

SERVANT OF THE CHURCH HANDBOOK AND DEACON GUIDELINES

January 13, 2024

I. Overview

This Handbook and these guidelines are to clarify some of the duties and other miscellaneous matters related to the office of deacon, the deacon body, and deacon officers. Where there is any conflict between these guidelines and the church Constitution and By-laws, the Constitution and Bylaws shall be understood to have priority. This Handbook and these guidelines have been approved by the deacon body, and also include customary practices of the deacons based on precedence, practice, and recommendations that have been established by the deacons.

II. Code of Ethics

A. *The Bible*

I accept the New Testament as my source of authority on the Christian life and the work of a deacon. From it I learn that deacons were first chosen to serve with the Pastor in the ministries of the Church. That they were ordained by the Church to serve people in need. That they were expected to set an example in Christian life and service.

B. *Proper Authority*

The Church determines my specific authority, and I will be true to its constitutional or special instructions to its deacons. The Lord Jesus Christ has granted me spiritual authority, and I will be true to Him by setting a Christian example in everyday living. My conscience, quickened by the Holy Spirit, gives moral authority; and I will strive to be wise, fair, loving, and courageous in dealing with current issues.

C. *Ministerial Staff*

I am a partner and co-worker with my Pastor and all ministerial staff. Together, we are responsible to Christ and are co-workers for Christ. I will strive to help ministerial staff by:

- Praying for them
- Encouraging them
- Publicly defending them when they are criticized unfairly
- Privately being frank with them when I think they are mistaken
- Being their brother in Christ, co-laborer in the church, and moral and spiritual helper in service to people

D. Other Deacons

I recognize that I am engaged in team work with other deacons and will:

- Respect them
- Pray for them
- Strive to understand their points of view when we do not agree and will disagree in love
- Carry my share of responsibility at all times
- Defend them if they are attacked or misunderstood by others

E. The Church

I will strive to work responsibly with all who are members of the Church by:

- Attending the services and participating in the work of the Church
- Supporting the financial program of the Church
- Encouraging the indifferent members and praising the faithful ones
- Supporting the decisions of the Church even when I am in the minority
- Discouraging envy, jealousy, backbiting, and strife
- Refraining from gossip, insisting that the truth be told about all matters
- Guarding sacredly any confidence which could be detrimental to the Church
- Bearing witness to the unsaved and appealing to them to accept Christ and join the Church

F. My Lord

Of myself, I am neither wise, good, nor strong enough to be a deacon. But I am not alone in this work. Christ is my companion, and through His wisdom, mercy and power I am able to serve.

III. Responsibilities – General

A. Active Deacons

- Periodically review the Code of Ethics (see Section II)
- Deliver new member packets to new members as needed
- Serve on councils, committees, and commissions as appointed by the Chairman of deacons
- Assist the ministerial staff in observing the ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper)
- Assist the ministerial staff as needed and requested
- Rotate and serve as deacon of the week (DOW) – see below
- Rotate and serve as alternate deacon of the week (ADOW) – see below
- Mentor Yoke Fellows as needed and appointed by the Chairman of deacons
- Review and maintain a working knowledge of current church policies and documentation
- Review and understand the current church budget, budget line items, and budgeting process
- Maintain keys, alarm code, and safe combination
- Attend all regularly scheduled, and special, deacon meetings
- Prepare and deliver a deacon devotion at deacon meetings as assigned
- Attend all regularly scheduled, and special, church conferences and business meetings
- Serve as the Board of Directors for the Corporation
- Serve on the deacon Qualification Review Team as appointed by the Pastor and Chairman of deacons
- Recommend the annual budget to the Church
- Investigate, and mediate resolutions as needed, any complaints/grievances against the Personnel Committee
- Along with the Personnel Committee, MMO Committee, and Financial Management and Stewardship Committee, recommend any staff reductions and/or additions to the Church as needed

B. Inactive Deacons

- Periodically review the Code of Ethics (see Section II)
- Assist the ministerial staff as needed and requested
- Assist the active deacons as needed and requested
- Maintain a working knowledge of church policies, documentation, and budget

