

Message from the Stated Clerk Officer Training



One of the distinctions of the Presbyterian system of church government is the concept of officers who are called to ordered ministry. These officers are, of course, deacons, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders. In the context of an individual church, ruling elders and installed MSW are called “presbyters” and, together as the session, they govern the congregation. The session’s responsibilities and authority are significant, see BoO G-3.02, and so it is needful that ruling elders be trained when they undertake this critical responsibility.

Not only is it needful that ruling elders be trained, the Book of Order makes it imperative that ruling elders and deacons be trained, that they undergo a period of study and preparation. It provides that all persons elected to be ruling elders or deacons are to be examined by the session of their church concerning their personal faith, their knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the PCUSA, and the duties of the ministry. BoO G-2.0402.

Many churches provide the training to their officers. But I have learned that some do not and also that other officers could use a refresher. And there may be some people who are thinking about becoming an officer who would like to learn more about the church. Although it will not be in depth, at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 9, I will provide an overview of church doctrine, the form of government, and the duties of deacons and ruling elders at the ***Leadership Training being held at Sargent Memorial Presbyterian Church. (See the flyer in this edition of the Thursday Mail and on the NCP Facebook page for other offerings at the Training.)*** Those attending are encouraged to bring a Book of Order with them. The new 2019/2021 Book of Order is available on the PCUSA website: <https://www.pcusastore.com/AdvancedSearch/DefaultWFilter.aspx?SearchTerm=book+of+order>. It can be ordered in paper for \$10.00 or downloaded for free. It is available in Korean, Spanish, Indonesian, Braille, Large Print English, and English.

I hope to see many of you there. It is a privilege to work among so many dedicated folks.

Peace, Sara