

# **Deacons'**

# **Manual**

**What is a Deacon?**

The office of Deacon is a historic office of the Presbyterian Church (USA). In the New Testament, Deacons were appointed to care for the distribution of food and other necessities to the poor and needy members of the church (Acts 6:1-6). In Romans 16, both women and men served the church as Deacons. Other references to this leadership office are included in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) describes the ministry of Deacon as 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.0202)

There are currently 12 Deacons, comprising two classes, each serving a two-year term, plus one “Youth” Deacon serving a twelve-month term. Ordinarily one-half of the Diaconate will rotate off service each year. Since 1996, the church has been open to including the service of youth on the diaconate. The Youth Deacon position has the same responsibilities as other Deacons with a focus on caring of the youth of the church (6th grade-12th grade). The Youth Deacon is actually a youth.

**The Deacon’s Mission**

The Board of Deacons [Diaconate] of TCPC is a body of believers called to ministry and servanthood by Jesus Christ. This call includes ministry to the congregation as a whole, our fellow Deacons, and to the community.

By the grace of God, we are one body with many members having gifts that differ according to the grace given us. We are called by God and elected by the members to serve under the authority of scripture and the Session of TCPC.

Acknowledging that the Holy Spirit empowers us to this ministry of compassion and human concern, we seek to serve, not to be served. Ours is a ministry that seeks to serve through compassion, care, and communication throughout the congregation.

The Deacons assist the pastor(s) in the pastoral care and nurture needs of the congregation and the community.

**Organizational Structure of the Diaconate**

The Diaconate structure is based on the vision of TCPC to be “an inviting family of compassion.” Two teams of Deacons care for the congregation: Inviting Team, Compassion Team. Each Deacon serves on one of the teams. The leader of the Diaconate is the Moderator who is appointed by the Session. A Vice-Moderator for each team is appointed by the Moderator.

With the Moderator’s concurrence, a Deacon may shift among teams during the term of service. Teams work closely with each other and upon invitation, with selected various ministry teams in the church, to integrate and leverage the work of deacons. The Diaconate may appoint any other positions it deems necessary, e.g. secretary, etc.

49 **The roles of each Team are as follows:**

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51 **The Inviting Team**

- 52 • Welcomes and shepherds new members, prospective members and visitors to activities and
- 53 opportunities within the church, including new members class and connection with the pastor(s).
- 54 • Supports outreach and recruiting initiatives of ministry teams through communication with the
- 55 congregation.
- 56 • Notifies the Office Administrator of visitors and relays contact information so that a weekly report
- 57 is made for staff and Deacons, and reaches out to visitors, including “regular visitors.”
- 58 • Coordinates with the Evangelism and Fellowship Ministry Team.

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60 **The Compassion Team**

- 61 • Serves individuals and families who are in acute need which may be caused by death, illness,
- 62 surgery, the birth of a child, divorce, and loneliness after trauma. Often this includes management
- 63 of a MealTrain.
- 64 • Serves families facing chronic situations, such as long-term care, job changes, and other life
- 65 events.
- 66 • Serves and supports individuals and families in times of joy including major achievements (high
- 67 school/college graduations) or important dates such as significant birthdays or anniversaries, birth
- 68 of child/grandchild.
- 69 • Coordinates with the Prayer Shawl Ministry and the Children and Family Ministry Team at the
- 70 birth of a new baby, etc.
- 71 • Notes in conversations those members who desire a pastoral visit or “communion at home” and
- 72 are prepared to accompany the pastor to assist in communion.
- 73 • When a need is identified, Deacons will prayerfully respond to the situation. Including but not
- 74 limited to a home or hospital visit, phone call, email, card or offer to help with transportation or
- 75 meals.
- 76 • Check on members who have not participated in Church or been seen at Church activities for an
- 77 extended number of weeks.

