

DIACONAL MINISTRIES OF  
THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



# Diaconal Summit III

Networking. Encouragement. Training.

**June 15-17, 2017**

Wheaton, Illinois

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### **Speaker Outlines:**

- David Apple Biography
- David Apple: Jesus is the Great Deacon
- David Nakhla: The Refugee Opportunity
- Chris Sudlow: Diaconal Experience
- Lendall Smith: Pitfalls of Diaconal Ministry
- David Nakhla: Diaconal Presbyterianism
- David Apple: Everyone is a Deacon
- David Apple: Why the Office of Deacon?

### **Hymns:**

- Hallelujah, praise Jehovah, O my soul
- Though troubles assail us
- O God, thy judgements give the King
- Fountain of good, to own thy love
- O come, my soul, bless thou the Lord
- Father, I know that all my life

### **Disaster Response Oversight:**

- Presbytery Disaster Response Oversight
- Presbytery Disaster Response Oversight Appendices A-D

### **Reading Materials:**

- For Further Study of Diaconal Ministry
- Principles of Diaconal Ministry
- If You Are a Deacon
- A Presbyterian Approach to Mercy Ministry

### **Diaconal Resources:**

- Procedure for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for Individuals in Need in the OPC
- Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for Individuals in Need in the OPC
- Proposed OPC PDC Mandate
- CDM Report to General Assembly (June 2017)

## OPC National Diaconal Summit III

June 15-17, 2017

Wheaton, Illinois

### Thursday, June 15

3:30 - 6:30 pm Registration ..... Fischer Residential Hall  
3:15 - 6:15 pm Welcome Barbeque ..... Fischer Residential Hall

**All Summit Events/Meals take place in Todd M. Beamer Student Center:**

7:00 pm	Welcome	Coray Auditorium	Lendall Smith
7:15 pm	Worship and Prayer: <b>True Religion is Diaconal</b>		Nathan Trice
8:30 pm	Fellowship and Dessert		

### Friday, June 16

7:00 am	Breakfast		
8:00 am	Group Photo		
8:30 am	<b>Jesus is the Great Deacon</b>	Coray Auditorium	David Apple
9:30 am	Q & A		
10:00 am	Break		
10:30 am	<b>The Refugee Opportunity</b>	Coray Auditorium	David Nakhla
11:30 am	Q & A		
12:00 pm	Lunch		
1:00 pm	<b>Diaconal Experience</b>	North Party Room	Chris Sudlow
2:15 pm	Break		
2:30 pm	<b>Pitfalls of Diaconal Ministry</b>	Coray Auditorium	Lendall Smith
3:45 pm	Break		
4:00 pm	<b>Diaconal Presbyterianism</b>	Phelps Room	David Nakhla
5:30 pm	Supper		
7:00 pm	<b>Everyone is a Deacon</b>	Coray Auditorium	David Apple
8:00 pm	Q & A		
8:30 pm	Fellowship		

### Saturday, June 17

7:00 am	Breakfast		
8:30 am	<b>Why the Office of Deacon?</b>	Coray Auditorium	David Apple
9:30 am	Q & A		
10:00 am	Summit Wrap-Up		
11:00 am	Lunch		

## Wheaton College Campus Information

**[www.wheatonconferences.com](http://www.wheatonconferences.com)**

### CAMPUS RESTRICTIONS

Tobacco and alcohol use is prohibited in all campus facilities, including residence halls.

### CAMPUS SECURITY

Wheaton College Public Safety has uniformed officers on duty 24 hours a day, patrolling campus buildings, streets, and parking lots. In any emergency Public Safety should be called immediately. They can be reached at extension 5911 from any campus phone or by dialing (630) 752-5911.

Public Safety officers are trained in American Red Cross standard first aid and in CPR. Officers have direct contact and work in complete cooperation with the City of Wheaton Fire and Police Departments.

### RESIDENCE HALL

Fischer Hall is located at 600 East Harrison Avenue. The reception desk in the lobby serves as the primary summer conference desk. The large lobby can easily serve as the registration area for incoming conference groups.

Rooms are arranged in suites with a bathroom between each two rooms. Bathrooms doors do not lock. Guests should work out a system of knocking with their suite mates. Most rooms contain two single beds, two desks, two dressers, closet space, and a window.

A laundry room is located on the lower level. A television, recreational equipment, and snack machines are located on the lower level. All floors have a lounge on each wing. Access to living areas on each floor is computer-controlled; accessibility is only through use of a keycard issued at check-in.

Lost and Found items should be turned in to the CSA at the lobby desk. The College assumes no liability for items left behind after check-out. Items left behind may be claimed in the *Conference Services* office by calling 630-752-5112. There is a minimum \$20 shipping and handling fee to return items to guests who have left the campus. After August 15th, all unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Residence hall outer doors are locked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The only exception to this policy is during published registration and check-in times at the beginning of a conference. Quiet hours in the residence hall living areas begin at 11:00 p.m.



Wheaton College Residence Life staff live in the residence halls year-round. They have no connection with summer conference programs and their privacy should be respected.

Linen exchanges are handled by the CSAs at the lobby desks. Limited towel and washcloth replacement is available. One pillow is furnished per bed. There is no maid service.

Check-out procedures are outlined on the door signs posted in each guest room. In addition, flyers are distributed to occupied rooms on the evening prior to check-out.

Attendees are asked to deposit their soiled linens in the bin in the lobby prior to check-out. Charges for items missing from and damage to residence hall rooms will be assessed in the final billing. Excess cleaning requirements will also be billed to the conference. Linens that are not returned will be charged in the final billing.

### PARKING

Parking is free of charge to conference guests in campus lots. Parking permits are issued at check-in and are for designated lots. Permits are not required for commuters parking during daytime hours. Commuters may park at Fisher Hall, Traber Hall, or in the Jenks, Edman Chapel, or Billy Graham Center lots. Vehicles parking overnight must be parked in the designated lot. Wheaton College Public Safety will issue tickets for vehicles parked improperly, and will be billed to the conference if not paid.

All oversized vehicles must be parked on the far southeast side of the Billy Graham Center parking lot. This includes buses, passenger vans, and RVs. City ordinances and College policy prohibit any motor vehicle being used for housing while parked on College premises. This restriction is applicable to all RVs and motor homes.

### KEY CARDS

All keycards must be returned at check-out. Charges will be assessed for all missing keycards in the final billing.

For security purposes, anyone who has lost or misplaced their keycard, or has locked their keycard in their room, will be asked to properly identify themselves prior to being admitted to their room. Anyone needing assistance with key-related problems should contact the CSA in the lobby of their residence hall.

Persons asking for admittance who do not have ID will be accompanied by a Wheaton College CSA to their room where they will be asked to show ID immediately upon entrance to the room.

Attendees who have lost keycards will be issued a new one following proper identification, provided an extra keycard is available for the room. Guests who lose keycards must report the loss to a CSA (or to Public Safety if no CSA is available) in order to gain access to the residence

hall and have the keycard replaced. Keycards are replaced at a cost of \$25.00 each. Charges for any keycard not returned to conference personnel by the final check-out time will be included in the final billing.

### INTERNET ACCESS

Internet connection is available through ports located in residence hall rooms and in some public areas. All residence halls and most areas of campus have wireless access.

Participants staying in campus housing may use their own laptops to access the internet through in-room computer ports and wireless access. There is no charge for this service. Attendees may also access the internet on College computers in the computer labs located in the residence halls.

High-speed internet connection is available as follows:

- Access is limited to HTTP. Other protocols, such as SMTP/POP, are not supported. Conference attendees who need to access email must use a web-based (HTTP) email service.
- Configuration is limited to individual computers; no routers, hubs, wireless access points, switches, etc., are allowed.
- Availability is limited to pre-existing wired access ports and/or wireless access points. Additional access ports or wireless access points cannot be installed.
- Actual speed/throughput of the high-speed connection is not guaranteed.

Access is granted for 24 hours. After 24 hours, guests will need to re-register their device(s) in order to connect to the network.

Guests will need to provide a valid email address and phone number in order to connect to the College network. The process will also include acknowledgment and agreement to comply with College terms and conditions for the use of the Wheaton College network and configuration instructions.

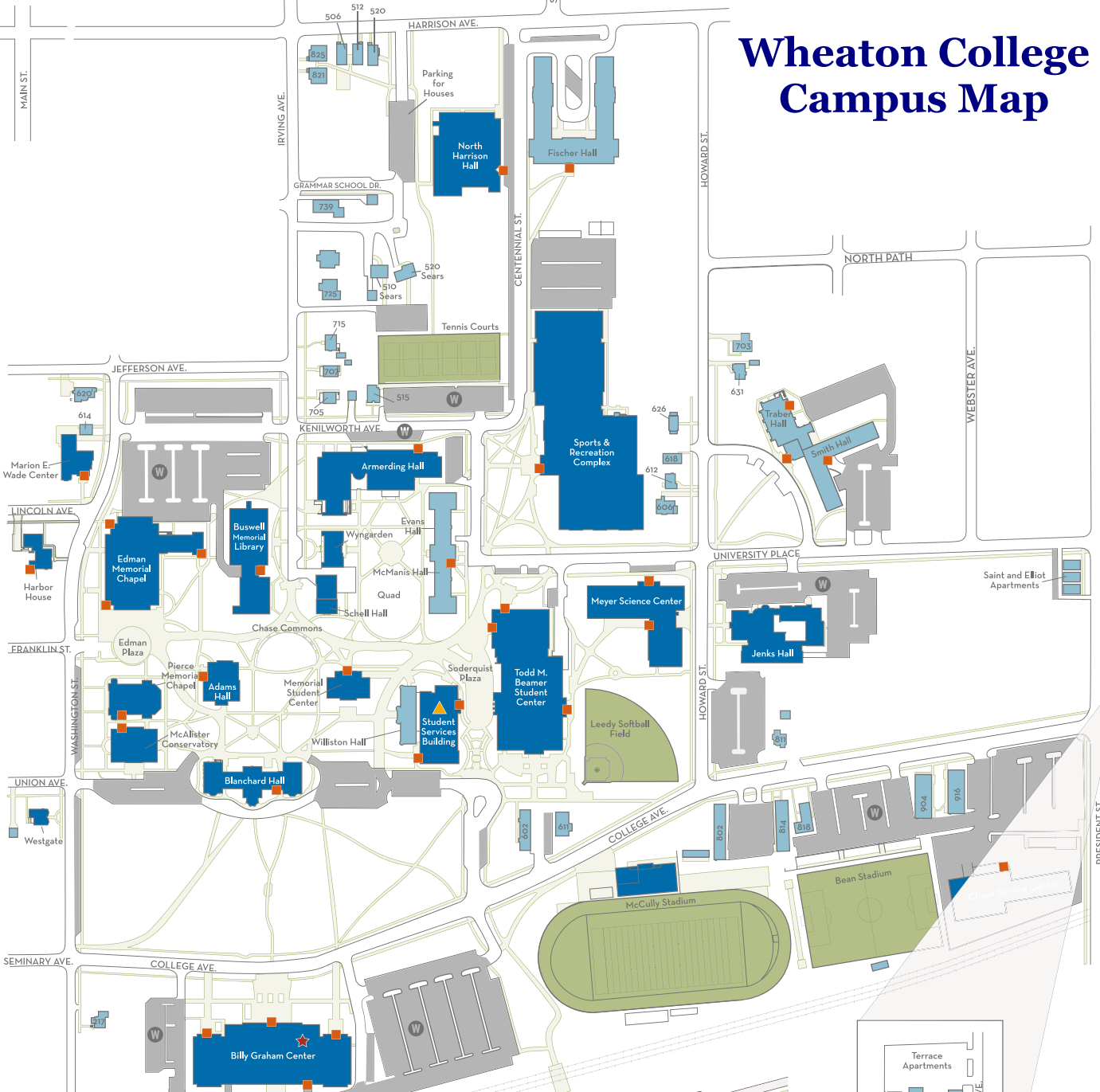
### SPORTS AND RECREATION COMPLEX (SRC)

The SRC offers conference participants access to a strength and conditioning room, an indoor jogging track, the gymnasiums, and the Chrouser Pool.

