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## Deaconesses at The City's Gate Presbyterian Church

As a denomination, The Presbyterian Church in America does not recognize the ordination of women to either of the two offices of the Church: elder and deacon. Yet, within the separate branches of reformed practices that have converged to form the **PCA**, there is a tradition of recognizing women who serve the church in specific, public ways as *deaconesses*. This tradition was—and still is—most notable among the churches in the **PCA** which were formerly part of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES), several of whom are part of the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery, where The City's **Gate** enjoys its membership and employs it for the extension of God's Kingdom.

The wisdom of this historical recognition of women in ministry is evident to growing numbers of churches within the **PCA** apart from the RPCES tradition. Increasingly, **PCA** churches are officially and formally affirming the importance, the contributions, and the value of their women in significant, spiritual leadership roles within their congregations. This recognition and honoring of the call of God on the lives of godly women by the church is most frequently done through the creation, organization, and implementation of the commissioned position of Deaconess.

In the spirit of joyful thanksgiving to God for the gifts and calling of such godly women in our congregation to loving service in the body of Christ, The City's **Gate PCA**, pursuant

to the Book of Church Order §9-7, establishes the commissioned position of Deaconess for the ministrations of Christ's loving mercy through our local body for His praise and glory among the nations.

Those who are elected and commissioned to this position will minister in the name of Christ and in conjunction with those who hold the office of Deacon, and shall have full rights within that position to the church's affirmation, training and cherishing of its gifts and functions.

As in all other ministerial positions affirmed by the church, the women who hold this trust should be godly individuals whose characters reflect those traits outlined in Scripture and the Book of Church order for persons called to sacred ministry; and whose ministrations within the body of Christ have evidenced the functioning of God's call prior to their nomination; and who, having submitted their lives to examination and training by the Session, are elected by the congregation, commissioned by the Elders, and publicly set apart for this ministry.

It is the desire of The City's **Gate** Presbyterian Church to afford to all its members the fullest expression of their gifts and calling to private and public ministries within the church. It is the vision of this church to carve out for its individuals in public ministry the widest swathe allowable for them for the use and exercise of their gifts and calling within the confines of the denomination's Constitution. As part of its pledge of loyalty and loving service to the Lord Jesus in the greater **PCA** body, The City's **Gate** will actively seek to reform the church where those present confines are in conflict with the clearest teaching of Scripture, through heart-felt adoption of the Motto of the **PCA** as its own: *"Reformed, and Always Reforming."*

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