

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions About MDPC Deacons

What is the difference between the Office of Elder and the Office of Deacon?

- In general, Elders and Pastors are responsible for the administration and teaching of a church. This includes finance, facilities, and Scripture.
- In general, Deacons are responsible for care and compassion of MDPC's members and ministries. This understanding is rooted in Acts 6:1-7, and in the discussion of spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:27-30).

To whom will Deacons report?

The Deacon Team will be housed in Caring Ministries, and will serve directly in conjunction with the Caring Ministries Pastor and staff. The Caring Ministries Pastor and the Caring Ministries Vision and Planning Elder will be charged with leading the team. Eventually, the Deacons would have a Moderator selected from among the elected Deacons. This person would work closely with the Caring Ministries Pastor and the Caring Ministries Vision and Planning Elder on a Deacon Lead Team.

Why would MDPC consider establishing a Board of Deacons at this time?

- The caring needs of the church continue to increase.
- The Office of Deacon would allow us to operate in faithfulness to Scripture (Acts 6:1-7)
- The Office of Deacon would allow us to affirm, celebrate, and commission those who already extend care and compassion to numerous MDPC members and ministries.

What will be the difference between this MDPC Board of Deacons, and the MDPC Board of Deacons that was closed in the early 1990's?

- Prior to 1993, MDPC Deacons were responsible for care, finance, and facility.
- Since 1994, MDPC has operated with no elected and installed Deacons.
- From 2019 forward, MDPC Deacons will be responsible for the care, compassion, and mercy ministries extended to the faith community of MDPC.

How are Deacons elected?

Deacons are elected in the same manner in which Elders are elected. Each year, the Nominating Committee will devise an educational program on the elections of Officers for all members of the congregation. The Nominating Committee (also a team of elected individuals) will then receive nominations from the congregation, as well as from pastors, staff, and Ministries leaders. After examining the qualifications of the nominated individuals and engaging in prayerful discernment, the Nominating Committee will extend an invitation to an appropriate number of nominated individuals to consider the call to the Office of Deacon. Nominees are then presented to the congregation for election. The elected Deacons will be ordained and installed along with the elected Elders, usually on the first Sunday of January. [For further information, see MDPC Policies and Procedures 1.2-1.3.]

- The elected 2022 class of MDPC officers will include seven (7) Deacons. Each of the subsequent two (2) years, the Nominating Committee will add seven (7) Deacons. This will create a 21-member Deacon Board.

What meetings will be required of Deacons?

Deacons will be responsible for attending the following:

- Deacon Team meetings (four per year)
- Joint meeting of Deacons and Elders (once per year)

- Meetings with their own ministries team as directed/needed. (Some teams have rhythm of monthly meetings, while other teams meet only as needed.)
- Meetings with the Pastor or other members of the Caring Ministries staff as needed.

What will Deacon meetings look like?

Quarterly Deacon Team meetings will be held on second Sundays as chosen by the Pastor for Caring Ministries and the Deacon Moderator. Scheduling suggested is January, May, September, and November, but should take into consideration Lent, Easter, Advent, and other pertinent calendar items. Deacon Team Meetings will be led by the Pastor for Caring Ministries and the Caring Ministries Vision and Planning Elder. In year three, a Deacon Moderator will step into this leadership position. Deacon Team Meetings will consider necessary statistics and decisions, but will prioritize conversation about how God is at work in our Ministries.

How will the Deacons interface with the Session?

Deacons and Elders and Staff will gather together at least once per year to celebrate God's work in and through MDPC. Deacons (like all Covenant Partners) are invited to attend Session meetings.

How will the transition work? Do current Elders become Deacons?

Current Elders will complete their elected term as Elders. They may be elected to the Deacon Board after one or more years of resting from elected office. Like Elders, Deacons will rest for at least one year between elected terms.

After the transition, will there be Caring Elders?

Session will always include at least one Caring Ministries Elder. This Caring Ministries Elder will represent the needs and concerns of Caring Ministries as Session makes governing decisions for the church. This Caring Ministries Elder will also serve as a liaison to the Board of Deacons, keeping Deacons abreast of pertinent all-church information.

Will Deacons serve in other Ministries in addition to the Caring Ministries?

The Board of Deacons will be housed in Caring Ministries. This model is in conjunction with Acts 6, where Deacons serve as care-givers for the body of faith. However, needs and opportunities for care touch all Ministries across the breadth of MDPC. Deacons can serve anyone within the MDPC community. As the number of Deacons increase, MDPC aims to expand their departmental representation and their influence, serving to connect and unite ministers across the church body.

Could we not simply recruit people to volunteer in care-giving opportunities?

Why should we utilize the elected office of Deacon?

There are hundreds of people that currently serve in MDPC's care-giving opportunities! Together these volunteers invest hundreds of hours to the care of MDPC's congregation. MDPC wishes to affirm the efforts and the gifts of these willing individuals, ordaining and commissioning them to serve as ministers of Christ within the body of faith in alignment with the biblical model of Elders and Deacons. MDPC also wishes to expand the giving and the receiving of care. One way to affirm and encourage attitudes and efforts of care is to allow the congregation to elect, to call, and to ordain those who exemplify gifts of compassion and mercy.