
- “Each presbytery shall adopt a policy for the prevention of sexual misconduct among its members. This policy shall govern the presbytery’s congregations unless a particular session, with the consent of the presbytery, adopts its own policy.” – 3.0109