Conference guest access to the SRC is available by purchasing a guest pass from the SRC staff at the information desk in the Great Hall of the SRC. The cost is \$8 a day.

Information about the SRC can be found at [www.wheaton.edu/athletics/src](http://www.wheaton.edu/athletics/src).

# Wheaton College Campus Map



## **OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries**

### **2016-2017 Roster**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### **Class of 2017**

Mr. Seth B. Long  
Mr. Christopher A. Sudlow  
Rev. T. Nathan Trice

##### **Class of 2018**

Mr. Ronald C. deRu  
Rev. Lendall H. Smith  
Mr. Robert J. Wright, Jr.

##### **Class of 2019**

Rev. Ronald E. Pearce  
Mr. John J. Voss, Jr.  
Mr. Alexander A. Zarek

#### **OFFICERS**

<b>President:</b>	Rev. Lendall H. Smith
<b>Vice President:</b>	Rev. T. Nathan Trice
<b>Secretary:</b>	Rev. Ronald E. Pearce
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr. John J. Voss, Jr.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEES**

##### **Administration & Finance Subcommittee (AFS)**

Mr. Christopher A. Sudlow (Chairman)  
Mr. Seth B. Long  
Mr. John J. Voss, Jr.

##### **Aid Request Subcommittee (ARS)**

Rev. Lendall H. Smith (Chairman)  
Rev. T. Nathan Trice  
Mr. John J. Voss, Jr.

##### **Disaster Response Subcommittee (DRS)**

Mr. Alexander A. Zarek (Chairman)  
Mr. Ronald C. de Ru  
Mr. Seth B. Long  
Mr. John J. Voss, Jr.

##### **Diaconal Training Subcommittee (DTS)**

Rev. T. Nathan Trice (Chairman)  
Rev. Ronald E. Pearce  
Mr. Christopher A. Sudlow

##### **Missionary Deacon Subcommittee (MDS)**

Rev. T. Nathan Trice (Chairman)  
Rev. Lendall H. Smith  
Mr. Robert J. Wright, Jr.

##### **Ministers & Widows Subcommittee (MWS)**

Rev. Lendall H. Smith (Chairman)  
Rev. Ronald E. Pearce  
Mr. Alexander A. Zarek

#### **STAFF**

<b>Administrator:</b>	Mr. David P. Nakhla
<b>Administrative Assistant:</b>	Miss Janet L. Birkmann



## Contact Info: OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries

NAME	EMAIL	ADDRESS	PHONE	CHURCH and PRESBY.	CDM POSITION	OPC OFFICE
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Long, Seth B.	<a href="mailto:sethlong@bellsouth.net">sethlong@bellsouth.net</a>	Home: 3379 Craft Colley Road Ermine, KY 41815	(O) (606) 632-1717 (M) (606) 634-2426 (H) (606) 653-7376	Neon OPC Neon, KY PSE		Elder
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Sudlow, Christopher A.	<a href="mailto:sudlow77@gmail.com">sudlow77@gmail.com</a>	Home: 2254 Innisbrook Court Aurora, IL 60504	(M) (630) 806-5901	Bethel OPC Wheaton, IL PMW		Deacon
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Voss Jr., John J.	<a href="mailto:keepsake179@gmail.com">keepsake179@gmail.com</a>	Home: 17416 S. Queen Elizabeth Ln Tinley Park, IL 60477	(H) 708-532-5489 (M) 708-302-1479 (O) 708-429-5010	Covenant OPC Orland Park, IL PMW	Treasurer	Deacon
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Zarek, Alexander	<a href="mailto:zarekpackaging@verizon.net">zarekpackaging@verizon.net</a>	Home: 769 North Ascan Street Elmont, NY 11003	(H) 516-825-3568 (M) 516-650-0975 (O) 516-825-3608	Franklin Square OPC Franklin Square, NY PCTNY		Elder

**Contact Info: Presbytery Diaconal Committee Chairmen  
May 2017**

Presbytery	Name	Email Address	Phone	Church
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Central Pennsylvania	Bennett, Shane	<a href="mailto:Bennett.shane@hotmail.com">Bennett.shane@hotmail.com</a>	(M) 717-501-8400	Faith OPC Fawn Grove, PA
Connecticut and Southern New York	Holst, Jonathan	<a href="mailto:holst.1@opc.org">holst.1@opc.org</a>	(H) (203) 288-8161	Westminster OPC Hamden, CT
Central US	Robson, Gordon	<a href="mailto:grobsondo@gmail.com">grobsondo@gmail.com</a>	(H) 918-298-5411 (M) 918-629-1017	Providence OPC Tulsa, OK
Dakotas	Eggleston, Curtis	<a href="mailto:Eggleston.1@opc.org">Eggleston.1@opc.org</a>	(H) 801-731-1625 (M) 801-510-5313	Berean OPC Ogden, UT
Michigan and Ontario	Bero, Tim	<a href="mailto:bero.1@opc.org">bero.1@opc.org</a>	(H) 269-344-0474	Retired
Mid-Atlantic	Brown, Stephen M.	<a href="mailto:brown.4@opc.org">brown.4@opc.org</a>	(M) 717-917-9766 (O) 703-560-6336	Grace OPC Vienna, VA
Midwest	Cornette, David	<a href="mailto:Cornette.1@opc.org">Cornette.1@opc.org</a>	(M) 920-889-3834	Calvary OPC Cedar Grove, WI
Northern California and Nevada	Trigero, Steve	<a href="mailto:seecwriter@yahoo.com">seecwriter@yahoo.com</a>	(M) 408-499-3784	Covenant OPC San Jose, CA
New Jersey	Slack, William O.	<a href="mailto:slack.1@opc.org">slack.1@opc.org</a>	(H) 908-454-4745 (O) 908-213-1377	River of Life OPC Phillipsburg, NJ
Northwest	Campbell, Don	<a href="mailto:presbyreformed@yahoo.com">presbyreformed@yahoo.com</a>	(M) 703-472-9738	Trinity OPC Newberg, OR

**Contact Info: Presbytery Diaconal Committee Chairmen  
May 2017**

Presbytery	Name	Email Address	Phone	Church
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New York and New England	Rulison, Mark	<a href="mailto:markhrulison@gmail.com">markhrulison@gmail.com</a>	(H) 581-842-5501 (M) 518-424-3099	Covenant OPC Amsterdam, NY
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Philadelphia	Burkett, David	<a href="mailto:burkettds@gmail.com">burkettds@gmail.com</a>	(M) 610-716-8502	Grace Fellowship OPC Germantown, PA
Southern California	DiPeppino, Mike	<a href="mailto:mdipeppino@logisticre.com">mdipeppino@logisticre.com</a>	(M) (714) 318-9684	Grace OPC Costa Mesa, CA
Southeast	Hopper, Tim	<a href="mailto:tdhopper@gmail.com">tdhopper@gmail.com</a>	(M) 434-906-5120	Shiloh OPC Raleigh, NC
South	Borg, Michael	<a href="mailto:borg.1@opc.org">borg.1@opc.org</a>	(H) 218-464-8185 (O) 941-301-9403	Providence OPC Bradenton, FL
Southwest	Troutman, Joseph L.	<a href="mailto:troutman.1@opc.org">troutman.1@opc.org</a>	(H) 817-416-8578 (M) 817-488-1133 (O) 817-488-1133	Mid Cities OPC Bedford, TX

## Evaluation Form

OPC National Diaconal Summit III  
June 15-17, 2017  
Wheaton, IL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

1. Was the Diaconal Summit worth your time and expense?
2. Please rate the following on a scale of **1-10** (10 is Best); include a **comment** if you wish:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Accommodations \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Food \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Speaker David Apple \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the Great Deacon \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone is a Deacon \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Why the Office of Deacon \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The Refugee Opportunity (Nakhla) \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Diaconal Experience (Sudlow) \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pitfalls of Diaconal Ministry (Smith) \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Diaconal Presbyterianism (Nakhla) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How could we improve the schedule?
  - a. More time for: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Less time for: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Suggested future topics to address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Suggested future Keynote Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Suggested future Workshop Leader: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Would you be willing to help with any of the following in the future (check all that apply):
  - ☐ Summit planning
  - ☐ Set-up
  - ☐ Speaking; if so, what topic: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Additional comments, suggestions, or questions for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries:



OPC Diaconal Summit III  
June 15-17, 2017  
Wheaton, Illinois

**Keynote Speaker**  
Dr. David S. Apple



Dr. David S. Apple has directed ACTS—Active Compassion Through Service—the Mercy Ministry of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, since 1988. He has led divorce recovery and single parent ministries, and presently oversees over 200 volunteer staff in outreach, evangelism, and hospitality to homeless and addicted persons, nursing home residents, incarcerated men and women, people living on the fringe, and others. His ministry includes deacon training and equipping churches across the United States for ministry in their communities. He is the author of Not Just a Soup Kitchen: How Mercy Ministry in the Local Church Transforms Us All and Neighborology: Practicing Compassion as a Way of Life.

David earned a B.A. from Calvin College, a Pastoral Counseling Certificate from Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, and an MATS and D.Min. from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He came to salvation in 1966 through the incarnational ministry of Northside Chapel CRC in inner-city Paterson, NJ. That experience, plus serving fifteen years as a deacon, has shaped his life and ministry.

## David Apple: Jesus is the Great Deacon p. 1

### Active Compassion Through Service

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### Unwrapping the grave cloths

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### People neighbored me

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### Lessons from “Our Father”

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### Mary

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Important take-aways: *Jesus, the Great Deacon*

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What can you put into practice?

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**David Apple: Jesus is the Great Deacon p. 2**

**Frank**

Important take-aways: **Jesus, the Great Deacon**

**Lillian**

**Thomas**

What can you put into practice?

**Tyra/Little Joey**

## **David Nakhla: The Refugee Opportunity p. 1**

### I. The Historicity of the Current Refugee Situation

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### II. What Does the Bible Say Regarding Refugees?

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### III. The Gospel Witness Opportunity to Muslims

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### IV. The OPC's Current Avenues of Involvement

#### A. International:

1. Funds to Greek Evangelical Church \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## **David Nakhla: The Refugee Opportunity p. 2**

2. Funds to MTW in Northern Uganda \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Khartoum, Sudan (being explored) \_\_\_\_\_

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B. Domestic:

1. Outreach to Clarkston, Georgia \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Your hometown? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Chris Sudlow: Diaconal Experience p. 1**

Greeting & Prayer

Introduction / Opening Questions

### **Part I: Sharing Experiences From a Local Diaconate**

A. Case #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Takeaways: \_\_\_\_\_

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B. Case #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Takeaways: \_\_\_\_\_

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C. Case #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Takeaways: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Part II: Working With Other Deacons**

Introduction

A. Distribution of Money \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chris Sudlow: Diaconal Experience p. 2

B. Unity of Purpose \_\_\_\_\_

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C. Receiving Diaconal Help \_\_\_\_\_

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D. Providing Diaconal Help \_\_\_\_\_

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Conclusion

Q&A and Discussion

# Pitfalls of Diaconal Ministry

Rev. Lendall H. Smith

In this session we are picking up on ideas that Dr. Philip Ryken noted in his endorsement of Dr. Apple's book about his experience of developing a ministry of mercy at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, PA.

*"Dr Apple has learned many valuable lessons about serving people in need. (He) ...gives wise warnings about the mistakes that people often make in ministry and shares many practical suggestions for truly addressing spiritual and material needs."*

## 1. Do not fail to continue reflecting on the high nature of your calling as a deacon?

Chapter 9 - The Role of the deacon in the Reformation and Today



**2. Do not fail to grasp the spiritual challenges of your ministry.**

Chapter 2 - The Heart of a Servant

Chapter 6 - Unwrapping the Graveclothes.

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**3. Do not fail to believe in the power of Christ and the Spirit to use your service.**

Chapter 3 ACTS - ACTIVE COMPASSION THROUGH SERVICE

CHAPTER 6 - Unwrapping the Graveclothes

Chapter 10 - Serving in Specific Situations.

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**4. Do not neglect the importance of trust and relationship in carrying out a ministry of mercy.**

Chapter 3 ACTS - ACTIVE COMPASSION THROUGH SERVICE

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**5. As a deacon do not attempt to carry out a ministry of mercy by yourself (or as deacons).**

Chapter 3 - Active Compassion through Service  
Chapter 5 - Those Who Serve and Why They Do  
Chapter 7 - You Don't Have to Reinvent the Wheel, (pp. 96,97)  
Chapter 9 - The Role of the Deacon in the Reformation and Today, (pp 128-152).  
Appendix C: Sample Talent Survey. (p. 205 - 206)

**6. Do not make the mistake of not setting limits on your ministry.**

Chapter 8 - Setting Limits to Your Ministry (Guidelines, pp 111-119)  
Chapter 11 - Frequently Asked Questions (FQA), #1 (p. 175).

**7. An example of such a limit is NOT to give cash in helping the needy.**  
FQA, p. 180

**8. Don't fail to tailor your diaconal ministry according to the needs of your congregation and the community where you live.**

Appendix B - Guidelines for Deacons.

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**9. Don't forget to saturate your ministry with prayer.**

Chapter 7 - You Don't Have to Reinvent the Wheel

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**10. In summary, do not grow weary in doing good. (2 Thessalonians 3**

FAQ, p. 178.

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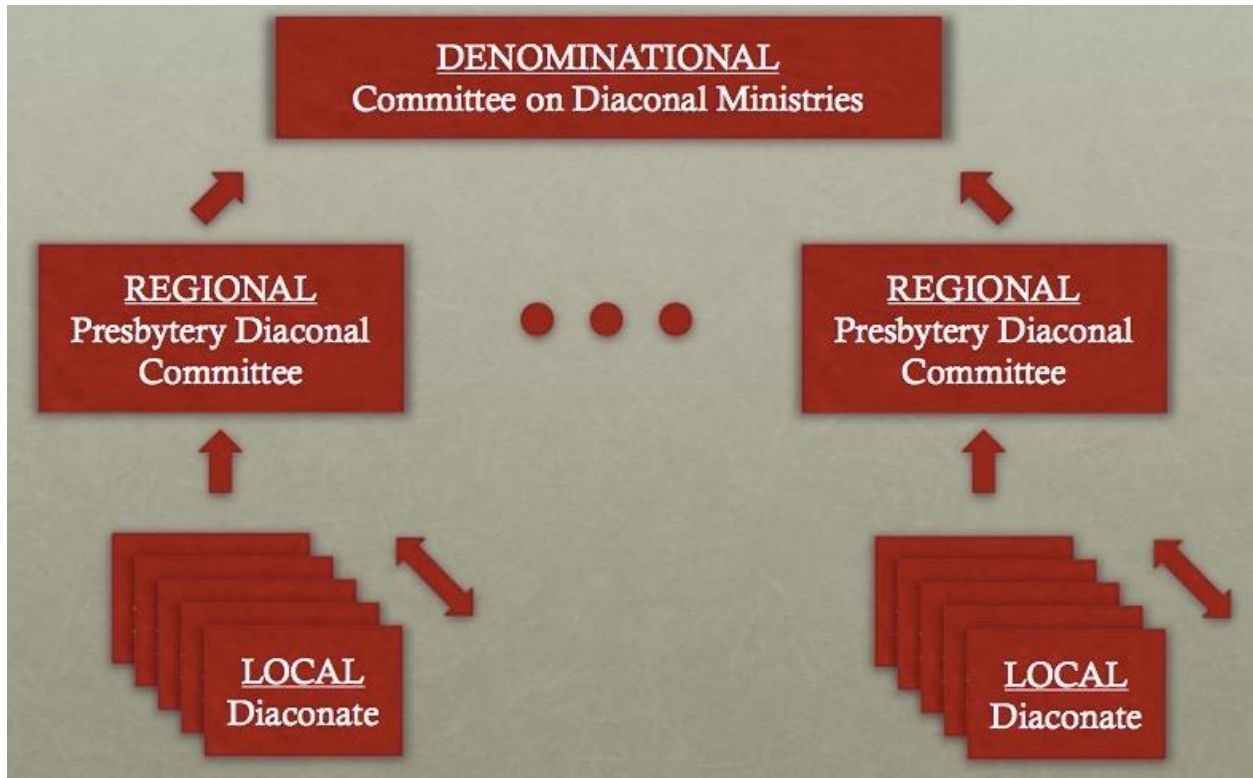
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**David Nakhla: Diaconal Presbyterianism p. 1**



**Presbyterian Form of Government**

**I. The Local Diaconate:**

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**II. The Presbytery Diaconal Committee:**

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## **David Nakhla: Diaconal Presbyterianism p. 2**

### III. The Committee on Diaconal Ministries

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### IV. Example of Cooperation: The Care of Retired Ministers and their Widows

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### V. Example of Cooperation: Disaster Response (developing)

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#### A. The Presbytery Disaster Response Oversight Plan

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# **David Apple: Everyone is a Deacon p. 1**

## Becky

Important take-aways: *Everyone is a Deacon*

## Expectations about the church

## The ministry of hospitality

## What can you put into practice?

## Abraham and the strangers

## Tenth's hospitality ministry

**Ministry in the schools**

Important take-aways: *Everyone is a Deacon*

**Juvenile Detention Center**

**Bureau of Prisons**

What can you put into practice?

**Put it into practice**

## **David Apple: Why the Office of Deacon? p. 1**

## Our biblical responsibility

Important take-aways: **Why the Office of Deacon?**

## Equip and mobilize

## Collect gifts and distribute them

## What can you put into practice?

## Stimulate a diaconal lifestyle

## Come alongside those who are hurting



## **David Apple: Why the Office of Deacon? p. 2**

## Prevent poverty in the church

Important take-aways: *Why the Office of Deacon?*

## Know about community resources

## Empower people

## What can you put into practice?

## Cooperate with other churches



## OPC Presbytery Disaster Response Oversight

### *Preparation and Response*

#### 1. PHILOSOPHY (WHY)

- a. The primary goal of disaster response in the OPC is to **restore worship** within OPC churches and families and to **demonstrate the compassionate love of Christ** to our neighbors
  - *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matt 22:37-40*
- b. Christians are not to presume upon the Lord's goodness, but rather to **plan for the future.**
  - *"You shall not put the LORD your God to the test..." Deut 6:16*
  - *"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Prov 6:6*
  - i. Preparation *before* the disaster is the best protection from disasters and the key to effective ministry during a disaster.
    1. This begins with the individual, then church, then presbytery.
    2. Yet, cooperating and working together strengthens preparation (efforts are multiplied) and is a picture of the body of Christ.
- c. **Presbyteries are well-suited to coordinate.**
  - i. Disasters are inherently local and regional matters.
  - ii. Those closest to it are much better equipped to make decisions of how and when to respond than those far away.
  - iii. This is consistent with other ministry in the Presbyterian church. Oversight is first local, then regional, and lastly, denominational.
  - iv. Coordination at each level is imperative for this to be effective.
- d. **Stewardship of resources** is a God-given responsibility, mandating preparing for the worst.
  - *In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other... Eccl 7:14a*
  - *Fill the earth and **subdue** it. Gen 1:28*
- e. **OPC Disaster Response** is available to the presbytery, upon request, in:
  - i. Providing leadership and strategies learned from previous disaster responses efforts.
  - ii. Communicating with sister denominations about cooperating on disaster relief.
  - iii. Mobilizing volunteers.



- iv. Communicating needs and prayer requests to the Church.
  - v. Receiving funds contributed for the care of the victims of the disaster.
- f. How the church responds in times of disaster is a **witness** to the watching world. Christ and his glory lies at the center of disaster preparation and response efforts. These efforts develop best under the strength and guidance of the Lord.
- *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16*

## 2. POLICY (WHAT)

### a. Before a Disaster

#### i. Organization

1. The presbytery ought to appoint a **committee** to oversee disaster response.
  2. The committee ought to appoint a Regional Disaster Response **Coordinator** (RDRC) who has:
    - a. Leadership skills
    - b. Management skills
    - c. A heart for mercy ministry
    - d. Authorization to speak on behalf of the regional church.
  3. The committee ought to encourage churches to appoint a Local Coordinator with similar traits as the Regional Coordinator
  4. The Regional Coordinator ought to encourage local churches and families to be prepared to meet their needs and those around them in the event of a disaster.
    - *Carry each other's burdens...Gal 6:2*
- ii. **Structures** need to be in place in order to mobilize volunteers and put into motion the chain of events of disaster response.
  - iii. **Information** needs to be gathered from each church prior to a disaster.
  - iv. **Volunteers'** contact information shall be gathered in advance of a disaster
  - v. **Supplies** should be on hand to enable ones family to survive after a disaster and to have left over to share with others.
  - vi. **Training** should be coordinated regionally and locally.

### b. After a Disaster

- i. **Neighboring presbyteries** ought to be prepared to come alongside an overwhelmed presbytery.
- ii. **Prayer requests** ought to be communicated to the presbytery.



c. Other

- i. This document ought to be continually improved over the years.

3. **PROCEDURE (HOW)**

- a. Establish a new committee or direct an existing committee to take oversight of disaster response. **This committee shall be expected to:**
  - i. Elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary and appoint other officers, as necessary.
  - ii. Meet as required.
  - iii. Appoint a **Regional Coordinator** and an **Alternate**. Normally, this would be the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, respectively.
  - iv. **Advise** the Regional Coordinator as required.
  - v. **Inform** the OPC Disaster Response Coordinator (National Coordinator) and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the names and contact information of the Regional Coordinator and the Alternate.
- b. The **Regional Coordinator** shall be expected to:
  - i. Before a Disaster
    1. Develop a **database** of resources in the region to be used in the event of a disaster.
    2. Gather contact info for **volunteers**, including their availability and skills.
    3. **Educate** the presbytery in the area of disaster response.
    4. **Gather** geographic, demographic, and readiness status of each church in the presbytery.
    5. Encourage each church to consider the appointment of a **Local Coordinator** who, in turn, shall gather geographic, demographic, and readiness status of each of its members.
    6. Complete, with the help of each Local Coordinator, a survey of church members' **interests and skills** (see Appendix A).
    7. Communicate to the **National Coordinator** periodically on matters concerning disaster response and regional actions.
    8. Consider reaching out to "Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster" (**VOAD**) in the region.
    9. Communicate with **sister denominations** about cooperating on disaster relief.
    10. **Receive calls** from National Coordinator, Local Coordinators, government agencies, or volunteer agencies.
    11. Conduct **rehearsals** for the purpose of assessing disaster readiness in the presbytery.
    12. Facilitate **training** and providing information about training opportunities for churches and volunteers.
      - a. Training ought to include proper **etiquette** for volunteers, such as, flexibility, patience and safety



when responding and respect when working on disaster victims' property.

- b. Volunteers should also be **cautioned** about entering a disaster zone uninvited, as this can cause problems for local officials and emergency operations centers and/or the local OPC church.

ii. **Anticipating** a Disaster

1. **Alert** volunteers that they might be called to serve.
2. **Purchase** necessary consumables, such as fuel, etc.
3. **Stage** equipment, if applicable.

iii. **After** the Disaster

1. **Survey** those in the affected area for status
2. **Assess** the damage and the ways to help.
3. Identify an “**Operations Center**”.
4. Identify the material, financial, and volunteer **needs**.
5. **Communicate** the need for assistance regionally, to neighboring presbyteries, to the National Coordinator, and/or to VOAD.
  - a. For prayer.
  - b. For volunteers.
  - c. For resources.
6. Establish a “**Volunteer Staging Area**” and coordinate volunteer lodging and meal information in coordination with the National Coordinator.
7. **Coordinate** the dispatching of disaster response teams and volunteers.
8. **Report** to the committee after a disaster response effort is completed.

**Appendices A-D:**

- A. Church Member Disaster Response Interest and Skills Survey
- B. Church Potential for Disaster Response
- C. Key People in the OPC, State, County, City, and Community
- D. Family Disaster Information

**Appendix A**  
**CHURCH MEMBER**  
**DISASTER RESPONSE INTEREST AND SKILLS SURVEY**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_ Church Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in assisting with a disaster relief project by our church? ☐ In this community?  
☐ In this county? ☐ Within the Presbytery? ☐ In this state? ☐ In the USA? ☐ Internationally?

How much lead-time would you need to get ready to participate in a project? \_\_\_\_\_

**INTEREST/EXPERIENCE/TRAINING**

Check the disaster ministries that interest you. Place **two checks** by areas where you are experienced.

<input type="checkbox"/> Advisory/advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Reconstruction team
<input type="checkbox"/> Bulk distribution	<input type="checkbox"/> Elderly care	<input type="checkbox"/> Repair (emergency)
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring for pets	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Resources/logistics
<input type="checkbox"/> Casework	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation of persons	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Chainsaw crew/tree removal	<input type="checkbox"/> General handyman	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage
<input type="checkbox"/> Child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup crew/debris removal	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter/translator:	<input type="checkbox"/> Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerical assistant	Language(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Shelter management or care
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal aid	<input type="checkbox"/> Site manager
(including Ham Radios)	<input type="checkbox"/> Meal preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Special needs care
<input type="checkbox"/> Computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical emergency team	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer team coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Damage assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Procurement	

Check if you have **specialized training** in the following (please add comments below):

<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced first aid and CPR	<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy equipment operator
<input type="checkbox"/> Bricklayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Mass Feeding
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry	<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse
<input type="checkbox"/> Chaplain	<input type="checkbox"/> Paramedic
<input type="checkbox"/> Crisis counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> Physician
<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster relief	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing
<input type="checkbox"/> Dry walling/Painter	<input type="checkbox"/> Roofer
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrician	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism	
<input type="checkbox"/> General contractor	

## Appendix B CHURCH POTENTIAL FOR DISASTER RESPONSE



The following may be available during disaster response in or near our community:

### **Church Facilities**

- ☐ Classrooms
- ☐ Dining room
- ☐ Dumpster
- ☐ Fellowship hall
- ☐ Food bank
- ☐ Gymnasium
- ☐ Ice makers
- ☐ Kitchen
- ☐ Nursery
- ☐ Outside electric hookup
- ☐ Outside sewage hookup
- ☐ Outside water hookup
- ☐ Refrigerators/freezers
- ☐ Rest rooms
- ☐ Showers
- ☐ Storage/vacant buildings
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Communication Equipment**

- ☐ Cell phones
- ☐ Ham Radios
- ☐ Satellite phones
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Equipment**

- ☐ Air compressors
- ☐ Chainsaws, etc.
- ☐ Generators
- ☐ High volume pumps
- ☐ Oxygen tanks

- ☐ Portable stoves
- ☐ Power painters
- ☐ Power washers
- ☐ Sanitation equipment/supplies
- ☐ Submersible pumps
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Vehicles**

- ☐ 4x4's
- ☐ Aircraft
- ☐ ATVs
- ☐ Back hoes
- ☐ Boats
- ☐ Bobcats
- ☐ Buses
- ☐ Campers/RVs
- ☐ Cargo Trailers
- ☐ Dump trucks
- ☐ Front loaders
- ☐ Portable showers
- ☐ Tractor-trailers
- ☐ Flat bed trailers
- ☐ Trucks
- ☐ Vans
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Construction Supplies**

- ☐ Electrical
- ☐ Hardware
- ☐ Lumber
- ☐ Plumbing

- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Medical Supplies**

- ☐ Crutches
- ☐ First-aid kits
- ☐ Medical supplies
- ☐ Wheelchairs
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Supplies**

- ☐ Cots
- ☐ Drinking Water
- ☐ Ice
- ☐ Non-perishable food
- ☐ Sanitizing liquids
- ☐ Tarps
- ☐ Tents
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Tools**

- ☐ Brooms/mops
- ☐ Electric extension cords
- ☐ Garden hoses
- ☐ Hand tools
- ☐ Paint brushes/rollers
- ☐ Power tools
- ☐ Rakes
- ☐ Shop vacuums
- ☐ Shovels
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**  
**KEY PEOPLE IN THE OPC,**  
**STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND COMMUNITY**



After listing the officials, list any church members or friends who may work in a particular office or agency. Sometimes, the personal contact is helpful.

Title	Name	Contact Information
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**ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

OPC Disaster Response Coordinator	David Nakhla	(562) 760-7606 opcdisasterresponse@opc.org
Presbytery Disaster Preparedness & Response Committee Chairman		
Presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator		
Presbytery Disaster Response Alternate Coordinator		
Local Church Disaster Response Coordinator		

**STATE GOVERNMENT**

State Representative		
State Senator		
Office of Public Safety or Emergency Management		
Area Coordinator		

**COUNTY OFFICIALS**

Emergency Mgmt Director		
Commissioner or Judge		
Sheriff		
Fire Marshal		

**CITY OFFICIALS**

Emergency Mgmt Director		
Fire Chief		
Fire Marshal		
Council Member		

**VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS**

American Red Cross		
The Salvation Army		
VOAD		

**OTHER CONTACTS**




**Appendix D**  
**FAMILY DISASTER INFORMATION**



**Last Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (primary): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (primary): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (secondary): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (secondary): \_\_\_\_\_

Church (Name, City, State): \_\_\_\_\_ Church Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of persons living in the home: \_\_\_\_\_

Pets: ☐ No / ☐ Yes – names and breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons requiring special needs care: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe level of care: \_\_\_\_\_

Map from the church on file: ☐ No / ☐ Yes – Date last reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Closest Neighbor – Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Closest Neighbor – Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Distance from your home: \_\_\_\_\_

Church member (outside your own household) who lives the nearest to you.:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Closest Relative – Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Closest Relative – Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disaster Preparation Assets on Hand at Home.**

- **City Water:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Well Water:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Gas:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Electric:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Back up power generation:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Four wheel drive equipment:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Boat with motor:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Ham radio:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Storm Cellar:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Chain saws:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Underground fuel cells:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_
- **All-terrain vehicles:** ☐ No / ☐ Yes - Details: \_\_\_\_\_

## For Further Study of Diaconal Ministry

### Books:

1. What Is Mercy Ministry? (Basics of the Faith)  
By Philip G. Ryken and Noah J. Toly
2. New Testament Deacon: The Church's Minister of Mercy  
By Alexander Strauch
3. Ministries of Mercy, The Call of the Jericho Road: Third Edition  
By Timothy J. Keller
4. Resources for Deacons: Love Expressed through Mercy Ministries  
By Timothy J. Keller
5. The Ministry of Mercy for Today  
By Peter Y. De Jong
6. When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor  
By Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
7. The Deacon: The Biblical Roots and the Ministry of Mercy Today  
By Cornelis Van Dam
8. Not Just a Soup Kitchen: How Mercy Ministry in the Local Church Transforms Us All  
By David S. Apple
9. Neighborology: Practicing Compassion as a Way of Life  
By David S. Apple
10. Serving God in a Migrant Crisis  
By Patrick Johnstone with Dean Merrill
11. Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis  
By Issam Smeir, Matthew Soerens, and Stephan Bauman

### Papers and Articles:

1. "Christian Charity or The Duty of Charity to the Poor, Explained and Enforced"  
by Jonathan Edwards
2. "The Diaconate," Parts 1 and 2  
By John L. Girardeau

3. "The Importance of the Office of Deacon"  
By John L. Girardeau
4. "The Deaconship"  
By James B. Ramsay
5. "The Office of Deacon"  
By Stuart Robinson
6. "Report on the Diaconate"  
By John L. Girardeau, Robert L. Dabney, Thomas E. Peck
7. "Presbyterian Deaconesses"  
By B. B. Warfield
8. "The Deacon: A Divine Right Office with Divine Uses"  
By C. Nick Willborn
9. "The Diaconate: God's Office of Temporal Affairs"  
By C. Nick Willborn
10. "The Gospel Work of the Diaconate: A Ministry Proportioned in Number"  
By C. Nick Willborn
11. "The Biblical Foundation of the Diaconate"  
By George W. Knight III
12. "Reforming the Diaconate," Parts 1-3,  
By William Shishko
13. "God's Gift of Deacons"  
By Ronald Pearce
14. "If You Are a Deacon" (included in Diaconal Summit III binder)  
By Nathan Trice
15. "A Presbyterian Approach to Diaconal Ministry" (included in Diaconal Summit III binder)  
By Nathan Trice
16. "Principles of Diaconal Ministry" (included in Diaconal Summit III binder)  
From the Committee on Diaconal Ministries of the OPC
17. Report of the Subcommittee on Diaconal Ministries  
From the Presbyterian Church in America

## Principles of Diaconal Ministry

### 1. The Reason for Diaconal Ministry

The heart of God for the poor is the reason for the diaconal ministry of the church. God's special regard for the needy among his people is clearly revealed in:

- His careful provision for and protection of them:  
e.g., Leviticus 23:22; 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 15: 7-11; 24: 10-15
- His stern warnings against the neglect or abuse of them:  
e.g., Proverbs 11:24; 14:21,31; 21:13; 22:22-23; 28:27
- His calls for covenant renewal in terms of care for them:  
e.g., Isaiah 1:16-17; 58:6-10; Ezekiel 18:16; Zechariah 7:9-10
- His casting of the Messiah's ministry in terms of ministry to them:  
e.g., Isaiah 11:4; 29:19; 61:1; Luke 4.18; Matthew 5:3
- His many calls to show generosity toward them:  
e.g. Job 29:11-16; Psalm 41:1; 112:9; Matthew 5:42; 25:35-40;  
Luke 3:11; 6:30-38; 12:33; 14:12-14; Acts 20:35; Romans 12:13, 20;  
2 Corinthians 8:1-21; 9:1-13; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; Titus 3:14;  
Hebrews 13:16; James 1:27; 2:15-18; 1 John 3:17-18

And God's general regard for all the needy among his creatures is revealed in:

- His goodness and mercy to all:  
e.g., Psalm 145:9; Psalm 36:6
- His provision for both the just and the unjust:  
e.g., Matthew 5:45; Luke 6:35-36
- The general benevolence by which he testifies of himself to all men:  
e.g., Acts 14:17; Romans 2:4

The church ministers to the poor and needy because of the very character and ways of our God.

## **2. The Need for Leadership in Diaconal Ministry**

Though much of the church's ministry to the poor will be on an individual and spontaneous basis, Acts 6:1-6 makes clear the need for leadership in the mercy ministry of the Church in order to better coordinate and allocate the resources of the church for the good of those in need. The office of deacon in the local church is the primary provision for this need for diaconal leadership, but in a connectional church it is proper that this leadership also be manifested at the regional level (presbytery diaconal committees) and national level (a denominational committee on diaconal ministry) as well.

## **3. The Subordinate Role of Diaconal Ministry**

While ministries of both word and deed are entrusted to the Church, the clear priority in Scripture is on the ministry of the Word of God. Indeed, the institution of the diaconate is expressly related to this priority, inasmuch as deacons serve to preserve the priority of the elders' devotion to the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6: 3-4). The forgiveness of sins and a new life in Christ is what men most fundamentally need, and all temporal needs are trivial in comparison. For this reason, the diaconal ministry of the Church must never be separated from the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church, and should always serve to facilitate it. Biblical mercy ministry may never devolve into mere aid or relief work, but rather should always adorn the ministry of the gospel.

## **4. The Essential Nature of Diaconal Ministry**

Though subordinate to the ministry of the Word, mercy ministry is, however, a vital complement to it, and can even be indispensable to it. The gospel is an expression of the holistic love of God: it aims at the ultimate wellbeing of the whole person, both body and soul. The kingdom of Christ will bring an eventual end to all human deprivation, both spiritual and material, for those who put their faith in Christ. The church testifies to this reality when it complements the ministry of the Word with a ministry of mercy, even as our Lord joined a ministry of healing to his ministry of teaching. Indeed, without genuine compassion for the material needs of our brother, our assurances of love for them can ring hollow (James 2: 15-16). The work of diaconal ministry is to lead the Church in such a way as to ensure that its love is not in word or talk only, but in also in deed and in truth (1 John 3:17-18). This is not to displace the ministry of the Word as the primary calling of the Church. It is rather to strengthen it, and to render it more credible and effective.

## **5. The Church and Diaconal Ministry**

The primary focus of diaconal ministry in the Bible is clearly on the covenant community. A special priority is given to providing aid to fellow members of the covenant community in the Old Testament legislation (Deuteronomy 15:11-12). The widows that Paul refers to as being eligible for ongoing diaconal support are members of the church (1 Timothy 5: 3-16), as were the widows in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6: 1-6). And the special offering for the poor that Paul takes among the churches is for the “saints in Jerusalem” (Acts 11:29, Romans 15:26, 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15). This priority of the household of faith is due to the fact that diaconal ministry is a vital component of the communion of the saints: it is a benefit of the unique bond of love that Christ has formed by his saving union with his Church (Westminster Confession 26:1-2). Just as the priority of the ministry of the Word each Lord’s Day is for the assembled people of God, so also the priority for the use of diaconal funds is for the covenant community.

## **6. The World and Diaconal Ministry**

Just as the ministry of the Word is not only for the Church but also for the world, so also is the ministry of mercy for both “saints and strangers on behalf of the church” (FOG XI.1). In the Mosaic law the resources of the covenant community were to be shared with the sojourner and stranger (e.g. Leviticus 19:10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21; 26:11-13). Likewise, Paul exhorted the church, “as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Diaconal ministry adorns the gospel when it provides tangible evidence of the love of God and of his messengers for the lost of this world. Indeed, in certain circumstances of extreme hardship the ministry of the Word can be virtually unintelligible apart from a ministry of deed. A compassionate response to men’s temporal needs can encourage an openness of heart to the gospel’s provision for their deeper eternal needs.

## **7. The Potential Abuse of Diaconal Ministry**

Diaconal ministry is always susceptible to abuse on the part of its recipients, due to the sinfulness of men’s hearts. Jesus acknowledged the tendency of men to seek only the material apart from the spiritual blessings of his own ministry (John 6: 26-27). Diaconal ministry must be conducted, therefore, mindful of the guiding principles of Scriptures, such as the importance of diligent labor by all who are able bodied (2 Thessalonians 3:10-13), and the duty of families to be the primary responders to material need (1 Timothy 5:8). Diaconal ministry must seek to avoid rewarding sinful patterns or creating or perpetuating a state of dependency upon aid. On the other hand, the prospect of abuse must not be allowed to stifle a compassionate response to genuine need. Our Lord was not blind to the potential abuse of generosity when he told his disciples “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8 KJV).

## **If You Are a Deacon**

From Ordained Servant, March 2014

Online at [http://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=409](http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=409)

By Nathan Trice, Pastor of Matthews OPC (Matthews, North Carolina)

If you are a deacon in Christ's church, you have been called by God to a high office indeed. You serve a vital role in protecting the church's primary calling of the ministry of the Word. You represent to the church our God's deep concern for the poor among his people, and particularly our Savior's own compassion toward the poor in his earthly ministry. And you have an opportunity to lead the church of Christ in adorning her witness to the world with deeds of mercy to accompany words of gospel truth.

This article seeks to refresh the perspectives of deacons regarding the true significance of their office as the Lord of the church has designed it. It is my hope that it will elevate in your mind, if you are a deacon, a sense of the tremendous importance of diaconal ministry in the church, as well as enlarge your insight into the heart of compassion of our Lord, to whom this office and its ministry is so important.

### **The Origin of Your Office**

If you are a deacon, you should understand well the significance of Acts 6 to your office. According to the traditional interpretation of the church, dating back to the days of the church fathers, this is that portion of the biblical account in which Christ institutes the office of deacon through his apostles.

The background to the institution of the diaconate involved the church leaders' struggle with what we sometimes call "a good problem to have." As evidence of the recent outpouring of the Spirit upon his church, and the resulting overflow of the love for the brethren that was the distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples (John 13:35), there had been a remarkable outpouring of material generosity toward the poor within the Christian community. Earlier, in Acts 4:34–35, we are told:

*There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.*

No doubt the wise and equitable distribution of these funds for the poor weighed heavily upon the apostolic leadership, especially in light of the remarkable growth of the church in these days, and their primary concern for evangelism and discipleship. This burden of responsibility reached the breaking point in the account of Acts 6:1–7, triggered by a controversy that arose in the church over the distribution of funds for the poor. The Greek-speaking members of the church in Jerusalem were convinced that their widows were being slighted in the distributions, and the indignation that accompanied this conviction threatened the peace of the church. The apostles were apparently convinced that at least part of the reason for this state of affairs lay in their having too many items to directly oversee effectively. In a meeting of the whole church, the apostles say (vss. 2b–4):

*It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*

The Greek word translated “serve” in verse 2 is the verb form of the word διάκονος (*diakonos*), from which we get our word “deacon.” It is the same word that is used elsewhere to describe a minister of the gospel as a “servant of Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 4:6). It is also a word that Jesus used to describe his own kind of ministry: “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.” (Mark 10:45). However, ever since the apostles in Acts called for men to relieve them of the responsibility of “serving tables” (a reference to money tables, most likely: the mechanism for receiving and distributing funds for the poor), the word “deacon” (servant) has come to have a more specialized reference to a certain officer in the church. The apostle Paul uses it that way in Philippians 1:1:

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers (or elders) and deacons (διακόνους, diakonois): Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

All members of the church are “servants” in a broader sense, but there are certain “servants” who are elected by the congregation and ordained by the apostles (or elders) to serve with authority.

Because the responsibilities of the new office would entail difficult decisions, interactions with members in delicate situations, and even the resolution of serious conflicts, the right men for this job needed to be “of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (v. 3). In that first deacon nomination and election process, seven such men were identified by the congregation, and the first deacon ordination in Christ’s church was held: “These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them” (v. 6). The office of deacon was now in place.

### **The Reason for Your Office (Broadly)**

If you are a deacon, you also need to recognize what is the most basic reason for your office. Acts 6 makes clear that the broadest reason for the existence of deacons in the church is to preserve and protect the church’s primary calling of the ministry of the Word and prayer.

Recall that, before the first deacons were installed into office, the apostles were carrying the full burden of leadership in the church, including the administration of mercy ministry funds. In Presbyterianism the calling and office of apostle is viewed as having ceased, and it is now elders along with the minister who have the highest authority in the local church and the final responsibility for all the ministries therein. Thus, the same partnership in ministry that was created in Acts 6 between the apostles and deacons should continue today between elders and deacons. Though all of the affairs of the local church are under the ultimate oversight of the elders (the word “overseer” is interchangeable in the New Testament with elder), there are many important concerns of leadership that, in a congregation of any size, would inevitably divert them from what are their two most crucial tasks: ministering the Word both publically and privately, and interceding in prayer with and for the members of the church. Thus, potentially any leadership concerns that go beyond these two most vital ones may, and often should be, delegated to deacons for their oversight.

It is for this reason that the scope of diaconal duties is quite rightly very broad in our churches. This is in keeping with the broader principle of delegation established in Acts 6, in which a specific task was given to the deacons to preserve certain priorities in the apostles (elders today). Thus, not only the church’s funds designated for the relief of the poor, but the funds of the church as a whole may be delegated to the diaconate for oversight. The many decisions that arise in connection with property ownership and maintenance, the logistics of facility use, and so on can be referred by the elders to the deacons. Elders may



certainly retain direct oversight of these areas if necessary, and they always are subject to the review of elders. However, it will often be wise, where qualified men may be found, for the elders to delegate many of these responsibilities of leadership to deacons. As assistants to the elders, the deacons serve an indispensable role: that of enabling the focus of the elders to remain on the spiritual lives of the saints.

Of course, there are many forms of service in the life of the church that should be shared by all the members of the church, ordained and not. Deacons are not to be “the servants” of the church in the sense that they personally do anything and everything that needs doing. They are servant-leaders in the church, who on the one hand have hearts willing to do the most menial of tasks for the sake of the body, yet who also have the authority to direct and oversee the involvement of the whole church in such tasks. The “deacon as church custodian” stereotype is shown for its folly by the high spiritual qualifications required by Scripture for deacons. With the exception of being “able to teach” (the ministry of the Word), the personal qualities prerequisite for the office of deacon are essentially the same as those required for elders (see 1 Timothy 3:1–13). The reason for this is that the office of deacon is one of leadership and authority in the church. Their service, then, should include enlisting the involvement of the broader congregation in the fulfillment of tasks fitting for every Christian to be involved with.

### **The Reason for Your Office (Particularly)**

But if you are a deacon, you also need to be aware of what is the more particular reason for your office: one that most exhibits the glory of your office and the goodness of the one who ordained it. Acts 6 also attaches to the office of deacon in a special way the calling of the church to minister to the physical and temporal needs of the poor: what is often called “mercy ministry.”

The impulse of the early Christians to give to meet each other’s material needs grew out of a profound awareness of one of the implications of the gospel: it is an expression of a holistic love on the part of God; it aims at the ultimate well-being of the whole person, body and soul. This is part of the reason that Jesus’s earthly ministry consisted not only in a ministry of teaching, but also a ministry of healing. The latter, in addition to providing attestation of his true identity as the Son of God, was also an expression of his compassion for sinners who were suffering the physical consequences of sin. It also pointed to the kind of ultimate restoration that his kingdom would bring: the end of all human deprivation, spiritual and material, for those who put their faith in Christ. The king was revealed as one who had compassion and brought relief to sinners, both body and soul. And those who were made conformed to his image by the Spirit had an instinctive urge to meet both kinds of needs in others. As the widows in the church at Jerusalem found, life within the redeemed community was one in which relief from both spiritual and temporal woes could be found.

This mercy ministry itself has a very broad application. The form of mercy ministry found in the book of Acts was focused upon widows, those in the congregation who typically would have faced the most pressing needs. But the legitimate objects of such ministry, by extension, would include those within the church who, by reasons of health, disability, old age, or other providential circumstances, find themselves lacking basic necessities of life. Likewise, the needs felt by the widows of the early church were met primarily by means of the monetary gifts of the church. Yet there are many temporal needs within the body of Christ that are best or only met by gifts of time and effort. From this we can deduce that the mercy ministry labors of the deacons should go far beyond mere check-writing and fund management. The temporal and material needs of the body are the special concern of their office, and their calling extends to all manner of service on behalf of the needy that addresses those concerns. Whereas one member, through financial hardship, may find himself in need of help purchasing a vehicle, another member, through age or disability,

may find himself in need of transportation itself by others with vehicles. Both are the proper concern of the diaconate. Again, one may need help with a mortgage payment; another may need help drafting a family budget: both are the proper concern of the diaconate. And again, the deacon serves the church best when he seeks to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of the whole congregation to minister to the needy in their midst.

Thus, the office of deacon represents a most fitting and essential complement to the office of elder in the church: together they represent the “two hands” of the church’s ministry. Whereas one has its primary expression in a ministry of Word, the other has its primary expression in a ministry of deed. According to 1 Peter 4:10–11, these are the two broad categories of gifts that the whole church partakes of—speaking gifts and serving gifts:

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.*

It is thus very natural and fitting that these two kinds of gifts be epitomized in the men that serve in the two offices of elder and deacon. And it becomes clearer why the mercy ministry of the church is a necessary complement to the gospel ministry. Without genuine compassion for the material needs of our brothers, our assurances of love for them will sound hollow (James 2:15–16). The calling of the deacons is to lead the church in such a way as to ensure that its love is not in word or talk only, but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:17–18). This is not to displace the ministry of the Word as the primary calling of the church. It is rather to strengthen it, and to render it more credible and effective.

### **The Significance of Your Office**

If you are a deacon, therefore, the special calling of your office happens to be a reflection of one of the major themes of the Bible: our God has a special concern for the poor. This is not something revealed for the first time in New Testament church polity. Rather, the institution of the diaconate is the fulfillment of a long-standing record of God’s heart for the poor.

For example, the call for compassion for the poor is written large in the instructions given to Israel by Moses. The Israelites’ own deliverance by Yahweh from poverty in Egypt was to shape their responses to the poor within their own communities. Since they themselves as a people had been redeemed from poverty, they were told by God in Deuteronomy 15:11, “You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.” Just as God had demonstrated a heart for the poor in singling out Israel among all the greater nations of the world, so his people were to have their own heart for the poor in their midst. And legislation within the Mosaic law included provisions and protections for the poor, the enforcement of which was a precursor to the diaconal ministry of the new covenant community (Exodus 22–23; Leviticus 19, 25; Deuteronomy 15, 24). When the apostle Paul committed himself so zealously to an offering for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8–9), he was acting on an ancient impulse within the law itself.

Likewise, warnings are given against taking advantage of the weakness of the poor in the wisdom literature of Israel. The reason? God identifies with the poor in a special way: what is done to the poor he counts as done to him: “Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him” (Prov. 14:31). Likewise, the poor who are abused will find a dreadful defender in God himself: “Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate, for the LORD will plead their

cause and rob of life those who rob them” (Prov. 22: 22). God’s people were to recognize that their treatment of the poor had a direct correspondence to their own relationship with God: a theme which would be reinforced in the New Testament by our Lord. Jesus made this clear when he said of ministry to the poor among his disciples: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matt. 25: 40). God’s jealousy for the poor is further underscored in a grim way as it forms a major rationale for his wrath against his people in the days of the prophets. Isaiah’s opening words of rebuke for the guilty nation single out its crimes against the poor: “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” (1:16–17).

This is a message brought by many of the prophets of old; God’s anger against his people is stirred by their neglect of the needs of the poor, and their actual abuse of that portion of the covenant community that God was so mindful of. The repentance and reformation that God calls for is repeatedly put in terms of mercy and justice toward the poor:

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isa. 58:6–7)*

This emphasis on mercy ministry as at the heart of true religion finds its echo in various places in the New Testament, particularly in the well-known words of James the brother of Jesus: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1: 27). The prophets and the apostles are one in underscoring—for all God’s people—how a heart for the poor is indispensable to a heart after God’s own heart.

Certainly the most spectacular way that the whole of Scripture underscores the significance of the work of deacons is in its casting of the work of the Messiah in “diaconal” terms. What will be the nature of the Messiah’s rule? Isaiah writes:

*But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. (11:4)*

Who, consequently, will find the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah “good news”? We are told in Isaiah 29:19, “The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.” What will be this Messiah’s sense of mission? Isaiah depicts the coming anointed one as saying: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (61:1). This is a text which Jesus himself claimed to be fulfilling in his life and ministry (Luke 4:18). All of this emphasis upon the coming of Christ as a ministry to the poor explains those opening words of our Lord’s most famous sermon: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3, compare with Luke 6:20). It also further illuminates the reason Jesus devoted the larger part of his public ministry to the relatively poorer region of Galilee rather than Judea.

Of course, none of this biblical data suggests that God’s favor lies in an unqualified way upon men of material neediness. The blessings of the gospel come to those who have suffered deprivation and oppression in this life *and* who in their need look to the Lord for help. It is those who embrace the gospel by faith who will inherit the kingdom of heaven. But our Lord’s prioritizing of ministry to the poor and his

relative pessimism about the prospects of gospel success with the rich (Matt. 19:23–24; Luke 6: 24), highlight the important place that ministry to the poor should have in the New Testament church. And it underscores the significance of that office which has a particular concern for this kind of ministry.

### **The Opportunity of Your Office**

Finally, then, if you are a deacon, you should be keenly aware of the opportunity that comes with your office: the opportunity to adorn the gospel that the church offers to the world. It is only through the ministry of the gospel that any sinner can find relief from the eternal consequences of sin, and this must remain the central and primary work of the church. But deacons are in a position to make that message of divine love more winsome and credible to the world by leading the church in deeds of mercy.

This, of course, reflects a certain perspective on the question of whether or not the diaconal ministry of the church should extend to the world. Should diaconal ministry work only in concert with the ministry of the Word within the congregation (edification), or does it have a place as well complementing the ministry of the Word to the world (evangelism)? It is certainly true that the primary focus of diaconal ministry within the biblical record is on the covenant community. A special priority is given to providing aid to poor “brothers,” or fellow Hebrews, in the Old Testament legislation (Deut. 15:11–12). The widows that Paul refers to as being eligible for ongoing diaconal support are obviously members of the church (1 Tim. 5:3–16), as were the widows in Acts 6. And the special offering for the poor that Paul takes among the churches is for the “saints in Jerusalem” (Acts 11: 29, Rom. 15: 26, 2 Cor. 8). All this is to be expected in the light of the fact that diaconal ministry is a vital component of the communion of the saints: it is a benefit of the unique bond of love that Christ has formed by his saving union with his church. Serving one another in love (Gal. 5:13), as well as speaking the truth to one another in love (Eph. 4:15), are both vital expressions of the unity of the Spirit. Just as the priority of the ministry of the Word each Lord’s Day is for the assembled people of God, so also the priority of the diaconal funds is for the needs of that covenant community. The church is the primary object of attention for both elders and deacons.

But it is precisely this parallel to the ministry of the Word that points to the propriety, and indeed the vital importance, of a diaconal ministry to the world. If the ministry of the Word is not intended by Christ to be exclusively for the benefit of the church, it would be surprising to find the ministry of deed restricted by Scripture for the sole benefit of the church. Even in the Mosaic law the resources of the covenant community were to be shared with the sojourner and stranger (Lev. 19:10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19–21; 26:11–13). This was because the Israelites themselves knew what it was like to be sojourners, and knew that God had a special concern for sojourners along with the fatherless and widows (Deut. 10:18–19). Likewise, we do not find the apostles limiting the ministry of deed to the church, but rather we find the apostle Paul exhorting the churches in this way: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

This principle seems to embody perfectly both the scope and priority of all the church’s ministry: it is first for the household of faith, but it is also to overflow intentionally into the lives of all that we meet as we go into the world. Indeed, is this not the broad trajectory of Jesus’s own ministry? He came with a ministry of Word and deed to the covenant community of Israel, prioritizing a ministry to them (though even then not excluding entirely those outside; see for example Mark 7:24–30). However, by the time of his “Resurrection Proclamation” (also known as the Great Commission, Matt. 28:18–20), we find him calling for this ministry to be carried by his disciples to all the nations. And again, what was the template of ministry that he himself had provided and that was now to go to all the world? It was a ministry of Word *and* deed. The ministry of the Word had the clear priority, but his labors to meet material needs also clearly “adorned” the gospel of

the kingdom that he preached. This is how deacons today can see their own opportunity in the church's outward mission: to adorn the church's proclamation of the gospel.

Diaconal ministry "adorns the gospel" by providing the tangible evidence of our true motives in preaching the gospel: love for the lost. If verbal expressions of love apart from material assistance can sometimes sound hollow to our own brothers and sisters in the church (James 2:15–16), surely this is just as possible—if not more so—in our ministry to the world. The forgiveness of sins and a new life in Christ is what men fundamentally need, and all temporal needs are trivial in comparison. Yet a compassionate response to men's temporal needs can encourage an openness of heart to the gospel's provision for their deeper needs. Indeed, this seems to be our Lord's perspective on ministry as he provided food for both body and soul to the multitudes, all the while aware that many would be initially drawn more to one than the other (John 6:26–27). It is for this reason that in the OPC we send to the mission field both missionaries and missionary deacons, theological instructors as well as medical doctors. Indeed, in certain circumstances the ministry of the Word is virtually unintelligible apart from a ministry of deed, which is why the OPC also has a mechanism for providing disaster response. The work of diaconal ministry alongside gospel ministry keeps the holistic nature of God's love for man in clear view, and the former often opens doors of opportunity for the latter. Men are more inclined to listen to those who are undeniably and tangibly loving them.

So all this is to say that there is a kingdom-building component to the work of the diaconate, along with a covenant-nurturing component. Deacons have an opportunity to provide leadership to the church in her mercy ministry to those outside her doors, always with a view to creating avenues of access for the gospel itself. Just as elders should see themselves as having an opportunity unique to their office to lead the church in evangelism and discipleship of the lost, deacons should see themselves as having a similar opportunity in ministries of mercy. Not only can they themselves explore and pursue ministries in the community and beyond that wisely and compassionately address material needs in a Christian context, but they can promote involvement in such ministries within the congregation. Ministries of service are, in fact, accessible to many in a typical congregation who would be otherwise intimidated by pure evangelistic work. And it is often in the context of ordinary servanthood, and the human connection that it provides, that ordinary Christians find the courage to give a clear testimony to Christ and the gospel. Deed ministry opens doors for Word ministry in the heart of the giver as well as the receiver. Deacons have a unique opportunity, therefore, to lead the congregation in an outward orientation toward the needs of the lost. And few things are more needful for us as leaders in the Presbyterian tradition today.

### **You, a Deacon!**

So if you are a deacon, you have a calling that is utterly essential to the church's mission to be a Christ-like community. Without your service in support of the elders, the primary calling of the church—the ministry of the Word and prayer—is threatened. And without your service alongside the elders, the ministry of the Word, both within and without the church, is left unadorned with the compassion of Christ. If you are a deacon, may a heightened sense of the tremendous importance of your office lead you to a fuller commitment to the responsibilities and opportunities that it entails. For it is specifically to deacons that the apostle Paul issues this promise of reward: "For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).

## **A Presbyterian Approach to Mercy Ministry**

From New Horizons, February 2017

Online at [http://www.opc.org/nh.html?article\\_id=910](http://www.opc.org/nh.html?article_id=910)

By Nathan Trice, Pastor of Matthews OPC (Matthews, North Carolina), and a member of the OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries

Presbyterianism brings churches together into relationships of mutual accountability and cooperation. This form of church government has been called “connectional” to distinguish it from church traditions in which congregations are independent of one another. Accountability in connectional church government is illustrated in examinations of ministerial candidates by presbyteries, their review of sessional records, and the whole process of church discipline, in which individuals and churches can appeal to the presbytery and the general assembly for assistance in resolving disputes in the church.

In connectional church government, cooperation is also illustrated in the sharing of resources to send and support missionaries abroad, to plant and support new churches at home, and to publish teaching tools like the magazine this article appears in. In all these ways, the advantages of being in a connectional church should be obvious.

But what about diaconal ministry? In what ways do the local deacons of your church benefit from ministering in a connectional church? Indeed, how do all members of the OPC benefit from being part of a denomination that pursues mercy ministry at every level of its Presbyterian structure? To many, perhaps, this is not as obvious, so perhaps a review of the work of mercy ministry at each level of the OPC is in order.

### **Mercy Ministry at the Local Level: Your Church’s Deacons**

The work of local deacons is certainly the most conspicuous expression of mercy ministry in the church. Originally appointed in response to the church crisis recorded in Acts 6, deacons assist the elders in all those aspects of leadership that preserve for the pastors and elders the priority of prayer and the ministry of the Word (v. 4).

More particularly, however, deacons are called to lead the congregation in its ministry to the poor, facilitating and overseeing that ministry to those who, like the widows of Acts 6, are in need of basic necessities (v. 1). This mercy ministry is vital to the health of the church and the credibility of the gospel that it preaches. It is an expression of the heart of God for the poor and the priority of Jesus himself in his earthly ministry.

(For an expanded look at the ministry of deacons in the local church, see the article “If You Are a Deacon,” included in this binder).

### **Mercy Ministry at the Regional Level: Your Presbytery’s Diaconal Committee**

It may come as news to many members of the OPC, and perhaps even to some deacons, that all seventeen presbyteries of our denomination have a standing committee on diaconal ministry. In most of these presbyteries, the diaconal committee is charged with things like:

(1) *The care of ministers in financial need.* In the OPC, ministers are members of the presbytery rather than the local church, and so it is typically a committee of presbytery that functions as their diaconate when a minister is without a call or in retirement, but also when a minister's diaconal needs surpass the resources of the local church that he serves.

(2) *The financial support of local diaconates.* Some presbyteries carry reserve funds for local diaconates facing needs beyond their resources. Other presbyteries rely on special appeals to congregations in the regional church for diaconal assistance.

(3) *The organization of disaster relief.* Presbytery diaconal committees are typically looked to for on-site leadership in responding to natural disasters affecting churches within the regional church.

In recent years, some presbytery diaconal committees in the OPC have begun to take a more proactive role in facilitating diaconal ministry in local churches. Some committees have sought to establish lines of communication with each local diaconate in advance of crisis needs or disasters, in order to be better prepared. Others have taken the initiative to provide training opportunities to deacons within the presbytery, holding diaconal conferences and sharing diaconal resources. Still others have organized diaconal ministries unique to the presbytery, such as short-term mission trips with a diaconal component. In each of these ways, presbyteries in the OPC have been seeking to strengthen the hands of local deacons and their congregations in doing the work of mercy ministry.

### **Mercy Ministry at the Denominational Level:** **Your Denomination's Committee on Diaconal Ministries**

Like each presbytery, the General Assembly of the OPC has appointed a standing committee for promoting the work of diaconal ministry in the denomination. The denominational Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) is composed of three ministers, three elders, and three deacons, who are aided by an administrator, David Nakhla. The OPC is unique among Reformed and Presbyterian churches in America in having a standing committee overseeing diaconal ministries at the denomination level.

Particularly since the catastrophic needs generated by Hurricane Katrina, the Committee on Diaconal Ministry has been enthusiastically promoting mercy ministry throughout the denomination. (Additional information about this committee's work can be found at the Diaconal Ministries webpage at [www.opc.org/committee\\_dm.html](http://www.opc.org/committee_dm.html).)

There are six areas of special focus for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries:

(1) *The financial support of presbytery diaconal committees when their resources are inadequate for their needs.* When a local diaconal need exceeds both the local church's and the presbytery's resources, the CDM stands ready to provide assistance.

(2) *The facilitation of denomination-wide opportunities for short-term missions work with a diaconal component.* To help organize this work, David Nakhla serves as the short-term missions coordinator for the OPC.

(3) *The coordination of disaster response at the denominational level.* David Nakhla also attends to this need, serving as the disaster response coordinator for the OPC.

(4) *The oversight and support of missionary deacons.* In cooperation with the Committee on Foreign Missions, the CDM seeks to recruit and send out men to serve in a diaconal role alongside missionaries on the field.

(5) *The training and support of presbyteries and local diaconates in mercy ministry.* To encourage the development of a proactive mercy ministry at the presbytery level, the CDM has held multiple “summits” of committee members from each presbytery, the most recent being near Chicago last October. And to encourage local deacons in their ministry, the CDM has held two national summits for deacons of the OPC. The third one has been scheduled for June 15–17, 2017, in Wheaton, Illinois.

(6) *Ensuring that the needs of retired ministers and their widows are being met.* This is accomplished by the oversight of presbytery diaconal committees and by use of the Obadiah Fund. The Obadiah Fund celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2016; see the December 2016 issue of *New Horizons* (p. 22) for expressions of gratitude from some of those who have benefited from this ministry.

### **All Mercy Ministry Is Local**

It has been truly said that “all mercy ministry is local,” inasmuch as it involves a direct personal response to human need, the exercise of wisdom by those immediately involved, and an expression of Christian love that can effectively join the ministry of deed with the ministry of word. The work of believers within their churches and communities, under the leadership of their deacons, is where mercy ministry really happens. But that mercy ministry in a local Presbyterian church can be supported and strengthened by the larger church to which it is connected. And that is yet another reason to be thankful to be part of a Presbyterian church!



## **Procedure for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for Individuals in Need Within the OPC**

Committee on Diaconal Ministries  
of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

### **Overview:**

- The Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) is privileged to be able to respond to appeals for diaconal assistance for individuals in need within the OPC, using funds entrusted to it through the faithful giving of individuals and churches.
- In striving to follow a Presbyterian structure within the diaconate, the CDM requires that appeals for aid for individuals be presented to it only after having first been considered at the local and regional levels of the church.

