



EQUIPPING FOR ELDERSHIP

U S I N G A N D M A I N T A I N I N G C H U R C H F A C I L I T I E S

Prayer:

God of compassion and strength, we give thanks for this place of worship. We praise you for weddings, baptisms and even funerals that have taken place here as we move through deeply significant phases of life together. We think of meals enjoyed, kindness offered and good news lived out. May this church continue to be a place where strangers feel welcome, friendships are forged and the love of God enthusiastically grows. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Introduction: Book of Forms 109.2

The session is responsible for all policy and procedures with respect to the use of church buildings and property subject to the provisions in sections 114.6 and 163.

Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-3 NRSV

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

A Brief Commentary:

This chapter of the Book of Hebrews calls upon the Christian community to demonstrate mutual love. Mutual love is described as treating strangers with less suspicion and more hospitality – as being empathic and supportive to those enduring challenging experiences – as living a life marked by faith, joy, peace, generosity.

Reflection:

Our congregation has been placed in a municipality. That municipality might be a bustling city, a small town, a quaint village, a remote country township where animals outnumber the human population. Wherever we are found, our church buildings stand as reminders of the holy presence of Jesus Christ in that community and in the world.

It falls to the whole congregation to be Christian stewards of our buildings under the leadership of both the session and the board.

As already noted, the denomination has stated that it is the responsibility of the session to determine how church facilities are used. Of course no one would question using the church for worship, Bible studies and the like. But if the facilities are going to be used for such events as Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, an out of the cold program or a community concert, the session must be approached for permission.

The Rev. Don Muir

Deputy Clerk

dmuir@presbyterian.ca

USING AND MAINTAINING CHURCH FACILITIES

Section 109.2 makes reference to two other sections. 114.6 notes sessions are, in turn, responsible to the presbytery for how churches are used. This does not mean the session needs permission of the presbytery before granting approval for events taking place in the church, but if the session is ever challenged about such a decision, it may need to answer to the presbytery. 163 explains that while the session makes decisions about who uses church property and for what purposes, it is the board that ensures the facilities are kept in good repair.

This shared responsibility makes it possible for the church to demonstrate love for the members and adherents of the congregation for the immediate community in which it stands and for the world beyond.

Follow up:

1. How well does our session, board and congregation understand this sharing of responsibilities?
2. How might we be even better stewards of our facilities in terms of how they are used and maintained?

