

Church Order and Related Matters

Chair: Kathy DeMey
Reporter: Matthew Ackerman

Council of Delegates

I. Materials

A. Council of Delegates Report (section II, A, 12, a), p. 40

II. Recommendations:

A. That synod not adopt the change to church order Article 45 proposed by Synod 2022 (II, A, 12, a)

Grounds:

1. This change will likely reduce the numbers of deacon delegates to synod because “ordinarily” does not carry binding weight.
2. Deacons offer unique perspective on ecclesiastical matters, particularly our ministries of mercy and justice. They offer relief to those in need, both within and outside of the church, and teach that benevolence is a quality of life in Christ, not merely a matter of financial assistance. They are charged with weighing opportunities for giving and service and using the resources of the church discerningly. They exemplify the love of Christ by showing compassion and mercy to those in need and treating them with dignity and respect. They are called to be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in society, and to equip the church for ministries of reconciliation and peacemaking.
3. The practical challenges of finding deacon delegates should not take precedence over the benefits of having deacon delegates.
4. Deacon delegates have only been seated at six synods, which is not enough time for these changes to be fully embraced by the denomination (i.e. some classes still do not seat deacons, some congregations do not have deacons, etc.).
5. Deacons tend to add diversity to synod, as the office is more likely to include younger members and women than the offices of elder or pastor.

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