

# Chester ARP Church Committee Manual

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# **Chester ARP Church Committee Manual**

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## **Church Vision Statement**

The Chester ARP Church is a community of believers redeemed and called by God to glorify him by growing disciples to maturity in Christ and by witnessing to the world so that the Lord's mighty name may go forth in truth and grace.

### **Internal Ministries of the Church**

To glorify God by growing to maturity disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ toward the integration of faith and practice through inspired worship and nurturing ministries focused on biblical teaching, prayer, discipleship training, encouragement, and compassion.

### **External Ministries of the Church**

To glorify God by demonstrating and sharing Christ's love with our surrounding community and the world through ministries of outreach and mercy with a passion for bringing lost souls to Christ and bettering the world through the gospel's impact.

### **Church Facilities**

To glorify God by using the facilities of Chester ARP Church to best serve the congregation to carry out her internal and external mission.

## Session

### CHAPTER XI<sup>1</sup> CONCERNING THE SESSION

#### A. ITS PURPOSE

1. The lowest court of the Church consists of the ruling elders in active service and the pastor, if there is one, of a particular congregation, and is called the session. The precedent for this court is found in the general form of church government founded upon the Old and New Testament principles, which was that of government by elders.
2. The session is charged with the spiritual oversight and government of the congregation.
3. The presbytery initiating a mission may appoint a provisional session to exercise oversight of the mission on behalf of the presbytery. The provisional session will report to the appropriate committee of presbytery that is charged with responsibility for new church development.

#### B. ITS AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The session shall have as its primary responsibility the initiation, planning, organization and administration of programs designed to enable the congregation to carry on the mission of God in Christ's Church by word and deed in the community and also in the Presbytery, the General Synod and the whole world. In order to institute and supervise the general work of the congregation, the Session has the power to appoint boards, commissions, or committees. (See Chapter XIV)
2. In order to carry out its responsibility, working under the proper jurisdiction of the higher courts and with the pastor, the session has power:
  - a. To counsel with the members of the congregation and to inquire into their Christian knowledge and conduct.
  - b. To admonish, rebuke, suspend, or exclude from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper any member of the congregation found delinquent, according to the Rules of Discipline.
  - c. To encourage parents who are communicant members to present their children for the Sacrament of Baptism.
  - d. To receive applicants into communicant church membership upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, upon reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or upon transfer of membership.
  - e. To grant the appropriate certificate of transfer for any member in good standing upon proper request.
  - f. To instruct, examine, ordain, and install ruling elders and deacons upon their election by the congregation.
  - g. To encourage the officers of the congregation to devote themselves to their respective responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Form of Government* of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Chapter XI. For the role of the Elder, please see Appendix B.

- h. To supervise the work of the diaconate and examine the records of its proceedings.
  - i. To develop and supervise the church school and the educational program of the congregation.
  - j. To employ and supervise the work of a director of Christian education.
  - k. To exercise, in accordance with the Directory for Worship, authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, and over all other religious services.
  - l. To assemble the people for worship in the absence of the pastor.
  - m. To direct the securing, receiving, and distributing of special offerings.
  - n. To devise and encourage suitable measures for the spiritual advancement of the congregation and of the Church.
  - o. To observe and enforce the lawful injunctions of the higher courts.
  - p. To select from among its ruling Elders representatives to the meetings of the Presbytery and the General Synod, but not to instruct such representatives as to how they shall vote, but may so instruct its representatives on a vote on a proposed plan of Church union. These representatives shall make a report to their session of the proceedings of the court.
  - q. To propose to the Presbytery such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.
  - r. To supervise, review, and control all organizations within the congregation, and in its discretion to require stated reports.
  - s. To call a congregational meeting.
  - t. To exercise authority over the use of the church building and associated properties.
3. The session shall:
- a. Keep an accurate record of its proceedings and submit annually such records to the Presbytery for inspection and review.
  - b. Keep an accurate record of:
    - 1. The rolls of the members of the congregation according to the *Form of Government*.
    - 2. The names of persons receiving the Sacrament of Baptism.
    - 3. Deaths and marriages of members of the congregation.
  - c. Report to the higher Church Courts and their agencies such information as requested.

