



Church Officer Handbook

August 2026

Who are we in 2026?

The House of Hope Presbyterian Church

1068 Presbyterians



Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

60 Congregations

Our Presbytery includes the Twin Cities, extends north to Pine City, south to Austin and Albert Lea, and includes Baldwin, Hudson, and St. Croix Falls in western Wisconsin.



Synod of Lakes and Prairies

16 Presbyteries, over 700 Congregations

Our Synod includes Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and part of Nebraska.



General Assembly

16 Synods, 164 Presbyteries
1.1 Million Presbyterians

The Session

(Book of Order, G-2.0104, G-2.0301, W-4.4003, G-3.0201)
(Bylaws, Art V)

Purpose. Provide spiritual leadership, conduct short and long-term planning, determine goals and policies, conduct current operations, and provide resources to meet the congregation's needs.

Qualifications of Elders. "...persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world." (G-2.0104) They should be "...persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit." (G-2.0301)

Role of Elders.

Ruling Elders "are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships." (G-2.0301)

Responsibilities of the Session. (G-3.0201)

1. **Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.** This responsibility shall include providing a place where the congregation may regularly gather for worship, education, and spiritual nurture; providing for regular preaching of the Word by a teaching elder or other person prepared and approved for the work; planning and leading regular efforts to reach into the community and the world with the message of salvation and the invitation to enter into committed discipleship; planning and leading ministries of social healing and reconciliation in the community in accordance with the prophetic witness of Jesus Christ; and initiating and responding to ecumenical efforts that bear witness to the love and grace of God.

2. **Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.** This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at least quarterly and the administration of Baptism as appropriate, in accordance with the principles of the Directory for Worship; and exercising pastoral care among the congregation; in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the congregation may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

3. **Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ. This responsibility shall include receiving and dismissing members; reviewing the roll of active members at least annually** and counseling with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership; providing programs of nurture, education, and fellowship; training, examining, ordaining, and installing those elected by the congregation as ruling elders and deacons; encouraging the graces of generosity and faithful stewardship of personal and financial resources; managing the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission; direct, delegate and supervise the ministry of deacons, trustees, and all organizations and task forces in the congregation, providing for support, report, review and control; employing the administrative staff of the congregation; leading the congregation in participating in the mission of the whole church; warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immorality in practice within the congregation and community; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the *Rules of Discipline*.

Stated Monthly Session Meetings:

Third Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. Meetings, September through June (excluding December)

SESSION COMMITTEES 2026-2027

Clerk of Session: Lynn Stein • Deputy Clerk: Mercedes Sheldon

FORMATION

ADULT MINISTRY

To provide spiritual and educational support for the adults of the congregation.

Chair: Dick Langer

Staff: Scott Jones

ARTS

To provide the congregation with visual, sculptural, and architectural arts and standards.

Chair: Elly Verhagen

Staff: Scott Jones and Madeline Cieslak

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

To provide spiritual and educational support programs for our congregation's children, youth, and their families.

Chair: Lois Knutson

Staff: Jimmy Hoke, Elsa Kendig; Phil Romine as clergy is needed

WORSHIP

To provide for services of worship, the administration of the sacraments, and provide for music programs to support and enhance worship and other activities of the congregation.

Chair: Diane Smith

Staff: Scott Jones, Aaron David Miller

CONNECTION

COMMUNITY ACTION

To plan and administer the congregation's mission and benevolence programs; and to respond to local, national and international issues in which advocacy is needed.

Chair: Deb James

Staff: Phillip Romine and Elsa Kendig

RESOURCES

DEVELOPMENT

To encourage the congregation to contribute time, talent, and financial resources to support the work of the church. Encourage bequests, planned gifts, and gifts to the endowment fund of the Church.

Chair: Kristina MacKenzie

Staff: Scott Jones, Christopher Freeze

FINANCE

To manage church finances and prepare the annual operating budget for Session and congregational approval and ensures that expenditures throughout the fiscal year fall within approved budget limits.

