



First Presbyterian Church
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Open and Transparent Governance Policy

Policy Number

Session 1.2

Responsible Committee

Administration

History

Issued: 11-19-14

Revised:

Policy Statement

As stated in the Open Meeting Policy of the Presbyterian Church (USA):

“The work of the church is strengthened when it is done in a spirit of openness and trust. Church members have a basic right to know about the work done and the decisions made by entities within the church. Church leaders have a basic responsibility to honor that right by conducting their business with a spirit of openness and vulnerability to public scrutiny.”

I. Purpose

This policy applies certain principles of the PC(USA) Open Meeting Policy and to First Presbyterian Church, uses certain language that is substantially the same as that used in the national policy, and sets a standard for notice and comment in the case of new policies.

II. Scope

This policy applies to Session and all committees and groups conducting the official business of the church (the “groups”), and to policies developed by those groups.

III. Definitions

None required.

IV. Implementation

- A. The meetings of groups must be open to attendance by church members, friends and participants, and documents considered at such meetings must be available to persons attending.
- B. Meetings may be closed when the subject matter is confidential, as long as the following requirements are met:
 - 1. Subjects dealt with must be limited to property negotiation, personnel, civil and criminal litigation issues, security or other sensitive legal/administrative matters.
 - 2. Meetings may be closed only after discussion and by a majority vote of the members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to the confidential subject matter.
 - 3. Only voting members of the group and persons expressly invited by the voting members may attend closed meetings.
 - 4. The reason for closing the meeting shall be announced before closure and recorded in general terms in the minutes.
 - 5. The decisions reached shall be recorded in the minutes, and shall be made public if and when confidentiality is no longer a concern.”
- C. All meetings of the groups, whether held at the church or elsewhere, shall be announced on the main church calendar available on the website. This provision shall not apply to special called meetings scheduled on short notice.
- D. Policies presented to Session should be stamped “Draft,” posted on the website and made available in the church office; notice should be given to the congregation that new policies have been proposed. Unless urgency requires otherwise, Session should allow at least three weeks for comments before acting on the proposed policies.