### C. ITS ORGANIZATION

- 1. The pastor, by virtue of his office, is the moderator of the session. An associate pastor, if there is one, is also a member of the session, and may substitute as moderator at the discretion of the pastor.
- 2. The mission developer of a mission congregation, by virtue of his office, is the moderator of the provisional session.
- 3. In addition to the moderator, the officers of the session shall be a vice moderator and a clerk who shall be elected annually by the session.
- 4. In cases where the pastor is, for any cause, disqualified from presiding, the associate pastor or the vice moderator may preside.

5. When a congregation is without a pastor, the moderator shall be a minister of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church appointed by the Presbytery. When it is not feasible for such moderator to be present, the vice moderator shall preside. In judicial cases the moderator must be the appointee of the Presbytery.
6. The session shall hold one regular meeting each month. The moderator may call a meeting of the session at any time he deems necessary and shall call a meeting upon the request of two ruling elders or upon request of the Presbytery. Notice of such meetings shall be given.
7. No meeting of the session shall be held without the knowledge of the pastor.
8. Each session shall determine the number of its members necessary for a quorum, provided such a quorum be not less than a pastor and two elders, or three elders without a pastor.
9. Only members who are personally present at the meeting are entitled to vote.
10. Each meeting of the session shall be opened and closed with prayer.
11. A provisional session should hold at least one regular meeting each month.

## **Clerk and Vice-Moderator of Session**

### **A. The Clerk of Session**

1. Perform all duties as outlined in the Form of Government and as the Session shall assign, including the recording of the Session, Joint, and Congregational minutes.
2. Maintain and preserve the church records.
3. Act on behalf of the Session in an Emergency situation, conferring with the Vice Moderator and the Pastor.
4. In the absence of the pastor, be responsible for the administration of the church.
5. Counsel the pastor and staff to their particular needs.
6. Ensure that all Session actions are carried out.
7. Help Pastor prepare Agenda for all regular Session Meetings and see that unfinished business is followed up.
8. Assist the pastor as requested and needed.

### **B. The Vice-Moderator**

1. Encourage the work of all Church Committees.
2. In the absence of a pastor, will lead all meetings of the session.
3. Ensure that all Session actions are carried out.
4. Act on behalf of the Session in an Emergency situation, conferring with the Clerk of Session and the Pastor.
5. Assist the pastor as requested and needed.

## Duties of All Committees

1. Meet regularly for the conduct of business, training, sharing, and praying.
2. Establish goals and priorities based on the needs of Chester ARP's congregation.
3. Oversee the programs your committee administers by attendance, support, involvement, encouragement, and prayer.
4. Provide for special training of the officers and leaders of the program.
5. Evaluate honestly and carefully each program, project, or activity on a continuing basis.
6. Devise a budget and monitor expenditures of particular ministries over which the committee has supervision. (The budget will be submitted to the Diaconate for approval, see duty #9 below).
7. Make necessary recommendations to Session or Diaconate regarding new programming or non-budget spending.
8. Route all matters that require unbudgeted expenditures through the Diaconate.
9. Present all annual budget requests to the Finance and Benevolence committee by October 1 of each year.
10. Be ready to accept assignments and directions from the Session or Diaconate.
11. Understand that all committees are under the authority of the Session and Diaconate.
12. Understand that all actions of the committees **are but recommendations** to be given to the Diaconate or Session for official action.

## Duties of All Committee Chairs

1. Call organizational meeting in January of each year.
2. Establish Stated, Regular meeting times.
3. Work with Pastor to recruit committee Members.
4. Provide for minute-taking and reporting to Session and Diaconate by making sure your committee's minutes and reports are sent electronically to the church secretary as soon as possible after the meeting. (Diaconate meets third Sunday of the month after worship; the Session meets the first Sunday morning before worship) The Minutes are to be in the Church office by noon on the Wednesday before the Meeting of the Session and/or Diaconate.
5. Train (Where appropriate) Committee members.
6. See that all meetings are publicized by making sure they are on the calendar in the church office. Sending reminder will not be the church office's responsibility. The Chairman is encouraged to e-mail or contact those on his committee reminding them of upcoming meetings.
7. Be prepared to report your committee's recommendations verbally to Session or Diaconate at their meetings during the presentation of the written report.
8. Monitor Budget Expenditures of your committee's programs and projects.
9. Be familiar with Session and Diaconate policies in order to guide committee by checking past minutes of committee, Session, and Diaconate.
10. Preside at all committee meetings.
11. Be responsible for follow-through of committee actions.
12. Pray for and encourage committee members and staff.
13. Find ways to inform the congregation of your committee's functions, actions and plans (Letters, Announcements, The Chatter, etc.).
14. Check in Church Office for mail regularly.