Chair: Dave Hutchinson

Staff: Jim Cochrane, Mike Gibson

STAFF SUPPORT

To plan and administer a system of policies and procedures to assist the Senior Pastor to ensure employees are compensated fairly and treated justly. Ensure actions and directives follow church policy and employment law.

Chair: Leatha Wolter

Staff: Scott Jones and Mike Gibson

Board of Deacons

(Book of Order, G-2.0201)
(Bylaws, Art. VII)

Purpose. Ministry of hospitality, compassion and service.

Qualifications of Deacons. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment. (G-2.0201)

Role of Deacons.

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. (G-2.0201)

Responsibilities of the Board of Deacons.

1. Support the goals of the congregation as established by the Session.
2. Provide ushers and support services of worship.
3. Support hospitality at congregational special events.
4. Provide support for the integration of new members into the House of Hope community.
5. Provide intercessory prayer in support of expressed congregational needs.
6. Provide input into the annual operating budget as developed by the Session.
7. Elect its own officers and committee chairs.
8. Perform other duties as delegated by the Session.

Stated Monthly Deacon Meetings:

The Board of Deacons will meet at least quarterly, with additional meetings as necessary at the call of its Chair. The meetings called will take place on the first Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noted. Special meetings may be called pursuant to the Bylaws.

BOARD OF DEACONS 2026-2027

Moderator: Gabriel Walsh

Deacons will:

1. Participate in "Neighborhood" Ministry (A Keeping in Touch Ministry)
2. Take part in hospitality at least one Social Event (Rally Sunday, Mardi Gras, Ice Advent and Summer Celebrations, etc.)
3. Usher Monthly
4. Chair/Co-Chair for Ushering assign each deacon to an Usher Team and creates a schedule for the year including special services for Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The chair(s) provide training for new ushers
5. Volunteer for Funeral Services

Every Deacon takes part in the worship life of the congregation.

Other Committee Opportunities:

1. Intercessors Guild - Intercessors pray one day each month for members of our church and community. Intercessors meet once yearly to coordinate the schedule.
2. Be a Deacon Representative on a Session Committee - Community Action, Worship Committee, Children, Youth, and Family Committee.

All Deacons will be asked to help with ushering or kitchen service for funeral and memorial services.

Board of Trustees

(Book of Order, G-4.01, G-3.02)
(Bylaws, Art VI)

Purpose. Responsible to the Session for financial, legal, risk and facilities planning and management.

Qualification of Trustees. Trustees commonly have special knowledge and skills in the areas of finance, investment, law, insurance, architecture and engineering.

Powers of Trustees (G-4.0101)

1. Receive, hold, encumber, manage and transfer real or personal property for the church.
2. Accept and execute deeds of title to such property.
3. Hold and defend title to such property.
4. Manage any endowment funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the church.

Duties and Responsibilities of Trustees.

1. Establish long-range goals for the financial stability of this congregation through research and analysis of the changing needs of this congregation.
2. Establish financial guidelines for use of the assets of this congregation for current operating purposes.
3. Collect, invest and disburse all funds of this congregation, observing any restrictions placed thereon by the donors.
4. Designate such banks, trust companies, fund managers or other depositories for the funds and investments of this congregation and the manner of withdrawal thereof.
5. Supervise the principal financial involvements of this congregation through committees that will provide control, continuity and communication to the Session.
6. Recommend to the Session the maximum appropriate annual draw from the Endowment Fund.
7. Assist the Session in developing annual operating budget.
8. Regularly monitor budget expenditures and variances.
9. Hold title to all real estate and personal property of this congregation.
10. Authorize such person or persons to execute deeds, mortgages, bonds, checks, contracts and other instruments pertaining to the business and affairs of this congregation.
11. Supervise the management of the properties, real and personal, of this congregation.
12. Provide for and oversee the repairs and improvements to the property of this congregation.
13. Provide insurance and other risk-management measures for the properties and activities of this congregation.
14. Supervise the activities of the church Treasurer.
15. Provide for an annual audit.
16. Make periodic reports to the Session, including annual financial statements.

Stated Monthly Trustee Meetings:

The Board of Trustees will meet at least quarterly, with additional meetings as necessary at the call of its President. The called meetings will take place on the second Friday of the month, unless otherwise noted.

