

1 **OVERTURE 72** from the Presbytery of the Ascension (to CCB, OC)

2 “Add a new *BCO* 12-8 to Require Recording of Session and Diaconate Members in  
3 Session Minutes”

4  
5 **Whereas**, according to Scripture and the subordinate Standards of the Presbyterian Church in  
6 America, the Lord Jesus Christ is the King and Head of the Church, and

7  
8 **Whereas**, the Preface to the *BCO*, summarizing the teaching of Scripture, declares that Jesus  
9 as Head of the Church, being ascended far above the Heavens, “gave all offices  
10 necessary for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of His saints,” and

11  
12 **Whereas**, the Preface to the *BCO* also says that “Christ, as King, has given to His Church  
13 officers, oracles and ordinances; and especially has He ordained therein His system of  
14 doctrine, government, discipline and worship, all of which are either expressly set  
15 down in Scripture, or by good and necessary inference may be deduced therefrom; and  
16 to which things He commands that nothing be added, and that from them naught be  
17 taken away,” and

18  
19 **Whereas**, we recognize and hold the ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church to  
20 be those of Elder and Deacon according to Scripture (e.g., Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3, Titus  
21 1, 1 Peter 5) and Christ’s appointment, and

22  
23 **Whereas**, both offices are necessary for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of  
24 His saints and are part of that system of government to which we may add nothing nor  
25 take anything away, and

26  
27 **Whereas**, there are legitimate concerns that congregations within the Presbyterian Church in  
28 America, are confused as to functions and the title and office of Deacon, and/or have  
29 foregone the practice of ordaining Deacons having unordained men and women to  
30 fulfill the functions and duties of Deacons, and

31  
32 **Whereas**, such practice is harmful to the Church because it rejects a “necessary” office  
33 instituted by Christ in Scripture and denies ordination to those divinely called, and

34  
35 *Moreover,*

36  
37 **Whereas**, the practice of “review and control” is not only a duty and pillar of our Presbyterian  
38 polity but also a help to churches in need to promote the peace and purity of the  
39 Church,

40  
41 **Whereas**, churches may also be helped by collaborating between elders and deacons from  
42 different churches within a Presbytery,

43  
44 **Whereas**, churches may have problems with finding and training officers that others in the  
45 Presbytery, if aware, could assist in brotherly care,

1 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 12 be amended by adding the following (underlining for  
2 additions; ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions):  
3

4 **12-8.** Every Session shall annually record in its minutes a list of all persons who  
5 comprise the Session and the Diaconate. If the local church has no Diaconate, then the  
6 Session's minutes shall indicate why, and whether the duties have devolved upon the  
7 Session according to *BCO* 9-2.  
8

9 **12-89.** Every Session shall keep an accurate record of baptisms, of communing  
10 members, of non-communing members, and of the deaths and dismissions of church  
11 members.  
12

13 **12-910.** Meetings of the Sessions shall be opened and closed with prayer.  
14

15 **Rationale:**  
16

17 At the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Chattanooga, a similar overture was defeated; however, the  
18 overture was defeated because it failed to reach the 2/3 threshold required to amend the *RAO*  
19 as the previous overture sought to do. Nevertheless, last year's overture did receive a majority  
20 of those voting at the General Assembly (929-730). Thus, there was clearly support for the  
21 concept in the overture, and it is hoped that this present version will redress concerns which  
22 caused the previous overture to fail.  
23

24 Some of those against the previous overture argued that changing the *RAO* was out of order  
25 because an amendment to the *BCO* should be ratified first. While this argument falls flat since  
26 sufficient *BCO* procedure already exists, particularly in 9-2 which is referenced in the  
27 proposed amendment above, the present overture answers this argument by seeking to amend  
28 the *BCO* rather than the *RAO*.  
29

30 Furthermore, this overture attempts to address concerns about collecting this information by  
31 mirroring the language of *BCO* 12-7. Certainly, if Sessions are already mandated to submit  
32 their entire year's minutes for presbytery review, then including a brief document providing  
33 the required information relating to the Session and Diaconate should not be too difficult.  
34

35 Finally, as alluded to in the "whereas" clauses above, this overture stands upon the premise  
36 that the office of Deacon, and not only the office of Elder, is necessary for the edification of  
37 the Church by Christ's own appointment. Therefore, this overture, by seeking to add this  
38 procedure for review and control, as well as care and assistance, thus ultimately seeks to secure  
39 the peace and purity of the Church and the honor of Christ as its head who has established the  
40 perpetual offices of Elder and Deacon.  
41

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43 *Adopted by the Ascension Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 31, 2026*

44 *Attested by RE Frederick R. Neikirk, Stated Clerk*