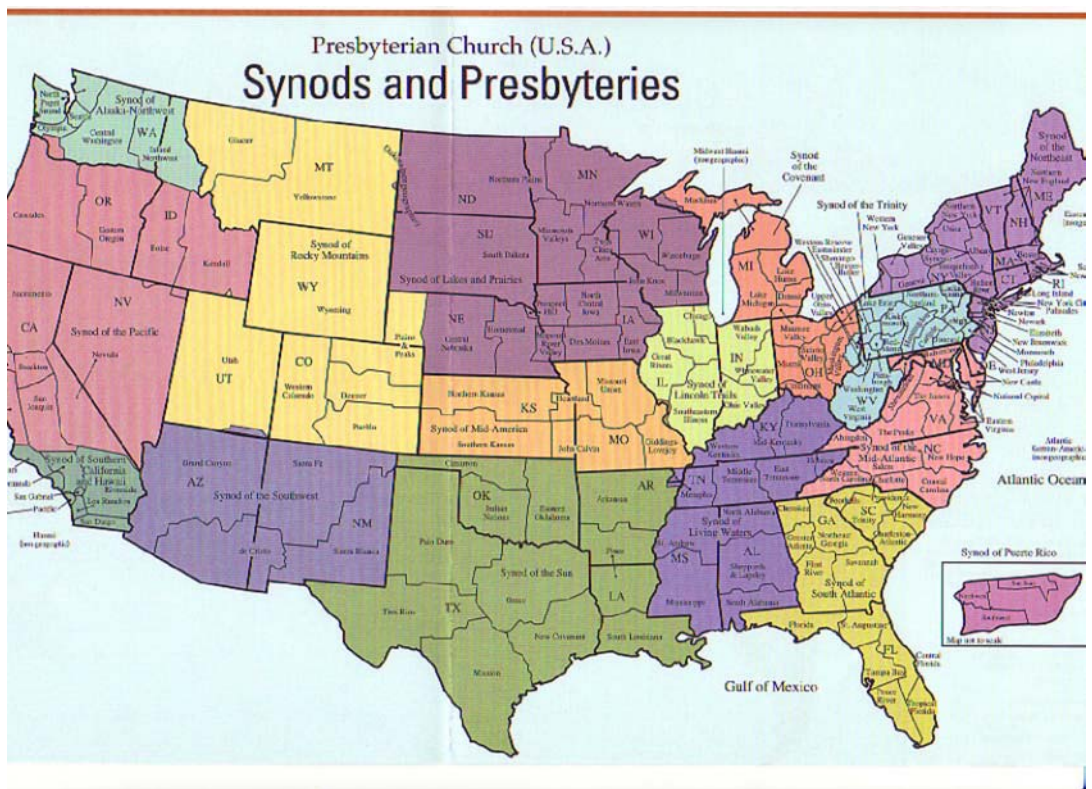


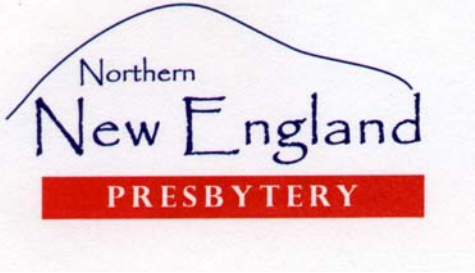
Polity

How we govern ourselves as a church.