Special meetings may be called pursuant to the Bylaws.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEES 2026-2027

OFFICERS

President: Susan Haigh
Vice President: Elise Jamison
Treasurer: Chris McHugh
Secretary: Anita Nelson

STAFF AND CLERGY

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff: Rev. Dr. E. Scott Jones
Executive Transitional Associate Pastor: Rev. James Cochrane
Director of Finance: Mike Gibson
Director of Development: Christopher Freeze

RESOURCES

INVESTMENT AND AUDIT

To provide management of special funds and an annual outside audit of church financial activities.

Chair: Greg Cummings

Staff: Scott Jones, James Cochrane, Mike Gibson

HOUSE, PROPERTY, AND INSURANCE

To supervise the management of real and personal church property.

Chair: Jeff Knutson

Staff: Scott Jones, James Cochrane

ENDOWMENT GIFTS is now part of the Development Committee of the Session.

Tips for Officers and Group Leaders for 2026-2027

Deadlines

- The Anchor will have five publications per year: 1. Sept-Oct-Nov; 2. Dec.; 3. Jan-Feb; 4. Mar-Apr-May; 5. Jun-Jul--Aug. Submission Deadline for a publication will be 4 - 6 weeks from distribution. Each Anchor will be distributed on the first day of the monthly grouping.
- Material should be emailed to Johan Wyckoff: JohanW@hohchurch.org or David Goudzwaard-Vaught: DavidGV@hohchurch.org, who will forward your info.
- Sunday bulletin. The Sunday bulletin is printed on Thursday mornings. It is published on Thursdays in the Thursday Enews. The deadline for submitting items to the bulletin is one week prior to the printing/publication date. So, the due date is the Thursday before printing, or, one week prior to printing. Material should be emailed to DavidGV@hohchurch.org. (Some varying deadlines for special liturgies and holiday schedules.)
- Mailings go through Mark Schwister, (651) 227-6311, allow ample time for mailings: 5 working days for any church mailing.
- The HOH Enews is the weekly e-newsletter published on Thursday afternoons. If you have material you wish to include, please submit it by noon on the Monday before publication to Johan Wyckoff: JohanW@hohchurch.org
- To subscribe to the HOH Enews, contact MarkS@hohchurch.org.

When is the next meeting? Please contact your committee chair. We try to keep to keep the schedule for committee and board meetings and other events updated on the website events calendar as we are able. It is the committee chair's responsibility to send meeting notices to its members, and notify David G.V. with set up needs to be placed on the church calendar. Please note: if meeting notices are last minute, it may not appear on the website calendar in time.

Committee chairs and leaders:

- Meetings/Room scheduling, set-ups through David Goudzwaard-Vaught, DavidGV@hohchurch.org.
- Except for the big three (Session, Deacons, and Trustees) Committee meeting notices are sent out electronically via email by committee chairs.
- Committee meetings can be scheduled during regular office hours. (See "Office Hours" on the next page.) Scheduling a meeting after business hours may require a door code to enter.
- To request a door code for access to the building when the building/office is closed, please contact David Goudzwaard-Vaught. Check with your committee's primary staff person before scheduling a meeting.
- Each committee has a mailbox. Be sure to check your committee's mailbox in the main office for correspondence or other information that may need your attention.
- For copying and mailroom assistance: Call the church office, 651-227-6311.
- Please turn lights off and leave the room as it was when you came in.
- No propping doors open at any time.

The building is alarmed from 11p.m. to 7 a.m. All persons must be out of the building by 10:30 p.m. unless special arrangements have been made with Clergy or Staff.

Website: www.hohchurch.org

- Postings/changes/corrections/suggestions to the website may be made through Johan Wyckoff or David Goudzwaard-Vaught

Budget, finance, contributions, stewardship administration: Mike Gibson, Director of Finance, (651) 223-7555, MikeG@hohchurch.org.

