

1 **OVERTURE 3** from Pee Dee Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Grant Constitutional Status to BCO 53 re Preaching”
3
4

5 **Whereas**, the constitutional documents of our denomination include the Directory of Public
6 Worship (Preface III, BCO 26.1) with our Book of Church Order implying the usefulness of
7 and adherence to the Directory of Public Worship; and
8

9 **Whereas**, it was the desire of our founding fathers to have an authoritative Directory of
10 Public Worship for our beloved denomination; and
11

12 **Whereas**, the Third General Assembly placed a temporary preface to the Directory of
13 Public Worship stating it “does not have the force of law” which was only to be in place
14 “until a more precise statement can be prepared by the Constitutional Documents
15 Committee;” and
16

17 **Whereas**, the Constitutional Documents Committee was dismissed in 1978 without any
18 report or action pertaining to the Directory of Public Worship; and
19

20 **Whereas**, the 1980 General Assembly tasked the Permanent Committee on Judicial
21 Business to re-write the Directory of Worship but this committee failed to achieve the
22 original goal of authoring an authoritative Directory of Public Worship beyond chapters 56-
23 58 concerning the sacraments; and
24

25 **Whereas**, the most recent changes to our Directory of Public Worship being the
26 constitutionalization of BCO 59-3 by the 46th General Assembly; and
27

28 **Whereas**, we are a denomination that rightly adheres to and affirms the Regulative Principle
29 of Worship; and
30

31 **Whereas**, the current Directory of Public Worship is wrongly considered just pious advice;
32 and
33

34 **Whereas**, the current Directory of Public Worship is often neglected or ignored due to its
35 lack of constitutionality; and
36

37 **Whereas**, there are current worship practices within our denomination that would be found
38 out of order by our Directory of Public Worship, especially pertaining to women and other
39 unqualified persons “Preaching” in Public Worship services; and
40

41 **Whereas**, the Larger Catechism continues, in Question 158, to state that “the word of God is
42 to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to
43 that office;” and
44

1 **Whereas**, our Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 89, states that it is through the
2 “reading, but especially the preaching of the word” that the Spirit effectually calls,
3 convinces, and converts sinners; and
4

5 **Whereas**, WSC 89 additionally states that it is through the “reading, but especially the
6 preaching of the word” that the Spirit builds up believers in holiness and comfort; and
7

8 **Whereas**, the Apostle Paul clearly teaches that only qualified and approved men within
9 Christ’s church are those who have been set aside for the reading and preaching of the
10 scriptures in worship (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2; 4:14); and
11

12 **Whereas**, the Session is charged to order worship “in accordance with the Directory of
13 Worship” in BCO 12-5e; and
14

15 **Whereas**, the amending and constitutionalizing of chapter 53 would assist the Session in
16 ordering worship according to the Word of God, the Regulative Principle of Worship, and
17 our Standards; and
18

19 **Whereas**, the amending and the constitutionalizing of chapter 53 would ensure that no
20 perversion of the greatest means of grace given to the life of the Church takes place within
21 our congregations’ worship services;
22

23 **Therefore, be it resolved**, that the Pee Dee Presbytery hereby requests the 51st General
24 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend our Book of Church Order 53
25 (by deleting the language indicated below by strikethrough and adding new language,
26 indicated below by underlining) and give this chapter constitutional status.
27

28 **CHAPTER 53**

29 *The Preaching of the Word*

30
31
32 53-1. The preaching of the Word is an ordinance of God for the salvation of men. Serious
33 attention should be paid to the manner in which it is done. The minister or a qualified man
34 should apply himself to it with diligence and prove himself a “worker who does not need to
35 be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).
36

37 53-2. The subject of a sermon should be some verse or verses of Scripture, and its object,
38 to explain, defend and apply some part of the system of divine truth; or to point out the
39 nature, and state the bounds and obligation, of some duty. A text should not be merely a
40 motto, but should fairly contain the doctrine proposed to be handled. It is proper also that
41 large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the
42 instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the sacred Scriptures.
43

44 53-3. Preaching requires much study, meditation, and prayer, and ministers or qualified
45 men should prepare their sermons with care, and not indulge themselves in loose,

1 extemporary harangues, nor serve God with that which costs them naught. They should,
2 however, keep to the simplicity of the Gospel, and express themselves in language that can
3 be understood by all. They should also by their lives adorn the Gospel which they preach,
4 and be examples to believers in word and deed.

5

6 53-4. As a primary design of public ordinances is to unite the people in acts of common
7 worship of the most high God, ministers, or a qualified man, should be careful not to make
8 their sermons so long as to interfere with or exclude the important duties of prayer and
9 praise, but should preserve a just proportion in the several parts of public worship.

10

11 53-5. By way of application of the sermon the minister, or a qualified man, may urge his
12 hearers by commandment or invitation to repent of their sins, to put their trust in the Lord
13 Jesus Christ as Savior, and to confess him publicly before men.

14

15 53-6. No ~~person~~ qualified man should be invited to preach or exhort in any of the churches
16 under our care without the consent of the Session.

17

18 *Adopted by Pee Dee Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 26, 2023*

19 *Attested by /s/ TE Michael S. Brown, stated clerk*