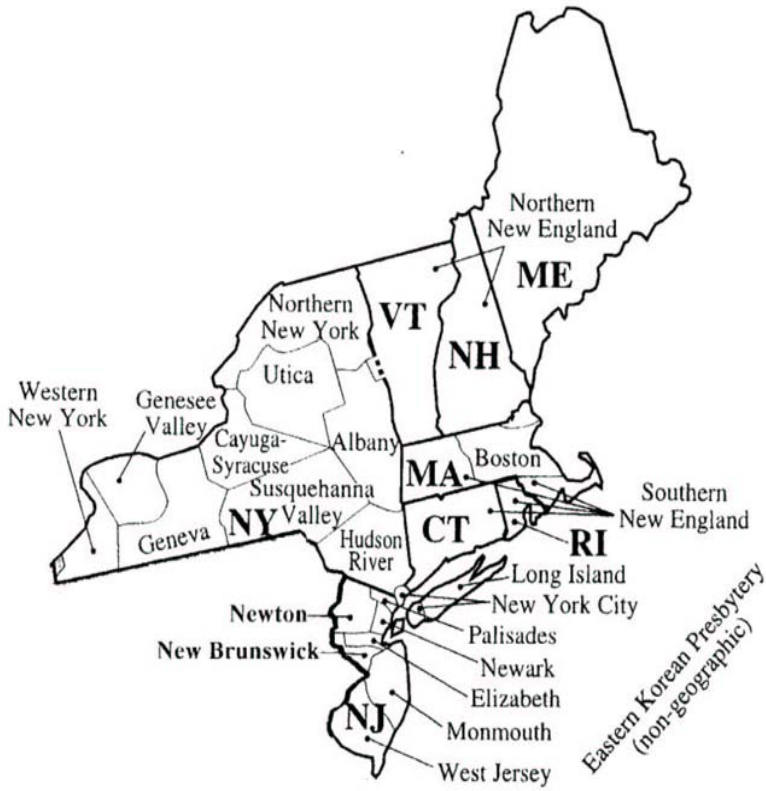


Synods & Presbyteries





Synod of the Northeast





Governing Bodies

- **Church Government**

- General Assembly
 - Synod
 - Presbytery
 - » Church

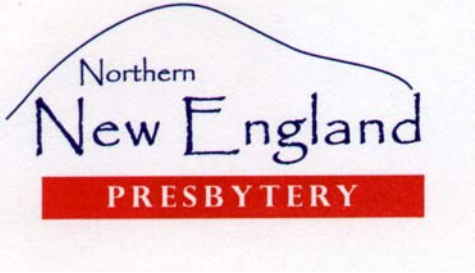
- **Civil Government**

- Country
 - State
 - County
 - » City

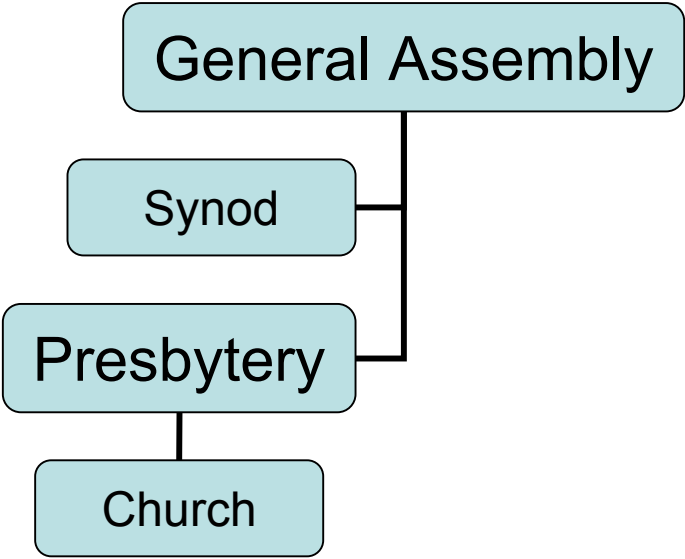
★16 Synods make up the General Assembly.

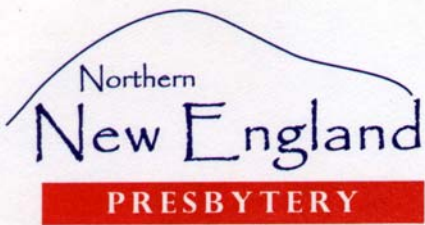
★22 Presbyteries in the Synod of the Northeast. There are 173 Presbyteries total in PCUSA.

★33 Churches and 3 Fellowships in the Presbytery of Northern New England. About 11,000 churches in PCUSA.



Relationships





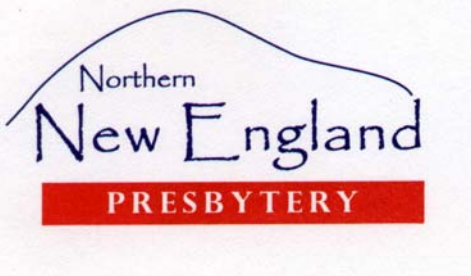
General Assembly (GA)

- Highest governing body of PCUSA
 - Provides staff to operate the denomination and perform mission, nationally and internationally.
 - Responsible for amending and interpreting the church Constitution.
 - Highest court in the denomination.
-



Synod

-
- Provides resources to Presbyteries.
 - Performs mission activities.
 - Provides appellate court for Presbytery PJC decisions.
 - New: Presbytery Partnership Groups (PPGs). PNNE + Boston + Southern NE
-



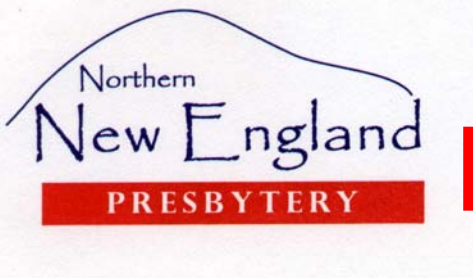
Presbytery

- Oversees and supports
 - minister members.
 - churches.
 - candidates for ministry.
- Performs various mission activities.
- Provides resources to the churches.
- Provides training and education for church leaders.
- Exercises discipline when necessary (PJC)



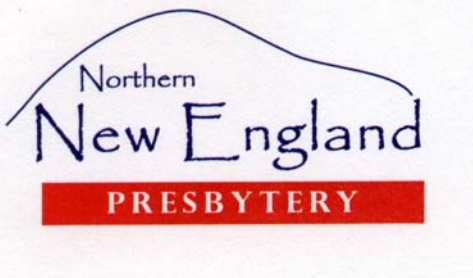
Per Capita

- Provides the funds for running the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly.
- For 2005: \$34.25 per church member
 - \$24.98 for Presbytery
 - \$3.70 for Synod
 - \$5.57 for General Assembly



