

Maintaining Congregation Membership Rolls

- I. Defining Membership (G-1.03)
 - a. In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ
 - b. Baptism is the visible sign of that call and of entrance into membership of the church
 - c. The baptism of those who enter the covenant of membership upon their own profession of faith in Jesus as Savior demonstrates that God's grace calls forth a response of faithfulness
 - As discussed later, this provides the basis for what is considered "active" membership in a congregation and is an important part of understanding the ideas behind the keeping of a congregation's membership rolls

- II. Ways to Become a Member (G-1.0303)
 - a. These ways are how a person enters into active church membership. This distinction becomes important when discussing the subject of membership rolls

Three ways to become a member

1. Public profession of faith, made after careful examination by the Session in the meaning and responsibilities of membership; if not already baptized, the person making profession of faith shall be baptized
2. Certificate of transfer, when a person is a member of another Christian church at the time of transfer
3. Reaffirmation of faith, for persons previously baptized in the name of the triune God and having publicly professed their faith

- III. Categories of Membership (G-1.04)

Three Categories of Membership

1. Baptized Member – has received Baptism sacrament and enrolled as a baptized member by session, but has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. These members receive pastoral care and may participate in communion, but do not have full membership rights and duties. Baptized members do not participate in the governance of the church.
2. Active Member – has made a profession of faith, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of the church, and participates in the church's work and worship.
 - Participate in governance of church
 - May be elected to ordained ministry
 - Session has responsibility to prepare persons for active membership

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3. Affiliate Member – member of another congregation of the denomination or of another denomination or Christian body who has temporarily moved.
 - Has presented a certificate of good standing from their home congregation
 - Has been received by Session as an affiliate member
 - Can participate in congregational life the same as an active member, but cannot vote in congregational meetings or be elected to an office in the congregation

No more “Inactive” members – instead there is a category called “other participants”

IV. Who is Responsible for Maintaining Membership Roll?

- a. The Session maintains the congregation’s membership roll (G-3.0204(a)) and has certain requirements they must do, as well as discretion for other aspects of the roll
 - The Session shall:
 1. Receive and dismiss members
 2. Review the roll of active members at least annually
 3. Counsel with those who have neglected their responsibilities of membership
 4. Maintain rolls of baptized, active, and affiliate members
 5. Delete names from the roll upon member’s death, admission to membership in another congregation, or renunciation of jurisdiction
 - The Session may:
 1. Delete names from the roll when a member requests
 2. Delete names from the roll when a members has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years – with a caveat
 - a. *The Session shall seek to restore members to active participation and shall provide written notice before deleting names due to member inactivity*
- b. The Clerk of Session has the specific obligation of maintaining the congregation’s membership roll (G-3.0104)
 - Doesn’t have to do this alone, though, and can seek help