

1 **OVERTURE 58** from the Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Amend *BCO* 10-4 to Specify that Clerks Must Be Elders”

3
4 **Whereas**, PCA Church courts are essential to the work of the Church; and,

5
6 **Whereas**, PCA Church courts utilize Clerks to facilitate the meetings of Session, Presbytery and
7 General Assembly; and,

8
9 **Whereas**, only PCA Ruling and Teaching Elders serve on Sessions, and as Commissioners to
10 Presbyteries and General Assemblies; and,

11
12 **Whereas**, PCA Clerks need to be accountable to the church courts in which they serve because of their
13 membership and delegated authority on behalf of the Court they serve; and,

14
15 **Whereas**, the PCA *Book of Church Order* does not make explicitly clear that Clerks shall be ordained
16 office bearers;

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18 **Therefore, be it resolved** that the 53rd General Assembly of the PCA amend the *Book of*
19 *Church Order* 10-4 as follows (underlining for addition):

20
21 **10-4.** A clerk or clerks shall be elected by the Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly
22 to serve for a definite period as determined by the court.

23 It is the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records
24 carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under
25 the hand of the clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the
26 Church.

27 The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian Church in
28 America.

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30 So that the amended passage would read:

31
32 **10-4.** A clerk or clerks shall be elected by the Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly
33 to serve for a definite period as determined by the court.

34 It is the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records
35 carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under
36 the hand of the clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the
37 Church.

38 The clerk shall be a Ruling or Teaching Elder within the Presbyterian Church in
39 America.

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41 **RECOMMENDED GROUNDS** adopted by Calvary Presbytery for the PCA General
42 Assembly:

- 43 1. **The courts of the church are elder-led bodies** — Sessions consist of the pastor
44 (teaching elder) and ruling elders (*BCO* 12-1); Presbyteries include teaching elders
45 and representative ruling elders (*BCO* 13-1). Administrative roles like clerk naturally
46 fall to members of the court who are already ordained elders, as they participate in
47 governance, understand ecclesiastical procedure, and can authentically sign records as
48 evidence in judicial or higher-court matters (*BCO* 35-8).

- 1 2. **Parity of elders and shared governance** — The PCA emphasizes one class of elder
2 (teaching/ruling) with equal authority in church courts (*BCO* 8-9). Limiting clerks to
3 elders upholds this parity and ensures the person handling official records, minutes,
4 citations, and correspondence is accountable under the same ordination vows and
5 discipline as other court members.
- 6 3. **Practical and historical considerations** — Elders (especially ruling elders) are
7 ordained to rule and oversee the church (1 Tim. 3, Titus 1 qualifications), including
8 "aptness to teach" and administrative faithfulness. Clerks often need deep knowledge
9 of the *BCO*, parliamentary procedure, and church law—skills elders cultivate through
10 service. Allowing non-ordained persons could dilute accountability in a connectional,
11 Presbyterian system where records have binding ecclesiastical weight.
- 12 4. **Safeguarding order and fidelity** — Clerks handle sensitive matters (judicial records,
13 appeals, minutes reviewed by higher courts). Drawing from ordained elders ensures
14 alignment with the church's doctrinal standards (Westminster Standards) and reduces
15 risks of mismanagement or procedural errors.
- 16 5. At the **General Assembly level**, the *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)* explicitly
17 require the Stated Clerk to be either a teaching elder or ruling elder in the PCA (*RAO*
18 3-5.a).
- 19 6. In practice our PCA clerks are **almost always** drawn from ruling elders or teaching
20 elders. Handbooks and common practice (e.g., the PCA's Handbook for Clerks of
21 Session) describe the clerk as an "elder" elected for the role, with expectations of
22 understanding Session duties, Presbyterian polity, and willingness to serve diligently.
- 23 7. The broader Presbyterian principle that church courts (Sessions, Presbyteries) are
24 composed of and **governed by elders** (*BCO* 7-2, 8-9), where ruling elders and
25 teaching elders share parity in authority and eligibility for offices in the courts.

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28 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting of February 7, 2026*

29 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Stated Clerk*