C. Deacon of the Week (DOW)

- Service runs Saturday through Friday
- Contact members (or have another deacon do this on their behalf) identified through newly added prayer needs (typically, listed in **RED** text in the Prayer Concerns distribution) or identified through contacts with church staff
- Deliver New Member packets (or have another deacon do this on their behalf)
- Assist ministerial staff during services/events as needed
- Unlock the Sanctuary at least 30 minutes before services and/or church events and remain on the premises (or ensure someone will do this for you, such as ministerial staff or ushers)
- Unlock the Family Life Center at least 30 minutes before Sunday School and other church events and remain on the premises (or ensure someone will do this for you)
- Make the weekly deposit and return the drop box key to the safe – it is safest to have another adult with you but this is at your discretion
- Lock down the campus following services and church events and ensure interior lights are off, toilets are not running, HVAC is set as appropriate, fire doors are shut and locked (FLC), and alarm is set (or ensure someone will do this for you)

D. Alternate Deacon of the Week (ADOW)

- Service runs Saturday through Friday
- Assist, or stand in for, the deacon of the week and ministerial staff as needed

E. Family Responsibilities

- Any deacon may be responsible for families at the request of the family or as appointed by the deacons.
- Active deacons with family assignments should have those families reassigned the December before their active term ends.

IV. Responsibilities – Deacon Officers

A. Chair

- Preside over all deacon meetings
- Call non-regular deacon meetings whenever the need arises
- Appoint deacons to councils, committees, and commissions as appropriate and needed
- Serve on the Church Council
- Serve on the deacon Qualification Review Team
- Assist the Pastor in appointing two at-large deacons to the deacon Qualification Review Team
- Moderate the deacon Qualification Review Team in the Pastor's absence
- May, along with the Pastor, call a church conference
- May moderate church conferences where the moderator and assistant moderator are unavailable
- Moderate, as needed, any conference at the close of a worship service to receive new members
- Assist the Pastor and any newly elected, un-ordained deacon, decide on a date for ordination
- Along with the Pastor and appropriate council/committee/commission chairperson, may declare an emergency that presents a danger to the health, safety and welfare of church members, or a danger to church property, and must be dealt with immediately, and waive the maximum expenditure amount provided for in the Fiscal Policy
- Along with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, sign special agreements with the ministers at the time of their employment (as needed and appropriate) once approved by the Personnel Committee and the Church
- Participate in any meeting involving, and mediate resolutions as needed, any complaints/grievances against the Senior Pastor
- Along with the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and another member of the ministerial staff, conduct an exit interview with the Senior Pastor upon their separation (retirement, calling, etc.)

B. Vice Chair

- Assist the Chair as needed and requested
- Act as Chair if the Chair is unavailable or absent
- Serve on the Deacon Qualification Review Team

C. Secretary

- Provide an agenda for, and take minutes of, each deacon meeting
- Distribute meeting minutes to the deacons following each meeting
- Send any recommendations by the deacons to the church office for posting in the Happenings
- Report deacon information, and present deacon recommendations, at all church conferences as needed
- Establish a deacon devotion schedule for the upcoming calendar year and distribute/post by December 31 with copies being sent to the Senior Pastor and the church office
- Establish a deacon of the week (DOW) and alternate deacon of the week (ADOW) schedule for the upcoming calendar year and distribute/post by December 31 with copies being sent to the Senior Pastor and the church office
- Send copies of meeting minutes, schedules, handouts, etc., to the Senior Pastor, church office, and the Church Management and Records Committee
- If both the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable or absent for a meeting, call the meeting to order and take nominations, and elect, a Chair for that meeting only
- Take minutes of any meeting involving complaints/grievances against the Personnel Committee
- Maintain a list of alternate deacon candidates
- Act as treasurer for the deacons

D. Assistant Secretary

- Assist the Secretary as needed and requested
- Act as Secretary if the Secretary is unavailable or absent

E. Other Positions

- The deacons may appoint additional officers, and define their duties, as needed
- The deacons may appoint committees and subcommittees as needed, provided each committee and subcommittee has a designated chairperson and specifically defined duties and responsibilities

V. Team Ministry

The deacon team ministry was terminated on June 5, 2023, and the bereavement and illness support responsibilities were transferred to the Deacon of the Week. Individual deacons may continue to serve individual members or families if those deacons and members/families agree to this arrangement.

VI. Ordinances

A. Communion (Lord's Supper)

Communion is usually held monthly.

