

Absentee Voting In PCA Congregational Meetings

Whenever the BCO speaks of method of voting, it speaks of “voters being convened”, “all the voters present” (BCO 20-4), “a majority vote of those present” (BCO 24-3).

BCO 25-1 affirms that only communicant members may vote in a congregational meeting.

Explicit rules are given precedence over general rules. “A general statement or rule is always of less authority than a specific rule or statement, and yields to it,” RONR (11th ed.). p 589, ll 17-18. So *BCO* 25-1 (a general rule) is understood in light of 20-4 and 24-3 (specific rules).

Therefore, absentee ballots are *not* allowed in congregational meetings.

No proxy votes are allowed, “an individual’s right to vote may not be transferred to another person (for example, by the use of proxies), RONR (11th ed.). p. 407, ll 8-10.

“It is a fundamental principle of parliamentary law that the right to vote is limited to members of an organization who are actually present at the time the vote is taken in a regular or properly called meeting, although it should be noted that a person need not be present when the question is put” RONR (11th ed.). p. 423. ll. 17-22.

Local bylaws may not contradict the *Book of Church Order*. Therefore, a local church could not have a bylaw to allow absentee balloting.

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