## **Worship Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To promote the full and well-rounded worship of God by the Chester ARP Congregation and to plan special events to deepen and broaden our worship experience.

### **Duties:**

1. Work closely with the Pastor in planning worship order, content, and time.
2. Evaluate the Worship needs of the congregation in regard to taste, style, and biblical mandate.
3. Evaluate and maintain the music ministry of Chester ARP.
4. Oversee the work of the Organist and Choir Director and others involved in the leadership of the music programs.
5. Plan for, promote and direct special worship services with Session's concurrence including (but not limited to): Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, and any other special services.
6. Make the necessary arrangements for the proper administration of the Lord's Supper and seek to promote knowledge of the proper meaning and reception of the Lords' Supper.
7. Prepare the elements and table for serving the Lord's Supper as directed by the Session to include: at least quarterly observation and always on Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve.
8. Maintain the necessary equipment for Worship: Communion tablecloth, candles, Choir Robes, music library, and music for special occasion.
9. Make recommendations to the Session concerning the Worship of the Church.
10. Oversee and maintain responsibility for, but not limited to, the Sunday Morning Worship Service, Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting, Special Services, Cantata, Choir, Special Music, and Decorations in the Sanctuary.
11. Find Pulpit and Musician supplies (fill-ins) as necessary.

## **World Witness/Missions Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To implement and support state, national, and foreign missions.

### **Duties:**

1. Evaluate all mission requests and present recommendations to Session.
2. Develop programs to generate information on missionaries, church planters, mission groups, and other ministries that are serving Christ in the world.
3. Communicate with the Church membership information about those missions and ministries Chester ARP supports.
4. Pray for the groups and missionaries we support.
5. Prepare annual Faith Promise Budget and schedule mission payments for the year.
6. Plan a conference weekend in April to promote missions.
7. Be in contact with the Catawba Presbytery's Church Extension Committee and Synod's ONA Board and World Witness.
8. Plan annual Carpenter's Fellowship Offering.
9. Plan, organize, and oversee all mission trips. (Youth trips in conjunction with Christian Education committee.)

## **Christian Education Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To promote Christian Education within the whole congregation of Chester ARP Church and to oversee our ministry to Children and Youth.

### **Duties:**

1. Plan, organize, and oversee education programs within the church, this will include all Sunday School Classes and Youth Groups.
2. Plan, organize, and oversee all nursery and Sunday Morning Children's Church programs.
3. Plan, organize, and oversee all Sunday and Wednesday Night Children's Activities.
4. Plan, organize, and oversee all special children's activities, which will include, but not be limited to: VBS, Easter Egg Hunt, and Fall Festival.
5. Recruit and train teachers and assistant teachers.
6. Recruit and train a Sunday School Superintendent.
7. Plan special educational events.
8. Oversee and work with the Director of Youth and Family Ministries in the organization and operation of a comprehensive Christian Education program.
9. Plan activities to recognize the leaders in the various programs.
10. Keep Session and Diaconate posted on participation and space requirements.
11. Evaluate programs on continuing basis.
12. Prepare an annual budget and monitor same throughout year.

## **Congregational Life Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To facilitate the building of fellowship among the congregation of Chester ARP Church by assisting in the assimilation of new members into the body, reengaging other members that have become inactive, and encouraging active member to be involved in the life of the church.