Process and prayer:

- Begin with silence, instructing that this is a time of silent confession of sins – after a time of silence, ask God to bless this sacred time of communion and to bless those who are partaking of His Son's table.
- "The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"
- Offer the bread and say, "The bread is the body of Christ, broken for you."
- "In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
- Offer the cup and say, "The cup is the blood of Christ, shed for you."
- "This is a prayer of Thanksgiving to God for His son, Jesus, and for the provision of salvation made through Him."
- Benediction (Numbers 6:24-25): "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift His countenance upon you, And give you peace."

B. Baptism

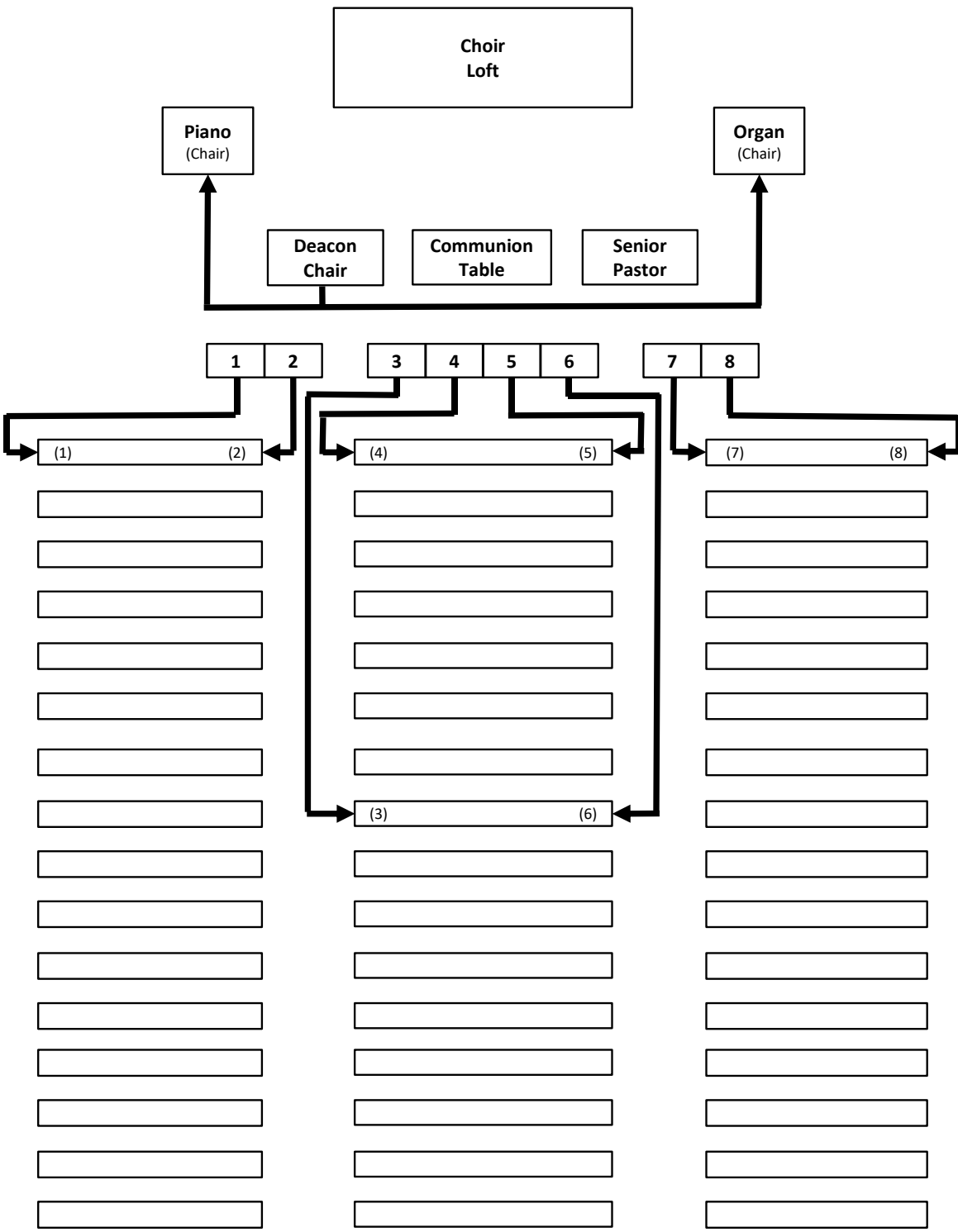
- Deacons shall assist the ministerial staff in baptism ceremonies as needed
- Deacons may baptize individuals when the need is imminent and ministerial staff is unavailable

