**The Role of Assistants to the Deacons**

**Job Description**

In defining the role of a of an Assistant to the Deacons, it is helpful to consider the role of the Deacon:

*The office of deacon is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.” It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. (BCO 9-1, 2)*

The office of Deacon is an extension of the ministry of Jesus. Beyond facilities, finances, and helps, Deacons lead the church into works of service and mercy. Assistants shall assist the Deacons in fulfilling this charge, with a specific emphasis upon mercy ministry. Women and men serving as Deacon Assistants, like Deacons, should also be known by their “spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.” (BCO, 9-3)

Deacon Assistants extend the diaconal roles of care and compassion throughout the church and the city (BCO 9-7). They facilitate the ministry of deed and mercy in the life of the church. At WPC, this could take the following forms:

* Prayer
* Care for the sick
* Care for the elderly
* Care for the institutionalized (prisons, nursing homes, hospitals)
* Care for handicapped and disabled
* Care for single parent families
* Rides ministry
* Help in job acquisition, training, financial counseling
* Help in assimilation of needy cases into the life of the church through help in getting people to worship, community groups, and church-wide ministry events
* Hospitality to members and visitors
* Serve as liaison to local ministries supported by WPC
  + Hope Pregnancy Center
  + Restorative Justice (women's prison)
  + Other
* Assist with the coordination for care and upkeep of the WPC facilities
* Support the Deacons as they carry out their role at WPC as requested

It is important that Deacon Assistants have hearts of service motivated from the Gospel, not based upon performance. Service rendered from a performance based worldview can easily counterfeit diaconal ministry. A heart of mercy driven from the Gospel understands the magnitude of sin and the abundance of grace lavished on us in Jesus Christ. Such a heart ministers out of the fruit of the Spirit rather than trying to attain it.

The role of Deacon Assistants is to assist the Deacons, is not an ordained office and is not a member of the Diaconate. Deacon Assistants shall be recruited by the Session and Deacons and trained, approved and appointed by the Session (BC0 9-7) as expedient to the needs of WPC. Ordinarily, Deacon Assistants shall serve for a period of two years beginning in August of the calendar year; additional service must be renewed for subsequent years by the Session.