

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

HANDBOOK

Effective September 2013



Eastminster Presbyterian Church

311 Haines Road

York, PA 17402

Phone: 755-6222 ~ email: office@eastminster-york.org

Website: eastminster-york.org

REVISED 9/1/2013

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THE OFFICE OF DEACON

From the Book of Order (2011 – 2013)

G-2.02 DEACONS: THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE

G-2.0201 Deacon Defined

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

G-2.0202 Under Authority of the Session

Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, or overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation. Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord's Supper. (W-3.3616). A congregation by a majority vote may choose not to utilize the ordered ministry of deacons. If the congregation has neither a board of deacons nor individually commissioned deacons, the function of this ordered ministry shall be the responsibility of the ruling elders and the session.

G-2.0402 Preparation for Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon

When persons have been elected to the ordered ministry of ruling elder or deacon, the session shall provide a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine them as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; and the duties of the ministry. The session shall also confer with them as to their willingness to undertake the ministry appropriate to the order. If the examination is approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and installation.

G-2.0403 Service of Ordination and Installation

The service of ordination and installation shall focus upon Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The moderator of session or person authorized to preside shall state briefly the nature of the ministry of ruling elder and deacon. The act of ordination and installation takes place in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.4000) shall be followed.

G-2.0404 Terms of Service

Ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years on the session or board of deacons, and may be eligible for reelection according to congregational rule. However, no ruling elder or deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, and a ruling elder or deacon who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year. Election shall be to classes as nearly equal in number as possible, with the term of only one class ending each year. The presbytery may, upon written request and by majority vote, grant a congregation a waiver of this limitation on terms. Once ordained and while they are active members of any congregation of this denomination, ruling elders or deacons not in active service on a session or board of deacons continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained, except as provided in G-2.0406, G-2.0407, or in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.



Constitutional Questions for Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning W-4.4003

The moderator of the council of those to be ordained, installed, or commissioned shall ask them to stand before the body of membership and to answer the following questions:

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- d. Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- i. (1) (For ruling elder) ...
(2) (For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

GENERAL INFORMATION **ABOUT EPC BOARD OF DEACONS**

The Board of Deacons consists of 15 deacons who are elected by the congregation to serve a three-year term or to fill a partial term. The Board of Deacons meets as a board during our annual retreat and on the second Thursday of each month. These meetings, with the exception of the annual retreat, are normally held at 7:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room of the Haines Administration Center. The Care Group leaders are encouraged to gather shortly before the meeting (as early as 6:30 pm) to allow for preparing cards and discussing other Care Group concerns. Other gatherings may be required depending upon the structure and function of events and services to the congregation.

Our efforts are funded through four main sources:

- Loose offerings on Communion Sundays.
- Interest from Deacon Endowment Fund
- Private contributions throughout the year
- Special fund raisers

MINISTRIES

Care Group Ministry: This ministry has the congregation divided into 6 groups with two Deacons as leaders. Through this structure the Board of Deacons is there for all those in our church family – active members and friends of E.P.C., both in happy times and times of challenges. We share in celebrating special days and events – birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, and births of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We are also there to reach out in comfort and support during difficult times, whether it be health issues, family situations, etc. We make contact through telephone calls, visits or cards, offering any assistance that may be needed.

Flower Delivery: Each Sunday, the Board of Deacons delivers the flowers that were in the Sanctuary during Worship Services. The Deacons often take the opportunity to visit with those receiving the flowers.

Ministry to the Bereaved: This has been rolled into the Care Groups ministry. Leaders visit with members who have lost a loved one and offer each a book entitled *My Beautiful Broken Shell* written by Carol Hambler.

Care Cards: Care Group leaders send birthday and anniversary cards to those in the care groups. We may also send other cards such as get well, thinking of you, baptism, and confirmation and graduation cards.

Care Group Meetings: Meetings of each care group are held at least once a year.

Prayer Chain Ministry: The Board of Deacons administers a phone and email prayer chain. This is a vital and valued ministry of Eastminster. It enriches those who pray as well as those for whom prayer is offered. If you would like to be part of the email or telephone Prayer Chain, contact Lois Moore.



How do we deal with confidentiality on the Prayer Chain?

Prayer List (found in the Bulletin) – This list tends to be chronically ill people, family of a deceased member or ongoing need for prayer, such as a national tragedy or recovery efforts from a natural disaster. After first obtaining the person's consent, a member may put someone on this printed prayer list in the bulletin, by contacting Zoe at 757-1460 or zoezoffice@gmail.com, or by dropping a request for prayer in the offering plate. The person putting the name on this list needs to periodically update appropriateness with the person on the list and let Zoe know when to remove the name.

Prayer Chain - There are two parts to the Prayer Chain – email and telephone. Lois Moore is Congregational Care Coordinator; and all Prayer Chain concerns and requests should be directed to her at lamoore725@comcast.net or phone (h) 717-246-0113 ~ (cell) 717-586-7650. A member may also request that someone else be put on the Prayer Chain, but only with the other person's consent. The Prayer chain information includes only the name of the person for whom prayer is requested.