Accounts payable, approved check requests: Director of Finance Mike Gibson (651) 223-7555, MikeG@hohchurch.org

- **Checks are processed twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.**
- The deadline for submitting approved check requests and invoices is Monday morning by 9 a.m. each week.
- Please allow 10 working days for processing checks.
- Two signatures are required on checks over \$500, so extra time may be needed to contact a second authorized signer.

For building emergencies after hours:

Call Jim Cochrane, Executive Associate Transitional Pastor (612-597-3472)

CURRENT BUILDING/OFFICE HOURS

Monday:	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday:	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday:	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday:	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday:	9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Saturday:	CLOSED
Sunday:	No Office Attendant

Committee Portal for Minutes

In an effort to provide an opportunity for all officers and current committee members to read and be informed about what other boards and committees are discussing, our website contains a "Committee Portal" which will be a location for all Session, Deacon, and Trustee boards and committees to upload their minutes.

You will be able to read any minutes from any Session, Trustee, or Deacon committee that uploads them to this portal. Uploading is very easy by clicking the button that says "upload document", then choosing the committee and the year in a drop-down menu; then browsing your computer for the PDF, WORD or EXCEL document, just as simply as you would if you were attaching a document to an email.

This portal will only be as rich and informative as you make it to be. The more committees that upload their minutes, and the more you read those that are provided, the more information about what's going on at HOH you'll receive!

This is a password protected portal, and only officers and current committee members will receive the password. We are trusting that you will not share this password with those that are not currently serving on a board or committee.

The Committee Portal can be found at our website hohchurch.org under the "About Us" tab, then choose "Governing Bodies." Scroll down the page until you see "Committee Portal" and click where it says "click here".

Please contact David Goudzwaard-Vaught, DavidGV@hohchurch.org, for the password.

Also, please remember that the Governing Bodies page contains a plethora of other useful information for officers to access.

Lastly, it would be best to assign a person from your committee to upload the minutes monthly for your committee once they are completed. Also, please note that there will be a one month delay with Session, Trustee, and Deacon Board minutes as they need to be approved by the bodies before being released.

And, as always, if there are specific minutes that you are seeking that are not in the committee portal (specifically minutes prior to 2022), please contact DavidGV@hohchurch.org

Here is a direct link to the sign in page:

<https://www.hohchurch.org/committee-portal/>

Realm Cheat Sheet

Realm is a great tool to use – especially when looking to trade communion serving dates.

Sending a Message

Once you're logged into Realm, you can send a message to all of Session by following these steps:

1. Look at the left side icons and click on 'Groups'.
You should now see the committees/groups you are associated with.
2. To find other Elders, click on 'Session.'
You should now see the newsfeed for our group.
3. Use the pencil icon to send/post an item to the whole Session. The 'post' box will let you compose a message, attach files, and even use bold text and make bulleted lists.

If you want to communicate just with a committee, you can click 'change group' on the right-hand side of the message box. OR you can click on 'Groups' again and select the correct group, then repeat step #3.

When you are in 'Groups,' you can access the contact information for anyone in your group, EVEN IF they are not visible in the 'Directory' part of Realm. To do this:

1. Go into the group that you share with the other person. {steps 1-2 above}
2. Look toward the top of the Group page, above the icons, to find where it says 'Participants.'
3. Click on 'Participants' and you should see a full list of those in the group.
4. Click on any one name to see that person's contact information.

Guide to the Church's Finances

Introduction

Finances at The House of Hope are like the church building's foundation: mostly invisible, yet solid and supportive. The following is a quick guide to the finances of the church for anyone, especially new officers.

Definitions

Here are some terms used in this guide:

- **Assets:** property or holdings owned by the church.
- **Liabilities:** debts or obligations owed by the church.
- **Revenue:** funds received during a specified period: for example, "monthly" revenue.
- **Expenses:** funds the church spends during a specified period.
- **Fiscal Year:** HOH uses the calendar year as its fiscal year.
- **Financial Report:** There are several reports generated internally by the church and by outside sources, such as auditors and investment managers. These are the main reports used by the church:
 - o **Statement of Activities:** This is a summary of church revenues and expenses during a specified period. It is like a Profit/Loss Statement.
 - o **Balance Sheet:** This is a financial snapshot showing church assets and liabilities at a specific point in time.
 - o **Audit:** This is an official written summary by an independent auditing firm of the church's financial performance during a particular fiscal (calendar) year. It is given to the Board of Trustees. Audit reports are available in the church office for anyone to review.