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### **Your Responsibilities as a Deacon**

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81 **Before Ordination and Installation:**

82 Deacons-elect are expected to attend all Officer Training Classes, after which the Session will examine

83 them in the following areas: personal Christian experience; knowledge of PC (USA) guiding doctrine,

84 government, and discipline; the duties of the office, the church software; and confer with them as to their

85 willingness to undertake the ministry appropriate to the order. After the Session examination and

86 affirmative vote, Ordination and Installation will be scheduled as part of Sunday morning worship.

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88 **After Ordination and Installation, the expectations of Deacons are:**

- 89 • To attend all Diaconate Meetings, both regular and called, unless excused. The Diaconate
- 90 currently meets the first Wednesday of each month. Should a Deacon need to be absent from a
- 91 meeting, she/he needs to advise the Moderator prior to the meeting.
- 92 • To serve as assigned on a Diaconate team.
- 93 • To regularly attend worship services and actively participate in the nurture and mission of the
- 94 congregation.
- 95 • To prayerfully consider working toward the Biblical tithe of one’s wealth for Three Chopt
- 96 Presbyterian Church, as exemplified by the church in its annual budget.

- Communicate pastoral concerns to others and to the pastor(s) and enlist their help as needed
- Pray for the members of the church family, give of your time and talents, and share in the nurture, fellowship and mission of the congregation.
- Contact new members to help them become connected and involved in the life of the church.
- Attend and support New Member events.
- Attend scheduled church officer retreats and/or retreats organized solely for the Diaconate, for spiritual growth, fellowship, planning and goal setting.
- Attend the annual Diaconate and Session joint meeting.
- Help serve Holy Communion during Worship as assigned by the Worship Ministry Team.
- Per the Book of Order in G-2.0202, the session may delegate other duties to the Diaconate.

**Deacons are also asked to:**

- Represent the Diaconate at a Session Meeting and to present a summary of the Session meeting at the next Diaconate meeting.
- Lead a devotional during a Diaconate Meeting.
- Prepare and assist in bringing communion to at-home members of the church, or local senior living facilities.
- Assist pastors in general pastoral care, in time of a death of a member, etc.
- Work with ministry teams [MTs] involved with programs of the congregation.

**How the Deacons Communicate Concerns**

**Communicating with the Entire Congregation**

When there is a sudden, unexpected death or another kind of event that the congregation needs to know about, Deacons may be asked to help communicate this news to the congregation. The pastor(s) will initiate this process through the Diaconate Moderator, after a general email has been sent. As some members do not receive email, the deacons will be called upon to carry this important information to people as an act of our kindness and love as a church.

**Learning about a Concern**

Knowing and recognizing when a special need exists in the congregation is an important first step for every Deacon. When a concern becomes known to the Deacon, the Deacon will inform the pastor(s) of the concern.

The Office Administrator also should be notified. The church depends on this role as the central hub of our information and the Office Administrator updates the visitation lists and visitors lists.

**Responsibilities of the Officers**

**Moderator**

The primary task of the Moderator will be to ensure that the Deacons are meeting the objectives of their respective teams and to be sure that they have the resources and support they need. The Moderator shall keep the Deacons informed of the pastoral care needs of the church and of the needs and opportunities of ministry teams.

**Other Responsibilities:**

- Communicates with the pastor about pastoral needs, joys and concerns.

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- Works with pastors and the clerk of session to plan for the annual meeting of the Diaconate with the Session.
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- Prepares agenda and leads the monthly Diaconate's meetings.
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- Communicates Deacon assignments for Session meetings to Clerk of Session.
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- Maintains Devotional Signup Sheet and distributes to Deacons.
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- Assigns one of the Vice Moderators to assume the responsibilities of Moderator, as needed.
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### **Vice-Moderators**

151 The Vice Moderators are responsible for overseeing the Inviting Team and the Compassion Team. They ensure that their team is kept informed of TCPC member needs, special assignments, and projects.