### **Duties:**

1. Oversee the organization and development of small groups with the congregation.
2. Plan, organize, promote, and oversee Church Family Retreat (perhaps a Bonclarken weekend; marriage retreat; men's retreat; women's retreat; etc.).
3. Develop a program to integrate new members into the life and activities of Chester ARP Church in coordination with the Missions and Outreach committee.
4. Prepare an annual budget and monitor throughout the year.
5. Plan fellowship dinners, trips, and other special activities to build fellowship within the body of Christ here at Chester ARP church.
6. Develop a plan to watch over the congregation and discover those that have become inactive or seem to be less involved and encourage them to remain or become more active.
7. Oversee the Men's Bible Study, Ladies Lunches, Sunday School Class Outings and assist them if needed.
8. Plan, organize, promote and oversee Church Christmas Dinner.
9. Encourage and Support weekly prayer groups.
10. Recommend to the Session and Diaconate creative and innovative ways to develop fellowship and assimilation of new members in the family of Chester ARP Church.

## Community Outreach Committee

### General Objective:

To reach out to the lost and hurting of Chester community through all appropriate and prudent Biblical means, and to fulfill Christ's command to the church in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:28).

### Duties:

1. Develop program of outreach that would be of interest to those without a church home to consider Chester ARP for membership.
2. Oversee the activities and scheduling of Greeters to welcome and assist guests at Chester ARP.
3. Provide follow up process which insures a personal contact is made (phone or visit) to all new guests who are interested in such a visit.
4. Plan appropriate recognition activity for new members. (This could possibly include New Members Luncheon in cooperation with Women's Ministries.)
5. Cooperate with the Christian Education committee to see that new members are integrated into the life and work of the Chester ARP Church.
6. Provide instruction and encouragement to church members on how to share their faith with others.
7. Develop programs that use a variety of methods and means to reach out to the lost and that promote Christ through the ministry of Chester ARP Church.
8. Prepare an annual Outreach budget and monitor same throughout the year.

## **Service/Nominations Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To promote the service of the Lord in the Chester ARP congregation through the nomination of members to positions of service.

### **Duties:**

1. Nominate members to fill committee and leadership positions (vacancies on committees; congregational officers: treasurer, assistant treasurer, congregational chairman, and congregational secretary).
2. Contact nominees to inquire about their willingness to serve.
3. Secure church members for Mid-week meal preparation and clean-up.
4. Work with church administrative assistant to maintain an active calendar for Mid-week meal service.
5. Secure volunteers for special church fellowships (Annual Christmas Dinner, Plymouth Rock Breakfast, etc.).
6. Work alongside of other committees to secure the volunteers for the service needs of the congregation's various programs.

## Diaconate

### CHAPTER VI<sup>2</sup> CONCERNING DEACONS

- A. DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON
1. The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy and service after the example of Christ.
  2. To this office should be chosen persons<sup>3</sup> of good character, honest repute, exemplary life, brotherly love, sympathetic nature, and sound judgment, and who are qualified under the standards recorded in Scripture.
- B. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES
1. It is the duty of a deacon to be a faithful and diligent Christian, actively sharing in the worship and service of the Church and giving particular emphasis to the duties of his office.
- C. THE DIACONATE
1. Its Purpose
    - a. The diaconate shall be responsible for the congregation's ministry to those in material need or distress. It shall also encourage practice of total stewardship among the members of the congregation. It shall plan, in collaboration with the session, the causes toward which the offerings of the congregation shall be directed; devise effective methods for securing and receiving these offerings; secure and receive special offerings as directed by the session and the higher courts of the Church; and see that all offerings are properly distributed. It shall have the care of the general property of the congregation, both real and personal. In matters requiring extraordinary expenditure for acquisition, construction, or alteration of church property, consent of the congregation is required.
  2. Its Organization
    - a. The deacons of a particular congregation shall be organized as a board, the diaconate, of which the pastor and associate pastor shall be advisory members, and of which the congregational treasurer shall be an advisory member when not otherwise a member thereof. The diaconate shall elect a chairman and a secretary from among its own number. The secretary shall keep a record of the diaconate's proceedings, and shall submit its minutes to the session at least once a year and at other times upon request of the session. The congregational treasurer, who is entrusted with the regular offerings of the congregation, shall be responsible to the diaconate. A monthly financial

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<sup>2</sup> *Form of Government* of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Chapter VI.

<sup>3</sup> Circumstances of the local congregation shall require each session to determine the meaning of the word "persons."

report of the congregational treasurer shall be included in the minutes of the diaconate.

