

## Constitutional Questions for Elders & Deacons

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?

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?

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?

Will you fulfill your **ministry** in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

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?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

Will you **pray for and** seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

(For **ruling** elder) Will you be a faithful **ruling** elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in **councils** of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

(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?

*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-2.0301 Ruling Elder Defined*

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders, and they are eligible for any office.

## Responding to God's Call - Ruling Elders

The Nominating Committee is considering placing your name in nomination as an elder. The members of Session have a responsibility under our Form of Government to "... examine each candidate's calling, gifts and preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Councils, i.e. Sessions, shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates." (G-2.0104b)

The call to service as an ordained officer in the church is an act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a council (Session) of the Church. (G-2.0103) We believe that this is a unique time for our congregation and you. The Holy Spirit has been working in you to prepare you for this moment and opportunity, giving you suitable gifts to guide and undertake ministry and mission. Persons who undertake the ministry of a ruling elder, deacon or teaching elder should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. (G-2.0104a)

To enable this conversation between yourself and the members of Session, and allow us to grow in our knowledge of your journey in faith and preparation, share with us your statement of faith through the following questions:

How long have you known Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Under what circumstances did you confess your faith?

What is so profound for you in knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

Please describe your discipleship to the Lord. How have you served and what have you done to advance the gospel?

What gifts and abilities do you believe God has given you?

After reviewing the constitutional questions for ordination and installation that are attached, is there any reason why you could not fulfill them?      No    Yes  
If "yes" please provide an explanation.

In light of G-2.0301 "Ruling Elders Defined," which is attached, how would you undertake being an elder for this congregation?

Your response to these questions is the foundation for a conversation on faith and ministry. Our mission is Christ's mission which is a gift from Jesus Christ. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority through and by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God's new creation. Christ's ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came "not to serve but to serve."

Thank you for your responses, and, for considering this call by God to serve his Church through this congregation.

## Responding to God's Call - Deacons

The Nominating Committee is considering placing your name in nomination as a Deacon. The members of Session have a responsibility under our Form of Government to "... examine each candidate's calling, gifts and preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Councils, i.e. Sessions, shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates." (G-2.0104b)

The call to service as an ordained officer in the church is an act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a council (Session) of the Church. (G-2.0103) We believe that this is a unique time for our congregation and you. The Holy Spirit has been working in you to prepare you for this moment and opportunity, giving you suitable gifts to guide and undertake ministry and mission. Persons who undertake the ministry of a ruling elder, deacon or teaching elder should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. (G-2.0104a)

To enable this conversation between yourself and the members of Session, and allow us to grow in our knowledge of your journey in faith and preparation, share with us your statement of faith through the following questions:

How long have you known Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Under what circumstances did you confess your faith?

What is so profound for you in knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

Please describe your discipleship to the Lord. How have you served and what have you done to advance the gospel?

What gifts and abilities do you believe God has given you?

After reviewing the constitutional questions for ordination and installation, is there any reason why you could not fulfill them? No Yes  
If "yes" please provide an explanation.

In light of G-2.0201 "Deacons Defined," which is attached, how would you undertake being a deacon for this congregation?

Your response to these questions is the foundation for a conversation on faith and ministry. Our mission is Christ's mission which is a gift from Jesus Christ. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches and uses the Church as he wills, exercising his authority through and by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of God's new creation. Christ's ministry is the foundation and standard for all ministry, the pattern of the one who came "not to serve but to serve."

Thank you for your responses, and, for considering this call by God to serve his Church through this congregation.