

1 **OVERTURE 71** from the Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
2 “Amend *BCO* 5-9.e, 9-2, and 9-7 to Allow Session to Directly Administer Diaconal
3 Ministry”
4

5 **Whereas** deacons are not required for the particularization of a church, and elders can oversee
6 the work (*BCO* 5-9, Titus 1:5); and
7

8 **Whereas** deacons are sometimes mentioned in the Scriptures as serving alongside the elders
9 (e.g., Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3) but other times are not mentioned (e.g., Acts 20:17,
10 Titus 1); and
11

12 **Whereas** elders “must either themselves distribute the offerings, or have it done under their
13 supervision,” (Ramsay 1898, as quoted by TE Morton Smith 6th ed. 2007 p.62), which
14 indicates that it is as appropriate for elders to be the officers who administer this
15 function as it is for deacons to administer it under their supervision; and
16

17 **Whereas** diaconal needs should not be allowed to interfere with the elders’ ability to focus on
18 the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6); and
19

20 **Whereas** deacons were first ordained when the ministry in Jerusalem grew to such size and
21 complexity that officers to focus on administration of the diaconal work (Acts 6) were
22 required; and
23

24 **Whereas** the office of deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the
25 Church (*BCO* 9-1), and this would remain true under the current proposal, keeping the
26 PCA a “two-office church” (as elder and deacon are the two offices to which men may
27 be ordained);
28

29 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 5-9.e, 9-2, and 9-7 be amended as shown below (additions
30 indicated by underlining; deletions indicated by ~~striketrough~~):
31

32 **5-9.e.** If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the
33 Session, ~~until deacons can be secured.~~
34

35 **9-2.** ... In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and
36 authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure
37 deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. Similarly, a
38 Session may choose, with ratification by a three-quarters vote of the congregation, to
39 directly administer diaconal ministry and, if prudent, may appoint lay volunteers to
40 assist in ministering to those who are in need under the authority and oversight of the
41 Session. No lay volunteer so appointed shall be referred to as a deacon or as a
42 deaconess. They shall not be elected by the congregation, nor shall they be ordained
43 or installed as if they were officers.
44

1 **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint
2 godly men and women of the congregation to ~~the work of assist the deacons in~~ caring
3 for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any
4 distress or need. These may be called assistants to the deacons, or the diaconal mercy
5 team, or some similar name. They are not officers of the church (*BCO 7-2*) and, as
6 such, are not subject for ordination (*BCO 17*).
7

8 So that the amended paragraphs read:
9

10 **5-9.e.** If deacons are not elected, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the
11 Session.
12

13 **9-2.** ... In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and
14 authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure
15 deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders. Similarly, a
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19 Session. No lay volunteer so appointed shall be referred to as a deacon or as a
20 deaconess. They shall not be elected by the congregation, nor shall they be ordained
21 or installed as if they were officers.
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23 **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint
24 godly men and women of the congregation to the work of caring for the sick, the
25 widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.
26 These may be called assistants to the deacons, or the diaconal mercy team, or some
27 similar name. They are not officers of the church (*BCO 7-2*) and, as such, are not
28 subject for ordination (*BCO 17*).
29

30 *Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its called meeting, April 16, 2026*
31 *A Northern California Overture Commission was authorized to perfect and re-file if it deems*
32 *necessary.*

33 *Attested by TE John Kong, Stated Clerk*