



2020 Officer Nominations

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 10:11

For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves?

Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Luke 22:27

God graciously and sovereignly chooses to lead His Church through fallen, yet redeemed, men who serve our Chief Shepherd and Servant King as elders and deacons.

- It is our privilege to participate in the Spirit's work of calling qualified men to shepherd and serve our church through this officer nomination process.
- It is also our duty in light of our vows to "support the church in its worship and work to the best of [our] ability."

Please take a moment to read over the following material so that you can become familiar with the two categories of ordained offices in the church and with Tabernacle's nomination process.

We are praying for you, and would ask that you do the same for us throughout this process.

Thank you,

The Session of Tabernacle Presbyterian Church

Elders and Deacons

Scripture affirms two categories of ordained officers in the church: elders and deacons. Within the category of elders, there are teaching elders (pastors) and ruling elders. The primary responsibility of the elder is to be a *shepherd*—leading, teaching, protecting, and caring for the flock that is under their care (*BCO 8-3*)*. The primary responsibility of the deacon is to be a *servant*—coordinating mercy, promoting generosity, and maintaining the property of the church (*BCO 9-2*)*.

Although we tend to focus on their roles and spiritual gifts, elders and deacons must first be men of proven character. Many saints may have the gift of teaching or mercy, but that does not mean they are qualified to serve as elders or deacons. God requires spiritual gifts *and* spiritual fruit:

1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer [elder], he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not

violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

These qualities are required for officers in the church because they describe men who are very much like Jesus, the true Shepherd and Servant of the Church. A church is only as healthy as its leaders, so be sure to nominate those men who truly walk and live as disciples of Jesus, loving Him and His Bride.

The Nomination Process

- Members in good standing of Tabernacle Presbyterian Church are invited to submit a nomination(s).
- Each nominee must also be a member in good standing of Tabernacle Presbyterian Church.
- Nominations for each office will be received beginning Sunday, March 29, and will close on May 10.
- Nominations should be based on a man's spiritual qualification and demonstration of gifts for ordained office. For this reason, it is required that nominees be members of Tabernacle Presbyterian for at least six months prior to being nominated, and attending for at least one year.
- Nominate only those you have prayed for in earnest. We also encourage you to speak with the potential candidate about your interest in nominating him as a deacon or elder.
- Each nominee must receive a minimum of two nominations from households other than his own to be considered a candidate.
- Each nominee who receives the minimum number of nominations will be contacted to determine his willingness and ability to become a candidate for the office of elder or deacon.

Those nominated and willing to serve will begin a training period lasting up to a period of a year. Once trained (or if they have been previously trained or ordained), candidates will then be invited by the Session to complete a written examination, followed by an interview. The Session will also seek input from the wives of approved candidates who are married. The examination will include the following elements:

1. Examination in his Christian experience and maturity.
2. Examination in his knowledge of our system of doctrine, government, and discipline.
3. Examination in the duties of the office to which he has been nominated.
4. Determination of his willingness to give assent to our ordination vows (*BCO 24-5*)*.

Afterward, candidates who have successfully completed the training will be put before the congregation. A majority vote of the members present will be required before any candidate can be ordained and/or installed as an elder or deacon. The entire process can take between six to twelve months, so we appreciate your patience.

The Bible places a great deal of stress on the character and responsibilities of church officers. Much is entrusted to them and much is required. Please take great care with this process, and ask the Lord to bless Tabernacle with godly men who will love and serve this church the way Jesus does for the entire Body, which is His Bride.

Regarding Gender

Perhaps you are curious about why we are only nominating men for ordained office. We believe the Bible casts a complementarian vision for male and female roles, calling men to positions of spiritual authority in their homes and in the Church (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-23; Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 2:12). Elders and Deacons are the only leadership roles in the Church reserved exclusively for men. Godly men and women are called to lead in a myriad of other ministry capacities.

We recognize this feels out of step with our egalitarian age, but we are in submission to our Lord who calls us to give Him our faithful and confident obedience. For an extended discussion on the ministry of women in the PCA, please see the 2017 Report on “Women in the Ministry” (go to tab-pres.org/get-connected/resources). Please speak with one of the elders or deacons if you would like more information.

*The PCA’s *Book of Church Order (BCO)* is available online at www.pcaac.org/resources/.