

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about OFFICER NOMINATION

## WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

**Answer:** One of the membership vows taken when joining the church includes the promise that you will “support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability.” Participating in officer nominations and elections is one of the most important ways that you can support the work of LMPC. The future direction of our church depends largely upon the leadership God selects through his people. You have a critical role in helping us recognize those whom God has gifted and called to this important ministry.

## WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS?

**Answer:** Summaries of the character qualifications for elders and deacons can be found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6-9. Acts 6 contains the story of how and why the early church appointed seven men to care for widows, and it is an excellent resource for understanding what qualifications deacons should possess. Elders and deacons should be men who are:

- worthy of respect and generous.
- if married, managing their families well.
- peacemakers and those who honor truth.
- Spirit-filled and wise.
- hospitable and committed to caring for those in need.
- holding firmly to God’s Word and the deep truths of the faith.
- (if elders) able to teach.

## I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT SOME OF THE MEN WHO ARE LISTED AS BEING ELIGIBLE TO SERVE. DOES THE SESSION BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON ON THIS LIST IS QUALIFIED TO SERVE?

**Answer:** No. The Session is not endorsing every person on the list as qualified to serve. The list contains the names of every resident male member, aged 21 and above, who is not under formal church discipline. The Session trusts that the nominating process, as well as the lengthy training that all nominated officers undergo, will ensure that only qualified candidates are elected to serve.

## WHY DO YOU PROVIDE A LIST OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES IF THEY ARE NOT, IN FACT, ALL QUALIFIED TO SERVE?

**Answer:** The list is provided with the desire that more than just the most visible and well-known men in the church will be nominated. There are those who are faithfully, yet quietly, serving the church who would make excellent officers. We also realize that because our members worship at five different services every Sunday morning, we don’t see everyone on a regular basis. Please use the list to remind yourself of candidates who may be serving “behind the scenes” and thus don’t come immediately to mind as well as those you know but don’t see

frequently.

#### **WHY ARE ONLY MEN ALLOWED TO SERVE AS ELDERS AND DEACONS?**

**Answer:** Our church and our denomination reserves the offices of elder and deacon to qualified men because we believe this is the teaching of Scripture. The particular responsibilities of authoritative teaching and leadership are to be filled not by all men, but by those men God has called and gifted to sacrificially serve his church (see 1 Tim. 2:11-14, 1 Tim. 3, and 1 Cor. 14:34-35). This teaching in no way implies that women are inferior to men, or that they are not also called to serve Christ and his church in many important ways. In particular, the Bible makes clear that women are to be partners in the diaconal ministries of mercy and service (see Rom. 16:1-2 and Luke 8:2-3), and therefore our church has many women serving on committees such as the Mercy Committee and the Home and World Missions Committees. Women are also called and gifted by the Holy Spirit to teach, pray, evangelize, supervise, and disciple in accordance with the guidelines given in Scripture. We strongly encourage every member of our church to use their gifts at LMPC, and we are deeply thankful for all of the non-ordained people in this congregation, men and women alike, who are serving in so many different ministries here. We are all members of one body, brothers and sisters in Christ, working together to serve our King.

#### **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS AND DEACONS?**

**Answer:** Elders provide overall governance and leadership to the church. They have the responsibility of watching diligently over the flock committed to their charge and making sure that neither doctrine (what is taught in the church) nor morals are corrupted. They are to visit people in their homes, especially the sick, and to set a worthy example by their zeal to evangelize unbelievers and to make disciples. Deacons lead in ministries of service, particularly to those in need. They also have the care of the property of the congregation. In the discharge of their duties, the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

#### **ARE THE ELDERS SUPPOSED TO BE OLDER MEN AND THE DEACONS YOUNGER MEN?**

**Answer:** While many older men do serve as elders and many younger men serve as deacons, the qualifications for each office are not necessarily dependent on age. There are older men with gifts of mercy and service who are called to be deacons, and there are younger men with gifts of teaching and leadership who are called to be elders. Deacons are not “junior varsity elders.” Elders and deacons are two distinct offices, each with its own calling.

#### **WHAT IF I KNOW ONLY A FEW MEN IN THE CHURCH REALLY WELL? I CAN'T COME UP WITH 10 NAMES FOR EACH OFFICE.**

**Answer:** While we allow each member to nominate up to 10 candidates for each office, we very much want you to nominate only those whom you believe qualify for church office according to the guidelines given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It is perfectly fine if, after prayerful consideration, you are only able to come up with a few names to put on your ballot. In fact, it is far better to nominate only a few men whom you believe to be biblically qualified for office than

to nominate many men with whom you have only a glancing acquaintance.

#### **AREN'T THE SAME PEOPLE NOMINATED AND VOTED INTO OFFICE YEAR AFTER YEAR?**

**Answer:** While many officers do rotate on and off the Session and Diaconate, serving more than one term, the pastors as well as those currently serving as officers are eager to see new officers raised up in the church. This past year, three of the elders were elected to serve for the first time on the Session at LMPC, and eight of the deacons were first-time officers.

#### **HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO THE PASTORS HAVE OVER THE NOMINATING PROCESS OR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE?**

**Answer:** The pastoral influence is intentionally limited. The lead pastor and the senior associate pastor participate in the nominating process by acting as advisors to the committee as needed. They do not vote on the names being considered by the committee.

#### **WHO SERVES ON THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE?**

**Answer:** The nominating committee is made up of two women chosen by the women's ministry leadership team, the chairman and vice-chairman of the Diaconate, three current elders chosen by the Session, and the vice-moderator of the Session. Members of the committee serve for no more than two consecutive years.