C. Ordination

- Newly elected deacons that have not previously been ordained shall be ordained at an ordination ceremony by the laying on of hands of all individuals who have been ordained
- The ordination ceremony shall be conducted before newly elected deacons begin their duties
- Any deacon who is ordained is a deacon for life

Lord's Supper Diagram

February 18, 2017



VII. Yoke-Fellow Ministry

A. Overview

In Philippians 4:3, the apostle Paul addressed his "fellow workers" in the ministry. A yoke-fellow is a follower of Christ who has been yoked or teamed with a fellow Christian for the work of ministry. Many examples of this partnership can be seen in the ministry of Paul. Acts 11:23-26 tells of Barnabas choosing Paul to be his helper in ministry at Antioch. During the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas would team up with Mark to begin carrying the gospel to Asia Minor. Later Paul would link with Silas and then with several others who would be his yoke-fellows in ministry.

It is crucial that the expectations for a yoke-fellow be explained clearly. Prospective yoke-fellows must understand what they are being asked to do. Then, when they commit themselves to be yoke-fellows, they are saying yes to specific expectations.

B. Purpose

Service: Those who do not feel qualified to be ordained as a deacon are given an opportunity to serve Christ in an important area of ministry. The yoke-fellow ministry also opens the door of service to many capable Christians who would otherwise be left out.

Support: The yoke-fellow ministry provides teammates to deacons and helps them shoulder their load.

Identification of potential deacons: There is always a need for qualified deacon candidates and this ministry assists in identifying potential future deacons.

Exposure to deacon ministry: Those who serve as yoke-fellows are set apart from the crowd. This gives the potential deacon the opportunity of Christian growth, learn what deacon ministry involves, and better understand the church and her function.

Readiness for deacon ministry: It also provides the deacon body and the church members an opportunity to observe the yoke-fellow and provides valuable information about his or her readiness to be selected as a deacon.

C. Service

One difference between deacon and yoke-fellow commitments is the duration. Yoke-fellows make a one-year commitment while deacons make a commitment for life. When deacons consent to ordination, they are agreeing to be deacons all the time and to serve with the body whenever the church chooses them for subsequent terms.

VIII. Regular Meeting Agenda Items

A. Overview

- Deacon service follows the calendar year
- Regular deacon meetings are usually held the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall (unless otherwise specified)

B. January

- First deacon meeting of the new year
- Deacons elected as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary take office
- Welcome new deacons and yoke-fellows
- Ensure new deacons have keys, the alarm code, the safe combination, and are aware of where church documentation is located

C. February

- Discuss holding a deacon retreat

D. March

- No special business

E. April

- No special business

F. May

- No special business

G. June

- No special business

H. July

- Decide on a date for deacon nominations and have it posted in the Happenings (usually the first Sunday in September)
- Begin planning for Pastor Appreciation Month (October) and Pastor Appreciation Day (the second Sunday in October) – contact the Personnel Committee and partner with them on this
- Accept deacon emeritus nominations (once per year)

I. August

- Discuss deacon budget items and money, if needed for the next calendar year, for submittal to the Financial Management and Stewardship Committee

J. September

- Hold deacon nominations (usually on the first Sunday)
- Set a date for the deacon Qualification Review Council to meet
- Invite the Financial Management and Stewardship Committee to present the preliminary church budget at the October meeting

K. October

- Pastor Appreciation Month
- Pastor Appreciation Day (second Sunday)
- Preliminary church budget presentation by the Financial Management and Stewardship Committee; vote on the church budget
- Set a date for deacon elections and post the date, and the list of nominees, in the Happenings
- Have the deacon nominees provide testimonies or biographies

L. November

- Hold deacon elections
- Begin identifying deacons to serve as deacon officers for the upcoming year
- Hold a deacon ordination ceremony, if needed
- Identify alternate deacons and Yoke Fellows for the upcoming year

M. December

- Last meeting for deacons who are rotating off
- Reassign families (if any) of those deacons rotating off
- Elect deacon officers for the new year