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- The Vice Moderator for Compassion prepares a Deacon Outreach Report for the monthly Diaconate meeting.
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- The Vice Moderator for Inviting Team prepares a report of the team's activities for the monthly Diaconate meetings.
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- Assumes the role of Moderator as needed.
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### **Clerk**

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- Takes attendance and notes at each monthly Deacon's meetings.
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- Prepares minutes of each meeting and distributes the minutes and each Team's report to Deacons, Pastor, Clerk of Session, and Office Administrator.
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### **Care for Deacons**

165 The work of the Deacon is sometimes challenging. We are fortunate to often be some of the first to know of new babies and engagements. We are also most likely the first group to learn of tragedy, illness and difficulties. And because we are human, we can at times become overwhelmed. It is very important for Deacons to communicate their concerns and blessings. The role of the Deacon is not a counselor, not a hired social worker or nurse, even if those might be their professional vocation. The Deacon is a fellow member of the Three Chopt Presbyterian church family, a Christian caregiver and a friend. Remember to allow the Diaconate membership to serve you in your personal life as you care for the members of our congregation.

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### **Annual Review**

175 Recognizing changing dynamics and needs, an annual review of the Diaconate's responsibilities is conducted in the first quarter of the year. The review will include the work of the Diaconate, their meetings, and leadership, including the process of officer election. The review will be led by an individual appointed by the Administration Ministry Team, meeting with the Diaconate. The review report may include recommendations to the Session.

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### **Visitors/ New Members: Order of Action**

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- A. Connecting with New Visitors: Deacons greet new visitors, answer any questions and make a connection with them. Deacons communicate events, activities and volunteer opportunities with the visitor as needed.
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- B. Visitor Information and follow-up
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- a. Deacons receive information Visitor Report from the Church Office on Monday/Tuesday
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- b. After review
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- i. Follow-up with a card, call or second email after 3 weeks
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- ii. If a visitor expresses interest in joining (on pew pad or other)
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- 1. Deacon contacts visitor, let them know of Inquirer's class
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- 2. Forward this information to the Pastor(s) for further contact
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193 C. Visitor follow-up

- 194 a. First time Visitor- Send a welcome card and welcome email (from Constant Contact –  
195 Office Administrator will send this on notice of first-time visitors)  
196 b. Additional Visits - After a month, send care/email explaining any current event or worship  
197 service of interest.  
198 c. Continued Visits - Pastoral Contact

199 D. Inquirer’s Class

- 200 a. Deacons attend Inquirer’s Class when notified to meet visitors interested in joining the  
201 church.  
202 b. Deacons attend a called Session meeting when new visitors are joining.

203 E. Shepherding Duties of New Members

- 204 a. Deacons meet the new member assigned to them soon after the member is presented to the  
205 congregation. Deacons find out if the new member has any questions or needs information.  
206 b. Deacons learn their “story” for an e-news biography. It should be written and sent to the  
207 new member for approval before being sent to the Office Administrator  
208 c. Deacons obtain offering envelopes for the new member. They are located under the sink in  
209 the conference room. Record the offering envelope # and send it to:  
210 [financialsecretary@threechoptchurch.org](mailto:financialsecretary@threechoptchurch.org)  
211 d. Deacons provide a paper copy of the directory if requested.  
212 e. Deacons obtain name tag for new member from Office Administrator  
213 f. Deacons keep in touch with the new member in person, phone or email for at least one  
214 year.  
215 g. Periodically, but no less frequently than once per year, the deacons host a new members  
216 dinner or luncheon. All deacons are invited. Other people that might be seen as potential  
217 friends/connections for the families are also invited.  
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219 **Outreach to Absent Members: Order of Action**

- 220 A. On a quarterly basis, the Diaconate will review the Realm-generated report of members who have  
221 not attended a church service or activity in-person within the previous six-month period. The  
222 Diaconate will discuss each name on this report and generate a list of members who have not been  
223 seen at a church service or at any church activity.  
224 B. The Diaconate will conduct outreach, typically via a telephone call, to the individuals who have  
225 not been seen at a church service or at any church activity within the previous six-month period.  
226 C. After outreach, the Diaconate will update the list with its notes and send it to the pastor for his/her  
227 information and to the Office Administrator for inclusion in Realm.