

EPC Presbytery of the Pacific

Training Resources for Ruling Elders and Deacons

Since its beginning in 2011 the Presbytery of the Pacific has offered a two to three day discussion workshop to; 1) help Teaching Elders transferring from other presbyteries or being newly ordained prepare for their examinations by this Presbytery, and 2) enable existing and newly ordained Ruling Elders to understand the expectations of their office as an Elder in an EPC church. In our experience over the past five years this workshop has been very effective in its first goal, but less so in its second goal, primarily because most Ruling Elders find it difficult to take two days off from their “day jobs” to participate in these workshops.

Recognizing that our EPC Book of Order clearly requires that *“it is the responsibility of the Session to provide adequate opportunity for those elected to office to prepare themselves for their ministry”* [BoG 11-3A], we have been searching for other ways to enable the Pastor of each church in our Presbytery to expose all of the church’s existing and potential officers to these important teachings on a regular basis and with a flexible format.

One way is to use the excellent EPC Leadership Training Guide as a textbook/workbook and spend about 45 to 60 minutes discussing the contents of each chapter with the group. This spiral-bound book is available on the epc.org website for \$5 plus mailing.

Another resource that we have become aware of recently is an excellent set of instructional lectures given by Rev. Bob Hopper to a group of existing and potential officers at the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Wichita KS. These eight 45-minute lectures address much the same material, but are built around the eleven vows that each EPC Officer is required to take. The lectures are available as videos on-line and can be projected on a large screen for a group setting.

A third resource is a set of four 20-minute presentations that were done by Ron Bengelink and Jake McCall in the Spring of 2016. These are available on a DVD accompanied by copies of the Power Point slides and a set of suggested discussion questions. The presentations address four specific areas of direct interest to most EPC Ruling Elders, namely;

- Introduction to the Book of Order (Ron Bengelink)
- Presbyterian Governance; Principles and Operation (Ron Bengelink)
- God’s Eternal Decrees (Jake McCall)
- Infant Baptism (Jake McCall)

These materials are available for \$10 (to cover production and mailing) on request from the Stated Clerk’s Office.

In either case, we suggest that a single topic can be covered in conjunction with a regular Session or Deacons meeting, or two can be covered in a special meeting on a Saturday morning or other convenient time. Another possibility is to use two or three of these topics as a part of a Saturday meeting of the Officers of several EPC churches from the same “geographic cluster” of churches.

In any case, each Officer or Officer candidate should have access to three important resources; the EPC Book of Order, the EPC edition of the Westminster Confession and its Catechisms, and the EPC Leadership Training Guide. These resources are all available on-line at the EPC website, epc.org either downloadable or in spiral bound paper format for a nominal price. The Rev. Bob Hopper lectures are available on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/channels/499878>. You may find that Vimeo will require a payment of \$9.95 if you stream more than two of the lectures in a single sitting. We encourage taking an extra 30 minutes after each lecture for the group to discuss what they heard and to raise any question that folks may have as a result.

The Presbytery encourages each Session to seriously consider using one or more of these resources on a regular basis to ensure that your officers and potential officers are properly trained.