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# Session Minutes

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# Purpose

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- Minutes preserve the decisions of Session.
  - Minutes record important events in the life of the church.
  - Minutes prove that all Book of Order requirements have been met.
  - Minutes can be used to report Session activity to the church members, if Session approves.
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# Form

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- Minutes should be clearly written, preferably computer printed.
  - Use acid free paper.
  - May use any secure binder.
  - Pages must be numbered consecutively.
  - No erasures.
  - Corrections by single line cross out, new text clearly written and initialed by Clerk of Session.
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# Style

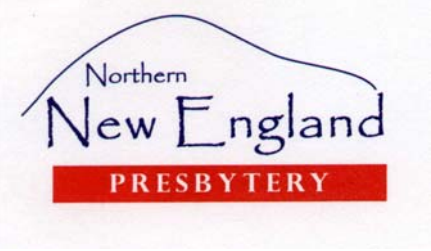
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- Write minutes so it's easy to find past decisions.
  - Straight text in paragraphs is hard to search.
  - Use headings, bold type, underlines, etc. to make reading easy.
  - Make motions stand out – bold type, underline, etc.
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# Retention

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- Session minutes must be retained forever.
  - Have a backup copy in case of fire or other destruction of minutes. Computer disk is good.
  - Old minutes may be sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia for safe-keeping. (<http://history.pcusa.org>)
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# General Structure

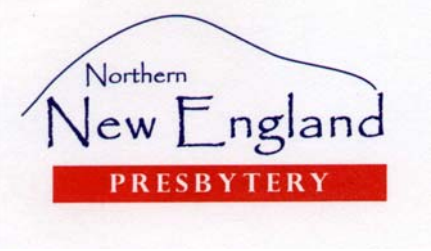
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- Attendance (present, excused, absent)
  - Quorum
  - Convene (date, time, place, moderator)
  - Approve agenda / docket
  - Clerk's Report
  - Pastors' Report
  - Committee reports
  - Adjourn (time)
  - Date and time of next meeting
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# Attendance

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- Session Members
    - Names of those present
    - Names of those excused
    - Names of those absent
  - Moderator name
  - Names of others present (record if given voice)
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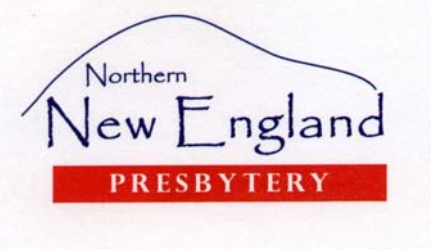
# Convene

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- Record date, time and place convened
  - Record that meeting was convened with prayer
  - Record name of moderator
  - Example
    - The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Anywhere, NH was convened with prayer at the church by moderator Rev. Someone on September 24, 2005 at 7:00 PM.
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# Approve Agenda

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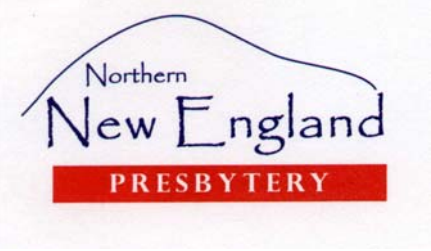
- Moderator asks for any proposed changes in the agenda.
  - Draft agenda is treated as a motion
  - Changes may be proposed as amendments.
  - Vote to accept the agenda as amended (often by consensus)
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# Clerk's Report

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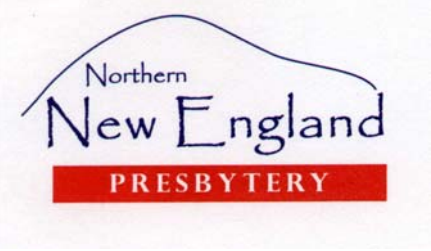
- Motion to approve minutes of previous meeting(s).
  - Motion to approve excused absences
  - Report changes to rolls
  - Report correspondence
  - Whatever else is needed / customary
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# Pastors' Report

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- Session approves baptisms.
  - Session approves weddings.
  - Session approves special worship services (time and place, not content).
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# Committee Reports

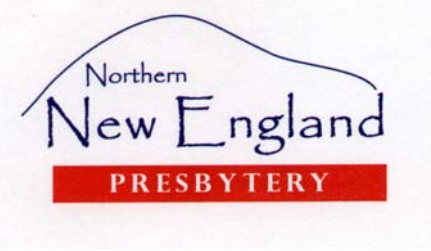
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- Record all successful motions.
  - Record other committee work that is significant.
  - Record items important to the history of the church.
  - DO NOT summarize discussion where there is disagreement.
  - Written reports may be attached to the minutes.
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# Executive Session

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- Session may vote to enter executive session where all non-session members are excluded.
  - Minutes are not needed, unless a motion was made and approved.
  - Best to use executive session for sensitive discussion and make decisions after ending executive session.
  - If must have minutes, they may be kept in a secure location with reference in the regular minutes.
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# Adjourn

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- Time adjourned
  - Record that adjournment was with prayer
  - Record date and time of next stated meeting

# Omnibus Motion

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- Use an Omnibus (consent agenda) motion to handle a number of routine matters with one vote.
  - No discussion other than clarification.
  - Any ONE person may remove an item for separate vote.
  - If omnibus motion passes, then all motions in the omnibus (not removed) also pass.
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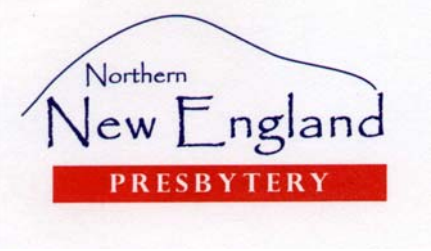
# Email Votes

- Non-controversial matters that cannot wait until the next meeting may be voted by email.
- Be sure those without email are contacted.
- Abandon email vote if anyone objects or if any negative vote – decision must be unanimous.
- Set deadline for voting. Must have quorum.
- Record email motion and outcome in next minutes (The following motion was approved by email on .....

# General Consensus

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- Sometimes a non-controversial motion will be approved by consensus (“if no one objects, then .....”).
  - Record these just like any other motion.
  - Consensus is just a way to vote (like voice, raising hands, etc.) and is still a motion like any other.
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# Review of Minutes

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- Session minutes must be reviewed annually by Presbytery.
  - This includes executive session minutes (if any).
  - Minutes may be
    - Approved without exception.
    - Approved with exception.
    - Reviewed but not approved.
  - Review may include commendations.
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