Assets

The church has four main types of assets:

- **Cash**
 - o The church maintains cash in savings accounts and two checking accounts, all of which generate interest and are fully protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).
- **Property**
 - o The church owns its building, park, parking lots, and personal property.

- **Beneficial interests in Charitable Trusts and Life Insurance Policies**
 - o The church is a beneficiary of four perpetual trusts established by church members.
 - The church does not own the trusts or control them. The trusts are owned and managed by third parties.
 - The trusts provide annual revenue to the church.
 - The trusts are not part of the church's endowment, but revenues received from the trusts support the endowment.
 - o The church is named as a beneficiary of life insurance policies that have been donated to the church.

- **Investments**
 - o The church has both unrestricted and donor-restricted endowment funds.
 - An endowment consists of money or property given to the church to be invested so it will produce revenue for the church.
 - Endowments are often designed with a goal of keeping the donated money or property intact permanently, but they can be established for a specific term.
 - Endowment funds are professionally managed with an investment objective to generate both growth and income.
 - o Revenue from invested donor-restricted endowment funds may only be used for purposes designated by the donors.
 - o Revenue from invested unrestricted endowment funds may, within certain guidelines, be used for purposes designated by the Trustees and Session to ensure the ongoing stability of the church and its ministries.

Liabilities

- The church generally does not have any long-term liabilities, but it can create such liabilities if needed.
 - o For example, if the church borrows money to pay for a major construction project that construction loan will be considered a long-term liability until it is paid in full.

- The church's short-term liabilities (known as accounts payable) consist of ordinary bills that are usually paid in a short period of time.

Revenue

The church has four principal revenue streams:

- **Donations**
 - o Church members and friends donate to support the church's operations and programs.
 - o Financial gifts donated to the church for specific purposes are called "Dedicated Funds." They are held in interest-bearing savings accounts until needed for the purposes described by the donors.
- **Endowment Funds**
 - o Revenue produced by invested donor-restricted endowments may only be used for purposes specified by the donors.
 - o Revenue produced by invested unrestricted endowment funds may be transferred to support the church and ensure its ongoing stability if the transfers are consistent with certain guidelines and authorized by the Board of Trustees and Session.
- **Charitable Trusts**
 - o The church is a beneficiary of four perpetual trusts established by church members. The trusts provide annual revenue to the church.
- **Other revenue**
 - o Interest income
 - o Fees paid for some church services and activities, such as funerals and weddings
 - o Fees paid for personal use of building facilities by congregational members
 - o Fees paid for use of building facilities by non-profit organizations such as Hope Arts Center, The Singers, Meadowlark Microschool, Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony (GTCYS), and others.

Expenses

- Every year HOH staff and members of the Finance Committee (comprised of representatives from key Session and Trustee committees) work together to prepare an annual operating budget for Session approval and presentation to the congregation at the annual meeting. The operating budget, consisting of revenue and expense estimates, helps the church employ its resources effectively to fulfill its mission.
- If there is a significant change in operating expenses or a shortfall in projected operating revenue during a fiscal year, the variance will be evaluated by the Finance Committee, which will consider whether an adjustment to rebalance the operating budget should be made.

- If the Finance Committee decides a budget adjustment is appropriate, it will present a report to the Session and request approval of the proposed adjustment.
Controls
- To prevent fraud and abuse, the church uses an accounting principle known as segregation of duties, in which financial responsibilities are divided up so that no one person can access the entire system. For example, checks for more than \$500 must be signed by two authorized signers. Independent auditors review church internal control policies annually as part of the auditing process.

Confidentiality and Transparency

- Financial donations to the church are confidential with only limited staff having access to this information. Financial information is reported in an open and transparent manner at meetings of the church's governing bodies and at the annual meeting of the congregation.

October 30, 2025