

## Deacon Description for First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley

The role of a Deacon is one of service to Christ and His church through the exercise of one's gifts to meet practical and spiritual needs. Deacons are members of the church elected by the congregation to ordained leadership roles; Deacons typically serve three-year terms. According to the First Pres bylaws, there should be between 30–40 total Deacons. Each year a new class of Deacons is elected, and each class consists of roughly 1/3 of the total number of active Deacons. Deacons are selected by the Nominating Committee and elected at the Annual Meeting. Training generally begins in April, with Ordination and active service beginning in May of each year.

*“The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.”*

Deacons partner with the Caring Ministries of First Pres as the hands and feet of Christ to serve individuals in our congregation and beyond. Serving as a Deacon is a rewarding and sometimes demanding call that requires commitment, prayer, and both extending and receiving God's grace.

### Deacon Orientation and Monthly Commitments

- Initial orientation and training meeting to be held in April
- Attendance at the annual Deacon Retreat (typically in May or June)
- A monthly meeting held the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month from 7–9 pm

### Deacon Project Leadership

- All Deacons are asked to serve on the leadership team of at least one of our Deacon project committees during the year. Current projects include: Young at Heart Luncheon, Memorial Services, Deacon closet clean up, seasonal gift deliveries, Encouragement Note Writing, and Grief Books management.

### Deacon Parish Ministry

- The Parish Ministry at First Pres was conceived as a way to promote deeper connections and extend care to a congregation that spans a large part of the Bay Area. Our Parishes, 14 geographical areas defined according to zip code, are each led by a team of Deacons and other lay leaders to cultivate connections and community through parish gatherings and service projects among its members. Besides opportunities for fellowship, Parish Ministries offer prayer and support for tangible needs by working with the pastoral care team to provide help, and assistance for members during times of need and loss.

### **General Deacon Commitments**

- Praying regularly for the Church, including the Deacon Ministry, as well as congregant requests received via the Caring Ministry team.
- Serving communion on a regular basis during church services, or to individuals who are homebound.
- Assisting with the hosting of memorial service receptions.
- Making twice per year seasonal gift deliveries (typically Advent and Lent) to our in-home and elderly, bereaved, and to those who have faced significant medical challenges.
- Attending the Annual Meeting and all congregational meetings

### **Qualifications to serve as a Deacon:** As a Deacon candidate we ask that one:

1. Be able to affirm trust in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, acknowledge Him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One should also be able to affirm that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to His Church,
2. Be able to affirm the tenets of the Reformed Faith,
3. Be above reproach and meet Scriptural standards (e.g., 1Timothy 3:8–13)
4. Be a member of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley,
5. Be involved in the life of the church and support First Pres financially,
6. Complete a Leadership Application which includes a Statement of Faith.