

Celebrating God's Gift of Servanthood



**Officer Orientation Retreat
Part Two—Deacon Edition**

**Wasatch Presbyterian Church
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Saturday, April 13, 2024

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Morning Worship

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Opening Sentences

In the beginning, when it was very dark God said, "Let there be light."

And there was light.

In the beginning, when it was very quiet, The Word was with God.

And the Word was God.

When the time was right God sent the Son.

Christ came among us, Christ was one of us.

In the beginning, we were created in the image of God. But the image of God is a deep and broad thing, the totality of which constantly eludes us. And so as we draw near to God, we offer the pieces of the image which we each hold, praying that together we may more fully reflect and proclaim the height, depth, and breadth of the One who calls us from death to life. Let us join together in the prayer of Catherine of Sienna,

"You, O Eternal Trinity, are a deep sea into which, the more I enter, the more I find, and the more I find, the more I seek. O abyss, O eternal Godhead, O sea profound, what more could you give me than yourself? Amen."

Scripture Reading: Romans 12

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

We rejoice in your generous goodness, O God. As you have made this day, O God, you also made us. Give light for our comfort. Come upon us with quietness and still our souls, that we may listen for the whisper of your Spirit and be attentive to your nearness in our deliberations. Empower us to rise above our differences in new life to proclaim your praise, and plan new ways to show Christ to the world, for he reigns forever and ever.

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

Our Father who art in Heaven....

Benediction

Let us begin our retreat in the presence and guidance of the God revealed in Jesus the Christ and in each of us.
Amen

How Our Deacons Work: An Introduction

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The Deacons: Presbyterian Polity in Action

1. Representative Democracy - similar to civil structure; separation of powers; one of three
2. “Theology of the Group” – a group of people is more likely to make good decision than an individual person

Purpose of the Deacons

1. Care for our members
2. Organization varies by size of congregation - division of responsibility and labor
3. Set the vision - “big picture” of how we tend to the needs and cares of our members and why
4. Work with committees and members to fulfill our shared mission

Purpose of the Deacon Committees

1. Do the Work of the Deacons—enact the deacon’s plan in their area of service
2. Primary place of deliberation and action

Role of Moderator

1. Moderate—keep us on topic and on track
2. Call meetings to order; identify speakers; calls for motions/discussions/votes
3. Moderator can be overruled by deacons—group is still ultimate authority
4. Does not make motions—may suggest a direction or approach for consensus
5. Call special meetings as needed—usually at request of a committee or two members
6. “Enforce the Process”—enforce our agreements; keep order in meetings; shared responsibility among members
7. Make a monthly report to Session highlighting information on deacon activities
8. “Deacon to the Deacons” – provides support and care for the members of the Board

Role of Secretary

1. Records actions of deacons and preserves information
2. Notifies members of meetings and compiles information for meetings
3. Does not make motions—records them

Role of the Treasurer

1. Works with the staff Business Administrator to keep track of the deacon budget
2. Receives and signs off on receipts for reimbursement
3. Reports on the deacon budget at meetings of the Board
4. Submits the deacon budget request to the Session Finance Committee for the following year

Role of the Deacon Coordinators

1. Check in monthly with the deacons on your team to see whether there are any changes to their congregants
2. Coordinate the areas under your supervision
3. Communicate deacon and church programming emphases with the deacons in your congregation groups
4. Engage lay members of the congregation in the work of your ministry area

Working Together as a Covenant People

1. Authorize Committees to fulfill their jobs and spend their money
 - a. No authorization needed for “regular” responsibilities or expenditures
 - b. Something “new” that impacts multiple areas needs to come to board
2. Honor our Covenant
 - a. Read and review Deacon Covenant –see draft within this orientation packet
 - b. Hold us all accountable to the same level
3. Honor our Process—Present a “United Front” to Congregation
 - a. We discuss, discern, decide and declare
 - b. We vote our convictions, and accept the majority decision
 - c. We do not share our process outside of the Board
4. Consider the question “What is best for the whole church?”
 - a. Not just your committee—the overall vision and direction of the congregation
 - b. Doing what is best for the whole body at the “expense” of your area may be necessary—and noble