Some people may want this Prayer Chain request to remain confidential. Therefore,
The person receiving the request will ask the member "May we include your name on the printed prayer list in Pew Points?"

If the answer is NO, that request will be put on the Prayer Chain only.

If the answer is YES, the request will be put on the Prayer Chain and the list that appears in the monthly Pew Points.

Pew Points – *Those We Have Remembered in Prayer in the Last Month* –

This list is a combination of the bulletin Prayer List, Sunday verbal prayer requests and Prayer Chain requests (only those who have given permission).

Care Notes Ministry: These pamphlets are available in the back of the sanctuary and deal with a variety of personal subjects.

Congregational Cards: This ministry provides “Thinking of You” cards for the congregation to sign each Sunday. They are then sent to individuals who are not able to attend church (i.e. home bound, those in assisted living and nursing homes, etc) each week.

Nursing Home Worship: The Board of Deacons assists with four worship services each year at Kingston Manor Nursing Home. We participate in the message, reading of scripture, prayers, etc. along with hymn singing.

Special Needs: The Board of Deacons has a number of medical items available for loan to members who may be in need of them. There are a variety of items such as: canes, walkers, crutches, bedside commode, and wheelchair.

Financial Assistance: The Board of Deacons maintains a reserve of funds (including proceeds from the Deacon Memorial Endowment Fund) that may be used to assist members of the congregation in times of financial need. The process of distributing these funds is confidential, involving only the Pastor, the moderator of the Board of Deacons and the treasurer of the Board of Deacons. The other members of the Board of Deacons will be informed, at the next meeting, of such action and the recipient shall remain confidential.

Guidelines for Donating Money (to congregation members)

- The Moderator of Deacons and the Pastor have the authority to offer assistance to a member at their discretion.
- A **guideline** of \$500 to one person in a 6 month period.
- There are agencies in York County that offer assistance. A complete list of services is available on the FIRST website (part of United Way). Search for FIRST York PA, which has a website with complete, up to date information for all the services we talked about and more.
- Consider a possible referral to Stephen Ministry.
- Each case handled on a case by case basis, providing the person with possible solutions to their problem.

Proceeds from the Deacons Fund: The Board of Deacons administers the remaining proceeds from the Deacon Memorial Endowment Fund in the following priority order.

- a. Congregation members needs.
- b. The Mission Committee for local community needs.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Care for the congregation and friends of EPC

- Show caring and compassion to all members and friends of the Eastminster Presbyterian Congregation. Especially those of us who are poor, hungry, sick, lost, friendless, oppressed, burdened by injustice or in distress.

Ministries

- Administer and conduct ministries to help move toward Board of Deacons goals
- Care Group Ministry
- Flower Delivery
- Ministry to the Bereaved
- Care Cards
- Care Group Meetings
- Special Needs
- Prayer Chain Ministry
- Care Notes Ministry
- Visitation to the Homebound
- Congregational Cards
- Nursing Home Worship
- Donations to the Community



Officer Elections

- Elect officers to help lead the Board of Deacons in the following term year (September through August) including moderator, vice-moderator, secretary and treasurer. This election shall be held one to two months before the beginning of the term year (Sept. 1).
- A deacon representative to the Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the moderator prior to the Annual Congregational meeting to be added to the slate by the Nominating Committee.

Congregational Nominating Committee

- Represent the Board of Deacons on the Nominating Committee to call candidates for vacancies and upcoming terms as elders, deacons, trustees and Preschool Board of Directors.
- Provide the committee with deacon responsibilities and job descriptions.

Long Range Planning

- A sub-committee of the Board of Deacons consisting of the vice-moderator, three volunteers and a ministerial advisor shall meet at least once a term year.
- This sub-committee shall be responsible for the evaluation of the Board of Deacons goals and objectives.
- They shall report their findings to the Board of Deacons and the Session.

INDIVIDUAL DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES

General: Each Deacon is asked to agree to the following:

- Support the Board of Deacons' ministries and activities, including regular participation at meetings, events and programs (e.g. nursing home ministry, etc.)
- Support EPC programs by taking an active part in congregational life.
- Regularly attend officer training events sponsored by the church and/or the presbytery.

- Assist in the preparation and serving of communion during Worship and to shut-ins.
- Lift others up in prayer through Prayer Chain requests.
- Deliver special gift baskets to shut-ins

Flower Delivery: Each Deacon is asked to sign up for and deliver flowers that were in the Sanctuary during Worship Services. Along with another Deacon, these are delivered each Sunday to pre-assigned members. The Deacons often take the opportunity to visit with those receiving the flowers.

Devotions: Each Deacon is asked to sign up for and lead devotions at monthly meetings.

Session Liaison: Each Deacon is asked to sign up for, attend and report on monthly Session meetings.

Care Groups: Each Deacon is assigned a care group to lead along with another Deacon.

ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

The primary goal of any Board of Deacons accountability issue shall be the well-being of the deacon. In the circumstances of our lives we sometimes find ourselves unable or unwilling to fulfill previous commitments. The Board of Deacons understands this. They also know that trying to impel others to renewed commitment or ignoring their loss of commitment is not healthy for anyone. It is obvious, however, that should a deacon find himself or herself in this situation, they must also be wrestling with very hard choices. The Board of Deacons has elected to help fellow deacons through this process and, at the same time, stay informed so that they may continue their ministries and service as effectively as possible.

- Should a deacon find himself or herself in a situation that precludes their ability or willingness to fully fulfill their obligations as a deacon, they are encouraged to discuss the dilemma with an executive officer.
- The Board of Deacons shall consider it a serious matter if, in any six month period, it becomes apparent that a deacon has missed in excess of 25% of meetings. Furthermore, it is incumbent on the body to consider the matter in a manner that is primarily concerned with the well-being of that deacon.
- If the Board of Deacons finds itself concerned about the well-being of any deacon for any reason, the moderator and another executive officer or at least two executive officers will make private inquiries to that deacon about their well-being.
- These officers shall pursue a nonjudgmental and honest conversation with the deacon for the purpose of developing a strategy of insuring their well-being as well as fulfilling the requirements of the deacon's position.
- Discussions may include but should not be limited the following or similar strategies:
 - A process of reconciliation and recommitment by the deacon and the Board of Deacons to the functions of the position.
 - A temporary leave of absence by the deacon approved by the Board of Deacons moderator and the Session.
 - Submission of an application of release to the Session by the deacon with the support of the Board of Deacons moderator and in accordance with section G-2.0406 of the Book of Order.

- If all reasonable efforts have been made by the Board of Deacons to resolve the concern, the matter shall be turned over to the Session by the Board of Deacons moderator and another executive officer or at least two executive officers with a recommendation to pursue a renunciation of jurisdiction in accordance with section G-2.0407 of the Book of Order.

OFFICERS

Moderator:

- Moderates Board of Deacons meetings, enabling fair and insightful discussion but voting only to break a tie.
- Calls special meetings of the Board of Deacons when necessary.
- Prepares agendas for each meeting.
- Provides for a monthly “Board of Deacons” report to Session. This is fulfilled by the minutes of each meeting.
- Provides for an annual “Board of Deacons” report to the congregation.
- Can sign or designate the vice-moderator to sign checks along with the treasurer.
- Calls executive committee meetings when necessary.
- Co-ordinates deacon assignments.
- Appoints a Board of Deacons representative to the Congregational Nominating Committee and advises that committee of the appointment.
- Confers with the pastor and treasurer on matters of membership financial assistance.
- Represents the Board of Deacons at new member “Meet the Leaders” meetings.

Vice Moderator:

- Fills in for moderator if the moderator is unable to attend a Board of Deacons meeting.
- Has responsibility for the Long Range Planning sub-committee.

Treasurer

- Maintains Board of Deacons financial records and prepares monthly statement.
- Provide an annual “Board of Deacons Financial” report to the Congregation at the end of the calendar year.
- Receives and disburses Board of Deacons funds.
- Removes money from Upper Room collection box and deposits it in bank account.

Secretary

- Takes minutes of all Board of Deacons meetings.
- Oversees the typing and distribution of minutes.
- Keeps attendance.
- Handles Board of Deacons correspondence with Moderator.

Executive Committee

- Consists of Board of Deacons Officers and meets as necessary.
- Responsible for new Board of Deacons member and officer training.

MEETINGS

Schedule: The Board of Deacons normally meets on a regular monthly basis on a schedule annually established by a majority of the Board. (Currently meetings are on the 2nd Thurs. of each month at 7:00 pm) If you are not able to attend a meeting you must contact the moderator as ask to be excused. If not, you will be marked as unexcused.

Format: In addition to business or discussion there will be time allotted for Care Group leaders to discuss their group and make any plans needed to fulfill the duties. (Currently time is allotted from 6:30pm to 7:00pm.) The Executive Committee will meet at that same time if there are issues to discuss that may facilitate the meeting. The goal is to have the meeting last no more than 90 minutes.

Quorum: For conducting business, a quorum is considered seven (7) deacons plus the moderator.

Order: Generally, Roberts Rules of Order shall apply to the business portions of meetings. Decisions by consensus are acceptable.

ANNUAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

September: New terms begin, Ministries sign ups, Kingston Manor, *Advise office of officers, Reserve meeting room*, (Annual retreat)

October:

November: Kingston Manor

December: Memorial Fund dividends dispersement, compile deacons report for congregational meeting

January: Appoint Nominating Committee representative

February:

March: Kingston Manor

April:

May: Kingston Manor

June: Begin planning Annual retreat, begin training of new members, invite new members to meetings

July: No meeting usually

August: Election of officers for next term, Begin training of officers

Unspecified: Joint retreat, Care Group Luncheon, Communion training.

Notes:



**We
can make
a difference!**