

PROCEDURE FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(Nomination period, September 17 – October 8, 2017)

One of our goals for this fall is to allow for the nomination, election and installation of officers here at Westminster Church. It is important that anyone wishing to make a nomination for office and those accepting nominations read this document in its entirety. Included here is the process for electing additional officers as well as the qualifications for elective office.

PROCESS

The process or procedure for the election of officers includes a series of steps:

Nomination

1. First of all is the step of **NOMINATION**. Any **member of the congregation** may submit a name for nomination to the office of Elder or Deacon. It should be emphasized that there is no set number of Elders or Deacons required by the Book of Church Order and, as such, there is no number required to be nominated. In fact, a period for the nominations may pass without anyone being nominated in a given year. The purpose for this time is to allow the congregation to prayerfully consider whether there may indeed be a man who has exhibited the qualifications for a given office and thus should be nominated to serve. The first step is for the membership to review the qualifications for office as set forth in Scripture (**I Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**) and summarized in the Book of Church Order (see below). If there is a man who clearly exhibits these qualifications, that person should be approached by the member and personally asked whether he would be willing to be placed in nomination for that respective office. A **form** is being made available for the purpose of formally introducing a name into nomination which requires the name of the person making the nomination, the signature of the person being nominated, and the office for which nominated. **No nomination will be considered valid without these three items completed.** Nominations will be open from **September 17** through **October 8**. Anytime during this period a completed nomination form may be presented to any Elder. Ordinarily, a man must be a member of Westminster in good standing for **at least one year** before he can be nominated to office (exceptions to this requirement can be made only by a *unanimous vote* of Session).

Qualification

2. After the period of nominations is completed there will be an extended time for the **QUALIFICATION** of those nominated. This will consist of a number of meetings over a period of months to discuss the Biblical qualifications for the respective offices and training for the same. During this period of time a nominee may find it necessary to disqualify himself for office due to a doctrinal or practical consideration. **Being nominated for office is no guarantee of election** and it is no shame to disqualify oneself if necessary.

Examination

3. The final stage of the qualification period is the **EXAMINATION** of the nominees by the Session. This will cover both doctrinal and practical considerations. It is at this point that a **slate of those nominees** approved to stand for election will be made public to the congregation.

Election

4. A congregational meeting will then be called for the purpose of the **ELECTION** of officers. Officers are elected by a simple majority. Soon after the election a service of ordination and installation will be held.

The importance of this process cannot be overemphasized inasmuch as the church officers are the Lord's tools for guiding and directing His people in this particular congregation. Therefore, we also encourage you to review the qualifications for office as summarized by the PCA Book of Church Order.

DEFINITION & QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS

(Book of Church Order)

CHAPTER 8. The Elder

8-1. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed Bishop or Pastor. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed Presbyter or Elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed Teacher. These title do not indicate different grades of office, But all described one and same office.

8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the church.

8-3. It belongs to the office of Elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

CHAPTER 9. The Deacon

9-1. The Office of Deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.

9-2. It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.

In the discharge of their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure Deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Ruling Elders.

9-3. To the office of Deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.

These pages represent a summary of the biblical qualifications outlined in **Titus I** and **I Timothy 3** and they should also be reviewed.

You will also want to be reasonably sure that he subscribes to the standards of the PCA as contained in the Westminster Standards (Confession and Catechisms). While it is not required of a prospective member of the PCA church that these standards be adhered to apart from that personal knowledge of the saving work of Jesus Christ which identifies one as Christians, it is required that officers personally endorse these standards. The vows for ordination and installation require such agreement with these standards. Here are the affirmations all officers must make:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

(3) Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity?

(4) Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the

profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?

(5) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(6) Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

Let us, therefore, enter into this period with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Session if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours in His service,

The Session of Westminster Church (PCA)