IX. Miscellaneous

A. *Number of Deacons*

- The number of active deacons is listed in the Constitution and By-Laws

B. *Service Period*

- Deacon service follows the calendar year (unless an alternate is filling a vacancy)

C. *Alternate Deacons*

- Alternate deacons (if available) shall be used to fill deacon vacancies and complete unexpired deacon terms
- Alternate deacons shall be those individuals that were on the ballot of the most recent deacon election but were not elected to office – the three (3) individuals with the highest votes NOT elected shall be considered the alternate deacons
- Alternate deacon candidates shall be prioritized by the number of votes they received in the most recent deacon election
- If a deacon vacancy occurs, the alternate deacon candidates shall be contacted (in prioritized order) to verify that they are still able to serve
- Any alternate deacon called to serve due to a vacancy who has not previously been ordained shall participate in an ordination ceremony prior to beginning their duties
- If no alternate deacons are available, or are unable to serve, then a special election shall be conducted as prescribed in the By-Laws

D. *Deacon Nominations*

- The number of deacon nominees should be less than, or equal to, the number of anticipated deacon vacancies, but should not exceed the number of anticipated vacancies.
 - Example 1: Four deacons are ending their active service at the end of the year, so there should be no more than eight deacon nominees for the regular election.
 - Example 2: One deacon leaves active service during a term, but no alternates are available, so there should be no more than two deacon nominees for the special election.
- Following nominations, review the list of deacon nominees and place them in order of nominations received (most to least) and start contacting the nominees (starting at the top of the list with those nominees having the most nominations and work your way down the list) to ascertain their willingness to serve if elected (if not already done ahead of time).
- Have the deacon nominees provide (1) testimonies before the church and/or (2) biographies that can be sent to the church body.

X. Deacon Emeritus

A. Overview and Purpose

The purpose of bestowing emeritus status on a deacon is to recognize a lifestyle of distinguished servanthood at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in accordance with scriptures.

B. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for emeritus status, a deacon must meet the following criteria:

- Has been ordained as a deacon
- Has been elected and served as a deacon at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church for at least two terms
- Is not currently serving as an active deacon
- Has decided not to serve as an active deacon again
- Has agreed to accept the honor of Deacon Emeritus

C. Process

- Nominations for Deacon Emeritus are made by the active deacons once per year
- The active deacons shall by secret ballot vote on the nominees and a maximum of two (2) shall be selected (those with the most votes) – if more than two nominations were made and a tie breaker is necessary to determine the two selections then it shall also be by secret ballot
- The Chairperson of Deacons shall verify the eligibility criteria for the nominees who were selected for the emeritus honor and shall meet with the selected individuals to determine if they are willing to accept the honor
- Once the eligibility and willingness to accept the honor for each selected individual has been determined, the deacons shall recommend to the church that the selected individuals be honored as a Deacon Emeritus
- Those selected individuals approved by the church for the emeritus honor shall be recognized (see below)

D. Recognition

- A ceremony to publicly recognize the honoree and award a plaque shall be added to a regularly scheduled service as coordinated by the Senior Pastor, Chairperson of Deacons, and Deacon Emeritus recipient (emeritus status may be awarded posthumously at a regularly scheduled service as coordinated by the Senior Pastor, Chairperson of Deacons, and the immediate family of the deceased recipient)
- The recognition ceremony shall be announced in the Happenings
- The plaque shall be awarded to the recipient (or their immediate family) by the Chairperson of Deacons
- The recipient's name and year of award shall be added to the Deacon Emeritus Honorees list (continuation plates) posted in the vestibule
- The responsibility for ensuring a plaque is obtained and the recipient's name is added to the Deacon Emeritus list shall fall to any deacon (active or inactive) who volunteers to do this

E. *Plaques*

- Plaques can be obtained from, and honoree plates can be engraved at, Creative Images in Cary (226 E. Chatham Street, 919-467-2188).
- The contact person was Heather Cribb.
- Plaques are 8"x10" rosewood plaques with inverted corners, black plate, and gold text, and cost \$83.00 per plaque (including engraving) in June 2023.
- Continuation plate engravings cost \$17.00 per plate in June of 2023.
- A proof of one of the plaques for 2023 is below:

