

## **STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF THE OFFICE OF RULING ELDER AT CHAPELGATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. (5/11/04)**

### Objectives:

- a. Sharpen the focus of ‘duties of office’ around core Biblical responsibilities of Elders – Shepherds of God’s people.
- b. Develop forum for greater care, communication, prayer, worship, fellowship and encouragement among fellow elders – both those on and off Session.
- c. Involve the greater body of Ruling Elders at Chapelgate not currently serving in the work of Shepherding.
- d. Clearly re-establish the covenant obligations and expectations of our ordination to office as Ruling Elders, according to Scripture and the BCO.
- e. Correct Session operating deficiencies where principles of the BCO are not followed.

### **Focus and Roles**

#### Primary Focus:

Shepherding God’s people (BCO 8-3, 8-8, 8-9)

The Elders Core Roles are Pastoring, Teaching, Defending the Faith and Overseeing (below are some examples from our church life and you do not need to perform them all)

#### Pastoring

- Maintaining and building relationships
- Counseling
- Praying
- Coordinating with Diaconate
- Disciplining
- Promoting unity and harmony
- Spiritually nourishing the flock
- Spiritually protecting and defending the flock
- Exemplifying piety and holiness in all of life

#### Teaching

- Teaching Adult Bible Training or Sunday School
- Modeling Christian love and service
- Making disciples
- Mentoring
- Instructing individuals
- Leading small groups
- Helping families ‘promote true religion at home’

## Defending the faith

- Promoting and defending sound doctrine
- Continuing spiritual growth

## Overseeing

- Participating in Session meetings
- Leading and participating in committees
- Participating in Presbytery and General Assembly
- Co-laboring with Senior and Program Staff, and Diaconate

## Elder Service

### A. Duties of Office:

All ruling elders in good standing who are members of Chapelgate Presbyterian Church, on or off Session, who at one time have been elected to office at Chapelgate by its members are expected to exercise their gifts and the responsibilities associated with their ordained office in accordance with BCO 8-3, unless they have been released from the active duties of their office in accordance with BCO 24-6,8, and 9. Ruling elders who are presently off Session are strongly encouraged to attend designated meetings every other month, for fellowship, prayer, mutual support, edification, and ministry discussions. In addition, all ruling elders will be asked to complete an annual status form for the purpose of affirming their continuing call to the office of elder.

### B. Meetings

1. Elders — whether on- or off-Session - will meet every other month, for fellowship, prayer, mutual support, edification, and ministry discussions. Regular Session matters will be limited to a brief 15-minute Clerk's report to take action on routine but urgent matters. A quorum of Session will be required for any action items associated with the Clerk's report and attendance at this meeting will be recorded.
2. The Session will meet on alternate months in fulfillment of the charge of BCO 12-5 through 12-8.

*[Note: a consequence of passing this proposal is that we remove the CPC distinctions of active/inactive or active/rotating. The BCO does not recognize such distinctions. We will still have the distinctions of 'on-Session' and 'off-*

*Session, ' or some other wording that does not imply 'serving' and 'not serving.' We cannot escape the requirement to serve.]"*

Note - It was approved (separate motion) to adopt the following implementation plan for the Structure and Operation of the Office of Elder at Chapelgate Presbyterian Church:

- 1) Personal contact to all elders who are not currently attending Session meetings
- 2) Begin teaching the new structure of the office of Elder in officer training classes
- 3) Congregational instruction of structure for changes and implementation process.
- 4) Prayer and decision time for all non-Session Elders to decide how they are fulfilling their calling.
- 5) Reassignment of shepherding groups as required
- 6) Election of officers under new guidelines
- 7) Begin Session/Diaconate operation under new policy

(It was pointed out that the process of implementation is sequential. A tentative time frame was discussed with the intent to begin operation under the new policy by January 2005. It was subsequently approved on 9/14/04 to begin the alternate meeting schedule starting with the November 2004 meeting)