Ways to Enhance our Productivity

1. Deacon assigned to group records minutes from group meetings and sends them to the Secretary
2. The Deacon prepares a report to the Board in three agreed areas: Action, Discussion and Information (rather than sending minutes)
 - a. Action—requires action from the board
 - b. Discussion—would appreciate insight of deacons to explore implications; no vote
 - c. Information—keeps deacons informed of committee activities; no vote; no discussion unless want to highlight or ask questions
3. Reports are due to the Secretary before noon on the Tuesday before next meeting
4. All deacons agree to read all information prior to meeting—absolutely necessary to make informed decisions
5. Action Items come from committees
 - a. If a deacon brings a motion, moderator usually refers to a committee
 - b. Exceptions can—and probably will—be made depending on circumstances
6. In most cases, major items will be presented for discussion at least one month prior to action
7. Electronic votes
 - a. Only when response necessary in short period of time
 - b. Nothing controversial (usually)
 - c. Any opposition indicates a face-to-face meeting will be called
8. Email is to be used for sharing information—not emotion—if confronted with complicated or difficult issue, it’s better to connect personally

Enjoy Serving on Our Deacons

1. Taking some time to agree on these items now should enhance our time together—and make our meetings more enjoyable
2. Thank you for your service to our church and to our God

Questions, Clarifications and/or Comments?

Remember Basic Principles of Deacon Work in Ministry

#1—Divide the Work!

#2—Multiply the Ministry!

#3—Grow the People, Grow the Church!

1. The goal of good committees is to involve as many people as possible doing the ministry, to encourage them in the life and ministry of our church...
 - a. by matching people's gifts to needs and opportunities around us
 - b. by trusting people to do their best without micromanagement
 - c. by dividing the ministry into smaller pieces so more can become a part
2. As servant leaders, we are called to **Invite, Engage, Integrate, and Disciple** our church family for ministry.
3. We must trust our members—and help them to trust themselves.

“Every difference of opinion is not necessarily a difference of principle.”

--Thomas Jefferson

Caring for Our Congregation

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The Deacons have a long and meaningful history here at Wasatch Presbyterian Church. Many members have been ordained and served over decades of the church's existence.

Over the past months, the deacons and staff decided that given the dual realities of the coronavirus pandemic and a large, diverse congregation, we need a new strategy for caring for our members, and placed it as one of the primary objectives that we would accomplish during the interim period. Due to the pandemic, many of the activities that deacons have engaged in through committee work are not currently possible, though others have become even more important. We recognize that a congregation as large as WPC requires a full complement of ordained people with warm spirits and big hearts to keep us connected and engaged; this is even more vital for those who are elderly, ill, and lonely.

The Deacons already are a vital part of what we call the “continuum of care,” caring for our members as the family of Christ. Our part of the continuum is to proactively connect throughout the year with all our members, which will be divided into “Parishes” of about twenty families each. By reaching out to each family, we have a better chance of helping people feel they are a part of the church, as well as learning of any situations or needs they may have.

The easiest way to describe our ministry is with four “C’s”: Connection, Communication, Compassion and Care.

Connection. We try to contact every member of the church on a regular basis so that we can create bonds of closeness and connection with them. Some members of the church no longer live in the area and can lose touch with us. Other members are not able to get to church as often as they would like. Regardless of their situation, the Deacons are doing our best to reach out to each and every member.

Communication. Part of our design in connecting with members is to keep them informed of what is happening at the church and how they can be engaged, so we share information about upcoming events or activities. Communication goes both ways, so we also invite members to share their questions, concerns—even their frustrations—in the hopes of opening the communication channels between our leaders and members.

Compassion. Everyone experiences tragedies in life, so the Deacons want to be “first on the scene” when difficulties arise. By connecting and communicating, our hope is that members will feel comfortable contacting us when they have questions or problems. While we are not the only form of compassion, we are here to help in any way we can.

Care. There are several options for ongoing care at the church. Using the first three “C’s,” our goal is to help connect people with the care ministries within our church. And, of course, we may make a visit or two along the way ourselves!

We hope you are excited about this enhanced role of ministry. We look forward to working together to serve our church and its members. There are still a lot of details to address and plans to make. Thank you for your willingness to serve together. We will love to “C” where this goes!

Financial Policies, Procedures and Practices

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How Do We Make a Budget?

