

## WPC Ruling Elder Job Description

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

Twelve ruling elders and the pastor make up the session or governing body of the congregation. The term is for 3 years, (unless otherwise specified), and no member shall serve more than 6 consecutive years without a pause in service.

There are 3 classes of 4 elders, with 4 elders rotating off each year.

**Ruling Elder Defined:** Ruling elders, together with the ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. (Book of Order G-2.0301)

In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. (Book of Order G-2.0104) Persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit would be considered for this ministry. (Book of Order G-2.0301) .

As a Ruling Elder at WPC, we are responsible for assisting the Pastor(s) in oversight of the spiritual welfare of the congregation. We are called to “pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.” (W-4.4003h). We trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer and Service are at the heart of this calling.

As part of Session, each Ruling Elder has a voice and a vote when deciding on matters brought before Session. It is important to vote with discernment for what is the will of God for the church body as a whole, and not for an individual agenda. In Ephesians 4:2-3, Paul urges us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.”

Responsibilities of Session Members: Ruling Elder  
What does Session do? (Book of Order G-3.02)

A. Care for the quality of life and growth (spiritual and bodily) of the Body.

1. Are members growing in Jesus Christ?
2. Are members being assimilated and equipped to do ministry?
3. Are members growing in love for one another? How is church unity?
4. Are we making progress with our goals/mission statement?

B. Committee leadership – Each Session member chairs a committee or serves as clerk of session. Committee chairs are determined by committees available and by considering individual gifts and talents. Most committees meet monthly and more often as needed. Committee chairs are responsible for setting the agenda, facilitating meetings, working in concert with other committees, providing minutes to session monthly, and/or reporting to session.

Current committees are as follows:

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|--------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Worship   | 2. Children’s Ministry     |
| 3. Outreach  | 4. Finance and Stewardship |
| 5. Personnel | 6. Missions                |
| 7. Youth     | 8. Fellowship              |

- 9. Adult Discipleship
- 11. Nominating

- 10. Trustees
- 12. Clerk of Session

C. Monthly Session meeting (usually the first Monday of each month)

- 1. Minutes of committee reports are due in session boxes (can be sent by email), one week prior to the session meeting.
- 2. Definition of Action Item: any new program, any change in business as usual, any fund-raisers.
- 3. Decisions are made by consensus; operating principle for ministry: What would Jesus do?
- 4. Agenda includes prayer and devotional time, clerk and pastor reports, committee discussion, old and new business.

D. Other duties and meetings

- 1. Approving baptism, roll changes
- 2. Other called meetings (usually to discuss an urgent matter)
- 3. Serving communion or ushering as needed
- 4. Meeting with and approving new members
- 5. Home Visitation
- 6. Annual Session Retreat
- 7. Attend day of leadership training
- 8. Attending and reporting at the annual meeting of the congregation and corporation in January
- 9. Attending and representing the congregation at Quarterly Presbytery meetings (2 voting members {commissioners} for each meeting).
- 10. Performing other duties as delegated by the congregation.

Once elected by the congregation, leadership training is provided, followed by an examination of personal faith (knowledge of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the constitution of the church, and the duties of the ministry). If approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and installation.

Training includes, but will not be limited to, reviewing and discussing the essential tenants of the Reformed Faith, Church Polity, and appropriate leadership conduct.

*Above and beyond all is to be in the word and in prayer for those in leadership, for those in the congregation, those in the community in which we serve and for any prayer concerns that are presented to us.*

Serving as elder is both a privilege and an honor. Know that you will be blessed as you serve God and the congregation.

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