3. Its Procedure

- a. The diaconate shall hold one regular meeting each month.
- b. The chairman may call a meeting of the diaconate at any time he deems necessary and shall call a meeting upon the request of either two deacons or the session. Notice of such meetings shall be given.
- c. The diaconate of each congregation shall determine the number of its members necessary for a quorum.
- d. Only members who are personally present are entitled to vote.
- e. Each meeting of a diaconate shall be opened and closed with prayer.

4. Its Relationship to the Session

- a. In the discharge of its duties, the diaconate is under the supervision and authority of the session. The congregational budget and other important financial decisions require the approval of the session prior to presentation to the congregation.
- b. The session may void or amend any action of the diaconate, or return it for further consideration.
- c. It is recommended that the session and the diaconate meet once a quarter in joint session to confer on matters requiring mutual attention. At such meetings the moderator of the session shall preside and the clerk of the session shall serve as secretary. The joint meeting can take no official action, but the session and diaconate shall act separately on matters committed to the care of each.

## Property Committee

### General Objective:

To maintain and improve all church properties (including grounds, van, and buildings).

### Duties:

1. Maintain a list of volunteer workers to complete small repairs and jobs around the church.
2. Evaluate monthly work orders and ensure minor issues are dealt with in a timely manner.
3. Bring ideas for major improvements to the Diaconate and Session.
4. Develop monthly, quarterly and yearly inspection checklists of buildings, grounds and van. (i.e. HACV, Lights, Electrical, Plumbing, Gutters, etc.) Make recommendations to Diaconate as needed.
5. Evaluate any improvement to the grounds and properties and make recommendations to Diaconate and Session.
6. Provide driver certification materials and/or classes for church members to be approved to drive the church van/bus.
7. Plan and organize a church workday at least annually.
8. Maintain and review records on use of church van and church copier.
9. Work with the Women's ministries committees on issues of decorum and style.
10. Use wisdom in keeping the congregation informed and seeking input on issues affecting the entire congregation.

## Finance/Stewardship Committee

### General Objective:

To administer, manage, and maintain the finances of Chester ARP Church, and to promote a comprehensive plan and program of biblical stewardship in Chester ARP.

### Duties:

1. Work with church treasurer to develop an annual church budget and present to Diaconate for approval by October stated meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday).
2. Oversee the payment of the church's financial obligations.
3. Oversee the deposit and distribution of general offering and special offerings (Thanksgiving, Easter, Carpenter's Fellowship, etc.).
4. Monitor the effectiveness of contracted bookkeeper..
5. Manage general fund and other church investments (along with the special investment committee established at the direction of the Session).
6. Evaluate and secure church property insurance annually.
7. Serve as Benevolent Committee in such issues that may require major assistance (More than \$200).
8. Plan, promote, and execute stewardship emphasis month each year..
9. Communicate the importance of total biblical stewardship with the congregation (letters, the Chatter, Website, etc.).
10. Plan, promote, and execute special stewardship Sunday when pledges for the upcoming year's budget will be received.
11. Ensure the reception and distribution of special offerings (Thanksgiving, Missions, Easter, Carpenter's Fellowship, etc.).
12. Oversee the accuracy and distribution of members' donation statements.
13. Encourage and possibly provide training for members dealing with individual family financial stewardship (budgets, tithing, saving, etc.).
14. Assist members by developing ways for them to be good stewards of their time, talents, and finances.

## **Congregational Service Committee**

### **General Objective:**

To serve the congregation of Chester ARP Church by meeting the member's various needs and by being actively involved in all the Church's service opportunities.

### **Duties:**

1. Plan, promote, and execute, with full Diaconate support, annual congregational clean-up and work days.
2. Determine possible needs of church and community members.
3. Generally care for members by assisting them with various needs (transportation, maintenance of homes, meal preparation, wood for heat, etc.).
4. Develop and implement a schedule for ushers in Sunday worship as well as other special worship services (Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve, funerals, etc.).
5. Ensure that the Church building is properly opened on Sunday mornings by 9:00 am.
6. Work alongside of Service/Nominations committee to secure church members for Mid-week meal preparation and clean-up.
7. Promote and encourage the general service of the Lord by members of the congregation within the context of the church.
8. Complete all service tasks assigned by the Diaconate.