

Regional Councils and Incorporated Ministries: What Is the Relationship?

As January 1, 2019, nears, and regional councils take effect, incorporated ministries may be asking what they should do to prepare. Common questions might include:

1. Do we need to change our bylaws?
2. Do we need to change our corporate name if it includes the presbytery/Conference as part of the name?
3. Our bylaws reference the congregations (collectively) within a presbytery. How will this be affected by the transition to regional councils?
4. Will our bylaws be invalid because they refer to courts of the church that no longer exist?

As the change to regional councils takes effect, questions will continue to emerge. Here are some guidelines to assist in your transition to the new structure:

All incorporated ministries will have to revise their bylaws, as references to Conferences, presbyteries, and Conference executive secretaries will need to be updated. How quickly this needs to be addressed depends on the language of the existing approved bylaws. If the bylaws indicate the Conference *or its successor*, there is less urgency to change them, as the regional council is the successor. However, all incorporated ministries should plan to revise their bylaws in **2019**.

If you are ready to start revising your bylaws, the following are some quick tips to facilitate the process.

1. Converting the language:

Old Language	New Language
Conference	Regional Council # – if name has been decided on, could use the name but not necessary to change bylaws once a name is determined
Conference executive secretary (CES)	regional council executive minister
presbytery	regional council if the bylaws still reflect the presbytery as the supervising court
presbytery used to define geographic boundaries	consider if there is a municipal equivalent to define the area, i.e., specific municipalities including towns, cities, counties
General Council	General Council – <i>no change required</i>

2. Approval process: Where the bylaws require approval by the supervising Conference, this will move to approval by the supervising regional council.
3. Successor: Be sure to include “or its successor” where a specific body or area is named. This gives the bylaws longevity should that body change or the name change.
4. A corporate name change is *not* required if the Conference or presbytery is part of the legal corporate name. The fact that the “court” no longer exists does not affect the status of the corporation in any way.

Until December 31, 2018, your Conference executive secretary (CES) continues to be the contact person with regard to activities related to incorporated ministries, including revision of bylaws. As of January 1, 2019, the regional council executive minister (RCEM) will be the contact person.