

A Pledge by Those Called into Leadership in the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, WA

In accordance with God's gracious and loving Word to us, we believe we are saved by grace through faith (**Rom 3:3-24, Eph 2:8-9**)ⁱ. God offers reconciliation to us through the sending, sacrifice, death, and Resurrection of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and invites us to respond by following Him (**Matt. 4:19**)ⁱⁱ. Acknowledging God's sovereignty, even our response is a gift from Him (**John 6:65**)ⁱⁱⁱ. We believe, as the Scriptures tell us, God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (**John 3:16**). We also affirm our belief that God commands us to go out and make disciples of all nations (**Matt 28:19-20**)^{iv}, by sharing God's message of love through our words and deeds. God's message and invitation to follow Him are not for some, but for all.

To those called to exercise special functions in the Church in terms of leadership, God gives suitable gifts and expectations for their particular participation in His mission. This includes (but is not limited to) those who serve in all ministries under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Church, from the ordained offices of deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament to small group facilitator, Sunday School teacher, and any and all worship leaders.

While we recognize that all people are at different places in their journey of faith and have different levels of spiritual maturity, there are also different levels of leadership responsibility and participation. The Bible makes mention of the role and high expectations of overseers (**1 Timothy 3, Titus 1:6-9**)^v. An "overseer" or "bishop" (as it is also translated) has a great deal of responsibility, as they are entrusted with "overseeing" a particular ministry of God's church. One who is entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing a ministry should not be a non-believer or recent convert (**1 Timothy 3**)^{vi} for their own sake and the sake of those within the ministry.

We also recognize that Jesus gave the people to whom He ministered opportunities to grow in terms of discipleship through participation and service "*so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*" (**Ephesians 4:12-13**). We desire to do the same and encourage others to share their gifts with the larger family of faith as long as the peace, unity, and purity of God's Church is preserved. Part of being able to share that gift is exploring God's invitation to follow Him through deeper fellowship with the Body. Because of the impact a leader can have on the larger Body of Christ, their life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel in the Church and in the world (**Phil 1:27**)^{vii}.

Additionally, a role of leadership in the church is a great privilege and not a right, and leaders must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a governing Body of the Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head (**Col 1:18**)^{viii}, in accordance with Scripture (**Rom 13:1-7**)^{ix}, and our constitution, the Book of Order (**G-6.0302-G-6.0304**)^x.

If someone, whether in a leadership role or not, who is participating in the ministries of the church fails to live their life in a manner worthy of Christ and disrupts the peace, unity, and purity of His church, it is our responsibility as brothers and sisters in Christ to disciple them through formative and restorative discipline and we reaffirm our intention to follow the Biblical model of **Matthew 18:15-20**^{xi}. We believe God loves us just as we are, but we also believe God loves us too much to leave us that way (**Rom 6:1-11**)^{xii}. As Session, it is our responsibility to help the individual, while at the same time, be good stewards or protectors of the larger Body and mission of God's Church.

We solemnly pray that God will bless and equip everyone in leadership of First Presbyterian Church Yakima for the greater building up of the Body. We pray that everything we do as a church would facilitate discipleship (spiritual growth) within our congregation and bring us toward further maturity in Him. We ask God give us a passion for the Lost, that His Kingdom may grow and He may be glorified. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Adopted By the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, WA – October 5, 2010

ⁱRomans 3:23-24 (New International Version)

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

ⁱⁱ Matthew 4:19 (NIV)

¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

ⁱⁱⁱ John 6:65 (NIV)

⁶⁵He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

^{iv} Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

^v 1 Timothy 3 (NIV)

¹Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

⁸Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and

trustworthy in everything.

¹²A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

¹³Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

He appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.

Titus 1:6-9 (NIV)

⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

^{vi} 1 Timothy 3:6 (NIV)

⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.

^{vii} Philippians 1:27 (NIV)

²⁷Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

^{viii} Colossians 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

^{ix} Romans 13:1-7 (NIV)

¹Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

^x G-6.0302 Elders are chosen by the people. Together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a particular church as well as the church at large, including ecumenical relationships. They shall serve faithfully as members of the session. (G-10.0102) When elected commissioners to higher governing bodies, elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office. G-6.0303 Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and in the world. (G-6.0106)

G-6.0304 Specific Responsibilities

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- a. It is the duty of elders, individually and jointly, to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation committed to their charge. Together with the pastor, they should encourage the people in the worship and service of God, equip and renew them for their tasks within the church and for their mission in the world, visit and comfort and care for the people, with special attention to the poor, the sick, the lonely, and those who are oppressed. They should inform the pastor and session of those persons and structures which may need special attention. They should assist in worship. (See W-1.4003, W-2.3011—.3012, W-3.1003, W-3.3616, and W-4.4003.) They should cultivate their ability to teach the Bible and may be authorized to supply places which are without the regular ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In specific circumstances and with proper instruction, specific elders may be authorized by the presbytery to administer the Lord's Supper in accord with G-11.0103z. Those duties which all Christians are bound to perform by the law of love are especially incumbent upon elders because of their calling to office and are to be fulfilled by them as official responsibilities.

Duty to Report

- b. An elder shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

^{xi} **Matthew 18:15-20 (NIV)**

¹⁵"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

^{xii} **Romans 6:1-11 (NIV)**

¹What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.