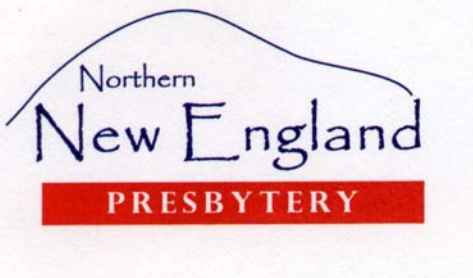
Foundational Documents

- Bible
 - Book of Confessions give us spiritual direction.
 - Book of Order gives us the rules for governance, worship and discipline.
-



Book of Confessions

- A confession is a statement of faith.
 - 11 Documents written over the centuries help to define and expand our faith.
 - Most confessions were written during a time of stress on the church.
-

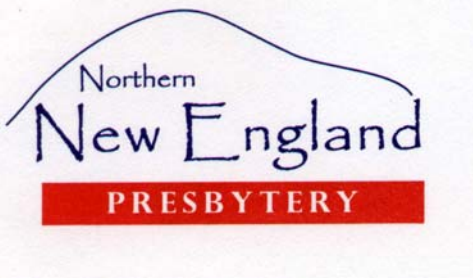


Book of Order

- Provides the rules for governing the church in three sections:
 - G: Government
 - W: Worship
 - D: Discipline
-

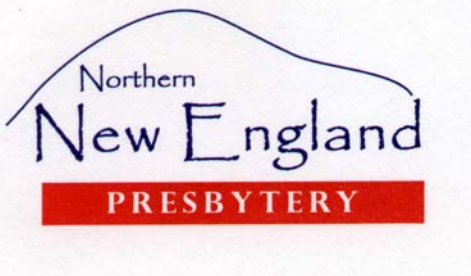
Representative Government

- The Church is governed by representatives called commissioners.
 - In a church, the “commissioners” are the Elders on Session and the ministers.
 - For higher bodies (Presbytery, Synod, GA) the commissioners are made up of an equal number of Ministers and Elders elected by the lower bodies.
 - Commissioners vote their conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit.
-



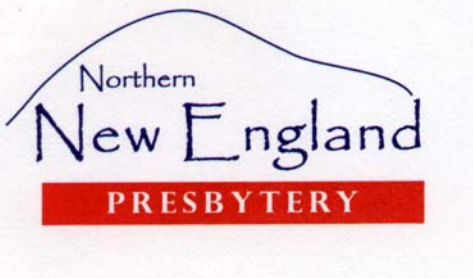
Head of the Church

- Jesus Christ
-



Officers

- Each governing body elects officers to ensure the proper functioning of the body.
- Officers of a church are
 - Ministers
 - Elders on Session
 - Deacons on the Board of Deacons.
- Higher level (e.g. Presbytery) officers are
 - Moderator
 - Stated Clerk
 - additional officers the governing body may create (e.g. Vice Moderator & Treasurer).



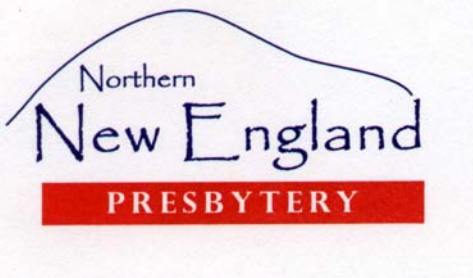
Session

- Session is composed of Elders in active service.
- Session is elected by the congregation.
- Session makes most decisions for the operation and mission of the church.
- Session is moderated by a minister, usually a pastor of the church.



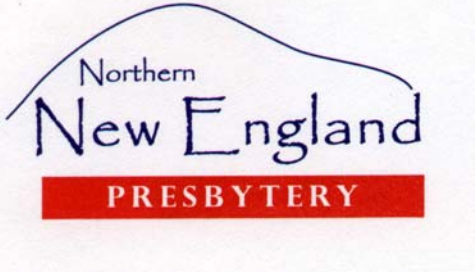
Responsibilities of Session Overview

- Defined in Book of Order G-10.0102
- Manage church membership.
- Provide leadership of the congregation.
- Provide for worship and education.
- Control church finances and budget.
- Care for church property.
- Hire and oversee church staff.
- Ordain and install officers.
- Serve in judicial matters when needed.



Congregation's Role

- The congregation is only allowed to do a few things (G-7.0304) which include.
 - Electing officers.
 - Calling pastors.
 - Matters relating to pastoral relationship.
 - Buy, mortgage or sell property.
 - Administrative organization and exemption from rules because of size.
-



Congregation Does Not Approve Budget!!

That's Sessions Responsibility



Pastor's Unique Responsibilities

- The pastor can do the following without approval or consultation with Session (W-1.4005)
 - Selection of scripture lessons
 - Preparation and preaching of the Word
 - Prayers for the people and by the people
 - Music to be sung
 - Use of drama, dance or other art forms
-



Finally

- Our polity is designed to serve the mission of the church.
- Polity provides a uniform framework and infrastructure for church operations.
- Our polity has been developed over many years and expresses wisdom that can help us in our mission and prevent making the same mistakes again and again.