1. Each fall, the Budget/Finance Committee (BFC) invites each committee to estimate how much it will cost to fund their ministry for the coming year
2. Each ministry team examines their present expenses and projects their future needs
3. BFC examines each ministry team's projected needs, estimates next year's income and establishes a draft budget
4. Draft budget provides an estimate of funding needed to fund next year's ministry
5. BFC leads us all in an Annual Fund Campaign in October, to encourage members to make pledges toward the budget
6. Once pledges are tabulated, BFC makes a more accurate estimate of projected income and suggests revisions to the draft budget as appropriate
7. BFC invites moderators of each committee to meet and discuss proposed budget
8. BFC presents proposed budget to the Session and Deacons for discussion in November and approval in December
9. Session approves the budget for next year—no congregational approval necessary

How Do We Get Approval to Raise Funds?

1. All requests to raise funds must be coordinated with Budget/Finance Committee (BFC) prior to fundraising—they will coordinate requests and mediate overlapping requests
2. "Regular" events can be submitted to BFC by September of each year and approved by Session at January meeting
3. Unforeseen requests can be submitted to BFC for coordination with other requests already scheduled

How Do We Spend the Resources?

1. Each committee is authorized by Session to manage their allotted amounts, both budgeted, donor-restricted, and session-designated
2. Classify expenses to the appropriate budget line item, even if this action overspends the particular line item; this accurate picture of expenditures will help in creating next year's budget
3. Committees are responsible for the "bottom line" of their ministry area—funds are fungible within line items
4. Do your best to stay within budget—but Session can approve more funds if needed
5. If a ministry team's needs to exceed its total budget by \$1,000 or more, it must seek Session approval
6. Contact BFC as soon as possible to explain the need for additional funds and decide next steps

How Do We Get Reimbursed?

1. Complete Check Request Form – found online or church office
2. Attach/scan original receipts
3. Attain authorization signature from Staff Resource or Committee Chair
4. Submit Check Request form to the Business Administrator by placing it in her box
5. Receive a check in the mail

DEACON COVENANT

Wasatch Presbyterian Church
Adapted from Session Covenant Approved June 20, 2023

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”
(Ephesians 4:1-6)

As members of this Board of Deacons, we have been called by God through the voice of this congregation to serve the people of God with energy, intelligence, imagination and love. Therefore, we bind ourselves together with bonds of honesty, support and encouragement.

As leaders called to model the Body of Christ, we will:

1. Maintain a community and climate of worship so that the central question is not “What is the group consensus?” but “What is the leading of Christ in our midst?”
2. Be intentional in developing relationships with one another and engaging in conversation and ongoing study together in order to build and maintain Christian community and foster trust.
3. Gather good data and basic factual information, identifying alternatives and possibilities. Keep all possible options open in order that creativity may contribute to the process.
4. Lay aside all biases and blocks to the Holy Spirit, leaving the outcome to God’s direction, being willing to consider new ideas, and being obedient to the results.
5. Spend time in reflection and prayer, listening for God’s intimations of the future and hints of God’s direction, relying on scripture, listening, and deep engagement with Christ and each other.
6. Share with the community what one has seen, heard, or felt in the reflection time and speak from our personal experiences related to the subject.
7. Act in a spirit of love and humility, honoring the truth that God works through each member of the body. Be aware God may be speaking through another person and remember that no one possesses all of God’s truth.
8. Listen attentively and with respect and openness to our sisters and brothers, believing that all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ. Focus on ideas instead of questioning motives, intelligence or integrity.
9. Wait for God’s timing. Continue to ask God for direction during the waiting. Speaking with a united voice depends on waiting long enough to receive a common sense of leading.
10. Lead by example, by sharing our faith and resources to further the church’s ministry through:
 - a. Regular attendance and participation in Worship
 - b. Intentional involvement in a Christian Education program
 - c. Consistent Stewardship through pledges and contributions
 - d. Joyful engagement in the Fellowship Activities with our members
 - e. Ongoing participation in the Mission Outreach of our church
11. Use our leadership roles to empower and encourage others, so that our members may experience the joy of serving and that God’s ministry will be done. We recognize that it is our responsibility to work with our committees and groups to provide clarity of roles, resources for their work, and directions in selecting priorities.
12. Maintain confidentiality within the group, sharing only “public” information in ways that build up the Body of Christ.

