

## **Article 7: OFFICE OF ELDER**

### **7.1 Definition of the Office of Elder.**

The office of Elder is one of rule, prayer and instruction. Elders are to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge in order to protect against the corruption of doctrine or morals. To this end they are to oversee the ministry of the congregation and inquire into the lives of the people for their spiritual growth. (1 Peter 5:1-5)

### **7.2 Requirements for the Office of Elder.**

Elders are men who must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, among other characteristics an Elder must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:7-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

### **7.3 The Orders of Elder.**

Within the office of Elder, there exists two orders of Elder, the Teaching Elder and Ruling Elder. The Elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching and administration of the sacraments. The Pastor, or Teaching Elder, is set apart especially to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God.

### **7.4 The Session.**

The Session consists of the Pastor, the Associate Pastor(s), if there be any, and the currently installed Ruling Elders. The Session shall elect a moderator and a clerk from their number. Ruling Elders shall normally serve the Session for a term of three years and then spend eleven months on sabbatical. They shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms without an eleven month sabbatical. A Ruling Elder who has completed an eleven month sabbatical shall be examined by the session regarding any changes of his theological views and his spiritual readiness to return to active service whereupon he will be presented to the congregation for re-election and installation.

### **7.5 Duties of the Session.**

Elders are charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church for which purpose it has power to:

- a) inquire into the knowledge, principles and Christian conduct of the members under their care;
- b) censure those found delinquent;
- c) receive members into the communion of the church or remove them for just cause;
- d) examine, ordain, and install Elders and Deacons on their election;
- e) plan, approve and adopt the budget of the church;
- f) establish and oversee all committees and special groups in the church;
- g) exercise authority over worship, the preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments;
- h) determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and
- i) appoint godly men and women to assist in the work of the church.

## **Article 8: OFFICE OF DEACON**

### **8.1 Definition of the Office of Deacon.**

The Deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. Diaconal duties include the care of those in distress, the management of congregational funds and property, and such other responsibilities as are delegated by the Session.

### **8.2 Requirements for the Office of Deacon.**

Deacons are men whose characteristics include honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

### **8.3 The Board of Deacons.**

The Deacons of this church shall be organized into a Board of which the Pastor shall be an advisory member. The Board shall elect a chairman and a clerk from their number and a treasurer who may be from the congregation, to whom may be entrusted the funds from the current expenses of the church. Deacons shall normally serve on the Deacon Board for a term of three years and then spend eleven months on sabbatical. They

shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms without an eleven month sabbatical. A Deacon who has completed an eleven month sabbatical shall be examined by the session regarding any changes of his theological views and his spiritual readiness to return to active service whereupon he will be presented to the congregation for re-election and installation.

#### **8.4 The Duties of the Board of Deacons.**

In the discharge of their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. The Board of Deacons is charged with service to the physical and spiritual needs of the church for which purpose it has power to:

- a) minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress;
- b) develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church;
- c) devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people and the distribution of these gifts;
- d) care for the property of the congregation both real and personal;
- e) keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the church;
- f) serve the elements of the Sacrament of the Lord's Table;
- g) plan and manage the budget of the church; and
- h) other responsibilities delegated by the Session.

#### **8.5 Mercy Fund.**

The Mercy Fund is a special account set aside for the purposes to financially aid those who are in need. The Mercy Fund is supported from individual contributions and from the general funds of the church as stipulated in the budget. The Board of Deacons has authority to dispense funds from the Mercy Fund at its discretion. In the case where the recipient is a church officer, additional approval from the Session is required.

### **Article 9: NOMINATION, ELECTION, AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

#### **9.1 Nomination procedure.**

Nominations for ruling elders and deacons are to be submitted by the congregation in writing to the session at least once every three years. The session will then examine the nominees to determine their qualifications. Those men who meet the qualifications for deacons and elders will be announced during a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing officers.

#### **9.2 Requirements for nomination.**

Nominees must be male communing members of this particular church and they must have been a member for at least a year.

#### **9.3 Probation period for officer candidates.**

Nominees examined and found to meet the qualifications for office and have never been ordained before must first serve as an Elder or Deacon candidate for a period of one year before they are elected and ordained. During that year the candidates are also required to attend a leadership training course, to attend Session/Deacon meetings and to perform duties assigned to them.

#### **9.4 Waiver of probation period.**

Nominees examined and found to meet the qualifications for office and have been ordained by this particular church may be elected and installed into office without the one year trial period.

#### **9.5 Examination of officer candidates.**

The prospective officer shall be examined by the Session in his Christian experience; on his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the PCA doctrinal standards; on the duties of the office for which he has been nominated; and as his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination.

#### **9.6 Election of officers.**

A congregational meeting shall be called at least once every three years for the purpose of electing new Deacons and Elders. All resident communing members are entitled to vote in the election of officers. The Session shall present the list of approved nominations to the church. Each member entitled to vote may vote yes or no for each nomination. Election is determined for each nominee by a majority.

#### **9.7 Ordination of officers.**

All Elders and Deacons shall be ordained and/or installed in accordance with the procedure set forth in the BCO. Ordination to the offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon is perpetual; such offices cannot be laid aside at pleasure.