



**Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**

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## **Guidance on Election of Officers During Gathering Limitations**

From the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Stated Clerk

April 20, 2020

The Session cannot vote to represent the congregation and elect an elder. That is a right reserved for the congregation only. There's really no formal way around it, short of having a virtual meeting where it was guaranteed that every member was able to connect in and speak. However, pragmatically speaking, there's no reason why a nominated elder couldn't begin meeting with the Session and be deployed for ministry leadership. He/She just wouldn't be able to vote on anything at Session meetings. You could certainly announce to the congregation that he/she was nominated. Whether you wait until summer or do a brief congregational meeting at a worship service once we're able to gather again, at least he/she can participate informally with the Session in the meantime.

The polity is designed to avoid complaints of "power grabs" or other kinds of concerns in choosing leadership. It is possible that some members of your congregation are sensitive to those sorts of things, particularly in times of transition or as a result of any recent difficulties. These unusual times do allow us some flexibility, but not total flexibility.