Furthermore we agree:

1. Committees are authorized and responsible for their particular areas of ministry as described in their job descriptions. They do not need additional permission to fulfill their duties.
2. Committees are authorized to spend their line items—budgeted, designated and restricted—and do not need additional permission from the deacons while performing the “normal” duties of their ministry. If a committee requires funding beyond its budget, it may submit a request to the deacons, detailing its rationale and design. Because budget allotments are made based on each committee’s plan, a request will be examined for its consistency with the deacon’s long-range plans.
3. Meetings generally will last no more than 60 minutes.
4. We will allot time in each meeting for ongoing training/reflection/dreaming—this provides the opportunity for the deacons to set both their vision and the direction, while committees may labor together to “make it happen.”
5. Written reports are not ministry minutes or summaries, but will follow the templet divided into:
 - a. Decision Items—issues requiring deacon approval by formal vote
 - b. Discussion Items—occasions that a committee requests feedback from the deacons, which the deacons will provide without a formal decision or vote. Whenever possible, “major items” will be presented for discussion at least one month prior to action.
 - c. Information Items—actions the committee has taken as authorized by the deacons; these items will be noted, but not mentioned unless (1) a deacon has a question or (2) the reporting deacon would like to highlight something.
6. We will speak as one body. While we may disagree during our discussion, our voted decision will be considered the official position/decision of the board of deacons, and we will not undermine this decision by conversations within the congregation. We work and stand together.
7. We will speak the truth in love to each other, knowing that sometimes this may hurt another’s feeling; we agree that it is better to be honest than agreeable.
8. We will support one another in our shared ministry, encouraging and assisting whenever possible. Because the church has called us to lead them, we consider our responsibilities to be a sacred trust, and will thank God regularly for the opportunity to serve our community and our God.
9. At this time in our lives, we each agree to fulfill these responsibilities. If a member of our board should have a change in personal circumstance which no longer allows him/her to fulfill these responsibilities in a timely manner, the member may resign from the board with absolute appreciation for ministry provided.
10. We are a team that trusts each member, holds each other accountable, and works together for the shared ministry of our church. Thanks be to God for this opportunity to serve!

Here we hold ourselves and each other accountable to this covenant, and the policies and/or agreements we make together. We commit ourselves to one another, this congregation and the God we serve together.

DEACON AGENDA (SAMPLE)

Tuesday, June 4, 2024 7:00pm

- 7:00 pm Opening Devotion Prayer
- 7:05 Time for Training and Improvement
- 7:15 Approval of Minutes of Deacons Meetings
- 7:20 Treasurer's Report

- 7:25 **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

- 7:30 **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 7:40 **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION (Committee Reports)**

- 7:50 Other Matters for Discussion
- 8:00 Adjourning Prayer

Closing Worship

"Seeking After God"

An Offering of Ourselves (based on "Body Prayer" by Richard Foster)

I pray today with my head, Lord, lifting it heavenward in adoration.

I pray today with my eyes, Lord, looking for the things that are not seen.

I pray today with my hands, Lord, raising them in jubilant praise.

I pray today with my knees, Lord, bowing in submission and contrition.

I pray today with my feet, Lord, working with all my might.

May you be pleased with my prayer. Amen.

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth.”

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

God, in you I trust.

Eternal God, we thank you for being with us today, and for every sign of your truth and love in Jesus Christ. Especially we thank you for the gift of peace in Christ...

for reconciliation in our relationships...

for each new insight into your love...

for energy and courage to share your love...

Gracious God, we remember in our own hearts the needs of others, that we may reach up to claim your love for them, and reach out to give your love in the name of Christ. Especially we pray for our families...

for harmony and justice...

for friends who are hurting or bereaved...

for the Spirit's power in this church...

O Lord my God, thank you for bringing this day to a close; Thank you for giving me rest in body and soul. Your hand has been over me and has guarded and preserved me. Forgive my lack of faith and any wrong that I have done today, and help me to forgive all who have wronged me. Let me rest in peace under your protection, and keep me from the temptations of darkness. Into your hands I commend my loved ones and all who dwell in this place; I commend to you my body and soul. O God, your holy name be praised. Amen. (The unison prayer is by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Departure Blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. **Amen!**

Bless the Lord! **The Lord's name be praised!**