### **Procedure:**

- The CDM provides a form entitled, "Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for Individuals in Need Within the OPC" to be used to submit a request.
- The form is available upon request or at OPC.org > Ministries > Diaconal Ministries at [http://opc.org/committee\\_dm.html](http://opc.org/committee_dm.html)
- The form can be printed and mailed in, or completed on line and submitted by email.
- The form should be submitted by a Presbytery or a Presbytery Diaconal Committee (PDC).
- The CDM receives the completed form with the expectation that the Presbytery or PDC has:
  - Received the request from a session or deacon board that has determined that the need cannot be fully met within the local congregation
  - Examined the request and ascertained the legitimacy and extent of the need
  - Determined that the need cannot be fully met within the Presbytery
  - Participated in responding partially toward the need, if at all possible
- The form should be accompanied by financial documentation that defines the need and supports the request.
- The form should be accompanied by a report of the Presbytery's or PDC's investigative work, as well as their conclusions and advice to the CDM in this matter.
- The completed form is received by the CDM Administrator, who will forward it to the appropriate sub-committee and, if the sub-committee requires further information, will contact the requestor for more details.
- The CDM will extend diaconal assistance with the understanding that the Presbytery or PDC that made the request will provide oversight and continuing care to individuals who receive assistance from the CDM.

### **Contact:**

Mr. David Nakhla  
Administrator, Committee on Diaconal Ministries  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E  
Willow Grove, PA 19090  
Cell 562-760-7606  
Email [David.Nakhla@opc.org](mailto:David.Nakhla@opc.org)

## **Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for an Individual in Need Within the OPC**

Committee on Diaconal Ministries  
of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

*The Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) makes this form available to Presbyteries or Presbytery Diaconal Committees that wish to request financial assistance for individuals in need within the OPC. Please fill it out as completely as possible. The CDM does not intend for this to be a roadblock, but rather to ensure that we receive all pertinent information so as to be able to come to a swift decision. All answers are confidential to the CDM. Some answers may require additional follow-up by the CDM. You can print out this form and send it by mail to David Nakhla, or visit [http://www.opc.org/committee\\_dm.html](http://www.opc.org/committee_dm.html) and complete an online form and send it by email to David Nakhla (see pg. 3 for address). Thank you.*

*“Procedure for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for Individuals in Need Within the OPC” can be found at [http://www.opc.org/committee\\_dm.html](http://www.opc.org/committee_dm.html)*

1. Name and address of the church/presbytery/committee requesting financial assistance.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Name and address of the person/family that needs assistance, and the OP church with which they are affiliated.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is the exact amount of financial assistance you are requesting from the Committee on Diaconal Ministries?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Usually a specific request for aid is the result of a larger situation. Please provide the history, nature, and extent (i.e., one-time or long-term assistance) of the need, including any relevant extenuating circumstances.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Have there been any attempts and/or success in negotiating outstanding bills and/or in agreeing upon payment plans?

**Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for an Individual in Need Within the OPC (cont.)**

6. Is this need something that could be covered by insurance? Has this option been explored? If a claim has been denied, has it been followed up with an appeal?
7. What has the individual, family, and extended family done to address this need?
8. Please describe any government assistance sought in addressing this need, and the result.
9. What counsel has the local diaconate provided, and how have they been able to respond financially to this need?
10. What interaction has the presbytery diaconal committee had with the local diaconate and/or session in evaluating this request?
11. What counsel has the presbytery diaconal committee provided, and how have they been able to respond financially to this need?

**Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for an Individual in Need Within the OPC (cont.)**

12. If applicable, have steps been taken to prevent this need from recurring?
13. Is there any other pertinent information that the CDM should know before considering this request?
14. Please list any financial reports, budgets, lists of assets, etc., that could help define the need and support this request, and include them as an attachment to this form.

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**Name of person completing this form**

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**Your position**

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**Signature**

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**Date Submitted**

**Submit this completed form to:**

Mr. David Nakhla, Administrator, Committee on Diaconal Ministries  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E  
Willow Grove, PA 19090  
Cell 562-760-7606  
Email: David.Nakhla@opc.org

***Response of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries:***

## OPC National Diaconal Summit III

June 15-17, 2017

Wheaton, Illinois

### **Proposed OPC PDC Mandate**

#### **1. The committee's work:**

##### **a. Regarding Local Congregations**

- i. Stands ready to assist local diaconates with matters that exceed their local resources.
- ii. Stands ready to assist congregations and mission works without local deacons.
- iii. Promotes, encourages and coordinates diaconal work within the presbytery.
- iv. Communicates and promotes diaconal ministry opportunities within the presbytery.
- v. Educates and encourages the presbytery to carry out diaconal responsibilities in response to various needs.

##### **b. Regarding the CDM**

- i. Promotes the work of the CDM within the presbytery.
- ii. Serves as Presbytery's liaison between the CDM and the churches of Presbytery in evaluating local requests for aid which the Presbytery is unable to provide for, and referring these to the CDM.

##### **c. Regarding Disaster Relief**

- i. Promotes the work of disaster relief among the churches of our presbytery, in coordination with the CDM, other OPC presbyteries, and the broader church in general.

##### **d. Regarding Ministers**

- i. Inquires and acts to ensure that every retired minister of the Presbytery, every minister's widow and his dependent family have adequate resources to meet their normal needs.
- ii. Seeks to discover cases of pastors in need and gives them aid as they are able, if they judge that circumstances warrant such aid.

##### **e. Regarding Anticipating Needs**

- i. Assesses needs by conducting a survey of the financial needs of the churches in Presbytery.
- ii. Brings to the presbytery's attention the work of other Christian relief agencies.

##### **f. Regarding Diaconal Funds**

- i. Raises funds from the churches of Presbytery to meet particular needs that come to their attention.
- ii. Recommends an annual per capita amount.
- iii. Requests funds from the CDM.

##### **g. Regarding Deacons of the Presbytery**

- i. Keeps a roll of active deacons of Presbytery and makes such a roll available to Presbytery.
- ii. Promotes contact between the local deacon boards.

# Resources for OPC Deacons

## Website OPC.org/committee\_dm.html

**THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Our History General Assembly Worldwide Outreach Ministries Start

**Committee on Diaconal Ministries**

Carries out the denominational ministry of mercy of the OPC  
 Responds to diaconal requests made by presbytery diaconal committees when needs exceed the capacity of that body  
 Works to ensure retired OPC pastors and their wives or widows are adequately cared for in retirement (Obadiah fund)  
 Stands ready to lead an organized and timely response to major disasters at home and abroad  
 Responds to diaconal requests made to the OPC by other reformed churches  
 Supplies our foreign missionaries with the ability to supplement the ministry of the word with deeds of mercy  
 Works to raise up, train, support and encourage Missionary Deacons on OPC foreign fields  
 Strives to encourage, support, and connect local deacons by means of training and networking opportunities

**National Diaconal Summit III: June 15-17, 2017**

Brochure and Registration

**If You Are A Deacon**

If you are a deacon in Christ's church, you have been called by God to a high office indeed. You serve a vital role in protecting the church's primary calling of the ministry of the Word. You represent to the church our God's deep concern for the poor among his people, and particularly our Savior's own compassion toward the poor in his earthly ministry. You have an opportunity to lead the church of Christ in adorning her witness to the world with deeds of mercy to accompany words of gospel truth.

This article in Ordained Servant seeks to refresh the perspectives of deacons regarding the true significance of their office as the Lord of the church has designed it. It is my hope that it will elevate in your mind, if you are a deacon, a sense of the tremendous importance of diaconal ministry in the church, as well as enlarge your insight into the heart of compassion of our Lord, to whom this office and its ministry is so important...

**Resources**

**Principles**

- Principles of Diaconal Ministry
- Principles for the Ministry of Mercy

**Requesting Aid**

- Procedure for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for an individual in Need Within the OPC
- Form for Requesting Diaconal Assistance for an individual in Need Within the OPC
- Procedure for Requesting Assistance with Payment of a Minister's Health Insurance Premium

**Teaching Materials from Diaconal Summits**

- 2010 National Diaconal Summit videos
- 2012 National Diaconal Summit videos
- 2012 National Diaconal Summit Workshops
- 2016 Presbytery Diaconal Summit videos

**Presbytery Diaconal Committees (PDC)**

- PDC Chairmen Contact Info

**Obadiah Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows**

- Obadiah Fund Overview
- Obadiah Fund Report: "Remember Your Leaders" (from New Horizons, January 2013)

**Disaster Response**

- Policy to Meet Needs Arising from Major Disaster (provisional)
- OPC Short-Term Missions and Disaster Response Website
- OPC Disaster Response Facebook Page

**Refugee Relief**

- Link to Refugee Relief at OPCSTM.org
- Refugee Relief: Foreign Missions at Home

**"Mercy Minute" Archives**

- May 10, 2017
- February 8, 2017
- November 9, 2016
- September 23, 2016
- August 10, 2016
- March 24, 2016
- November 21, 2015
- July 1, 2015
- March 3, 2015


**As Seen in New Horizons**

- A Presbyterian Approach to Mercy Ministry

## Mercy Minute Quarterly Newsletter

**The Mercy Minute**  
Committee on Diaconal Ministries

Vol. 5: Issue 2  
May 10, 2017



**Last Chance to Register!**  
**Deadline: Monday, May 15th!**

**OPC National Diaconal Summit III**  
June 15-17, 2017  
Wheaton, Illinois


**Networking. Encouragement. Training.**

- Deacons, deacons-in-training, and other OPC officers are encouraged to attend!
- All expenses paid except travel to Wheaton and \$25 registration fee
- The Committee on Diaconal Ministries anticipates holding these summits at 5-year intervals, so the next one will not take place until 2021!

**Don't Miss Out on the 2017 Summit!**  
**Click for all the details:**

**REGISTER NOW**

**\*\*\* NEW \*\*\***  
**Facebook Page for OPC Deacons**



On March 30th, we did something we've been contemplating for years. We created a closed-group Facebook page specifically for OPC Deacons!

Lots of interesting reading materials have already been shared by members of the group, and several discussion topics have been initiated! The page is closed to all but OPC Officers in order to encourage openness and ensure privacy.

## OPC Deacons Facebook Group

**OPC Deacons**  
Closed Group

Shortcuts: Westminster Theological Seminary, Women of Grace, BAPTISTS REFORMED

Join this group to see the discussion, post and comment

**Members (118)**

David A. Porter, Greg Nakhla, David Nakhla, Vincent A. Brand, Greg Kier, Robert Benge, Dan Van Een, Gary Walton, David Schreier, Jason Gamett, Mark A. Winder, James Hunter, Gerald Bell Smith, George McDraw, Gerald Miller, Mark Simmons, Sam Chisler, Peter Genger, James Meashof, Mike Hesson, David Veech, John Plathume, William Cronk, Thomas Bossmore, Glenn Car, Scott Allen, David Simlar

**DESCRIPTION**  
The purpose of this page is to enhance information-sharing, collaboration, and encouragement between OPC Deacons.

**CREATE NEW GROUPS**  
Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

**SUGGESTED GROUPS**

**little green thumbs**  
1,014 members

**Know County Ohio K9s**  
2 friends · 2,700 members



**David P. Nakhla**

**Administrator  
Committee on  
Diaconal Ministries**

**Cell 562-760-7606  
david.nakhla@opc.org**