

Nominating Committee

Elder . . . Deacon . . . Trustee . . . you might read these terms and wonder what they mean. If you are a longtime observer and participant of the life in Elfinwild you might also say to yourself, “uh oh, I bet it’s nominating time again.”

Both responses are reasonable. It is time to consider who is being called to one of the boards and it is also fair to wonder what these folk do in the life of our congregation.

Before we get to the practical issues, let’s try to clarify a few things. So here is an FAQ about the boards:

Question: Why do we have these boards?

Answer: In the most practical sense they exist to organize the ministry of the church. That said, they also exist to give witness to the service we are all called to in the name of our Lord. In other words, we are called as followers of Jesus to serve the Lord, His church, and our communities. These boards help to bear witness to that service.

Question: The boards are often referred to as leadership boards and the members are called officers. What if I don’t think my gifts are in being the boss?

Answer: The members of these boards are “not the bosses of us” as some might say. In fact, that understanding runs exactly counter to what Scripture tells us. The boards are called to be servants who help to organize and encourage the work of the church, not be the bosses. The primary function of an Elder is not command but rather discernment, the ability to listen and see the people of God and to encourage their growth and work. The primary purpose of the Deacons is the ministry of witness and sympathy; they tend to the hearts and spirits of the Church. The primary purpose of the Trustees isn’t to run the church, it is to be sure that the physical and financial matters of the church are in good shape so that ministry can happen.

We don’t need bosses, we need servants who are mindful of the example of Jesus who could have commanded anything and instead chose to serve the people He loved.

Question: OK, but what specifically do each of the boards do and what skills or strengths are needed?

Answer: Above all else, you must be a committed follower of Christ. Members of the boards serve 3-year terms of office, each board meets monthly, and additionally there are ministry teams within each board that meet as needed. Beyond that here are some brief descriptions:

- *Trustees – The trustees are given the task of managing the church’s worldly affairs so that the other ministries of the church can happen. They are responsible for our finances and for the physical plant of the church, its grounds and buildings. Generally we look for people who have skills in finances, management, engineering, and technical skills in keeping all of the buildings working and open for ministry.*

- *Deacons – The deacons are the ministers of witness and sympathy for our congregation. In Scripture, the most famous deacon was Stephen whose ministry and martyrdom are described in the Book of Acts. Today they take care of and visit with those who are homebound, prepare and organize meals for those who need help because of being sick or injured, they organize church activities like the picnic and Seasoned Saints luncheon, and fill many other needs where the heart of a servant is required. We look for people who are caring, good at hospitality, honest and open, show love to others in word and in how they act, and generally strive to show the face of God in the world.*
- *Session –The Session and the ruling elders who serve on it are the oversight body of the congregation. They are responsible for the work of the various ministries, teams, and boards of Elfinwild Church. That said, ruling elders are primarily responsible to equip and encourage the followers of Christ in their faith and in their diverse ministries both in the church and in the world. Ruling elders have the ability to listen and discern the spiritual health of the church and its people, the gift of deep faith, good judgment, and the willingness to serve as “shepherds of the faith.” (Acts 20:28.) Please keep in mind that ruling elders are not in charge of the Church, they don’t tell the people of God what to do. Their role is to help God’s children to grow in their faith and ministry, to draw closer to Him.*

Question: Deacons and Elders are “ordained” to those offices. What does that mean?

Answer: The definition of “ordain” when used in this context is to set apart for an office or duty. In the Church we believe that when the early church was being established the disciples of Jesus saw that some of them needed to be responsible for teaching the Word, some needed to be responsible for leading the people, and some needed to be responsible for caring for the people. From those early times we have the ordained offices of Teaching Elder (ministers), Ruling Elder, and Deacon. Ordination establishes a direct link back to the original disciples. We believe that those who are ordained are set apart to serve God and the Church in ways specific to the offices described above. It is very important to know that once you are ordained you will always be a deacon or elder whether you are actively serving on a church board or not.

Question: Does it take a lot of time?

Answer: Yes, it can. Agreeing to serve on a board is more than simply saying, “yes” to a meeting now and again. It is agreeing to serve in the ministry of the church whenever and wherever that occurs. And it takes time. For some that time is already available, others may need to carefully consider what they will give up doing in order to serve. But, not to put too fine a point on it, as followers of Christ we should ask ourselves what He and the disciples gave up?

Question: So is it as simple as saying, “I’m in, sign me up?”

Answer: No. This is a Presbyterian church after all so we need to do everything decently and in good order! Or perhaps, more helpfully, we believe that serving in this way is a response to a call from God. We sense and confirm that call by praying about what the Lord is saying to us personally about service and also by having a congregation who

prays about what they hear the Lord suggesting should happen in ministry. Serving on a board is thus a response from one person and a response from the congregation as to who should be serving at this particular moment.

Question: This will probably sound wrong, but it sounds like a lot of hard, and boring, work. Why would I do that?

Answer: You might not feel called to do that, at least not in this moment. But maybe you can feel a quiet, and insistent, tugging at your heart and mind that tells you there must be more to serving God than simply coming to church every now and again. And maybe you have had moments where you helped someone else and felt deep satisfaction, perhaps even joy, in that time of helping. Serving on a board is not drudgery and it does not involve martyrdom. We form deep friendships as we serve together, we laugh a great deal, and sometimes we cry together as well. We live as brothers and sisters in a family, all committed to serving our God and His children, and sharing in the work so that it does not overwhelm.

God sometimes speaks to us in a still, quiet voice that can be hard to hear unless we stop to listen. Other times He reaches into our lives and the world in loud and dramatic ways to help us to see where He is and what He wants us to be doing. Pray about our servant leadership boards. If you sense God speaking to you, quietly or loudly, please listen! If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for one of the offices please fill out the attached form and return it to the church office, or you can call the office at 412-486-5400. If you have a question or would like to talk about these offices or the nominating process please feel free to stop and talk with the elder of the week after church!

Name of Nominee _____

Name of Nominator _____

Office to be Nominated _____

Why You Have Nominated this Person
