

Elders

Wake Forest Christian Church

"The early Church chose persons of very high standing in both church and community to be their leaders. The eldership was an honorable position, and carefully chosen persons were sought out by the church as examples of Christian living. Persons with the same deep level of commitment to the Christian life are needed in today's church as well. You have been asked to serve as an Elder because you are regarded as one who has that commitment. It is a high honor and a solemn responsibility." –Dick Hamm, Past General Minister and President

In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) the position of elder was reserved for those leaders who were perceived to have spiritual wisdom and insight, who would counsel church members and clergy alike, and who prayed at The Lord's Table. For many years in the tradition of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), usually elderly men were elected as elders in the church. In the 1980's a change occurred where women were also elected as elders.

In the tradition of Wake Forest Christian Church, at least since 2016, elected elders prayed at the Table as well as those who volunteered to pray at the Table. Elders and deacons were elected, but there was little organization and meetings were few.

What WFCC has realized is that we have a wealth and depth in persons within the congregation who serve as ones who pray at the Table yet do not want to be elected as an elder.

In addition, the church has tried to divide the congregation into flocks with each elder serving as shepherd to a flock of people. This really has not worked well in our congregation. (Sheep and shepherds have strayed.)

Yet we know we are missing the wisdom and guidance of elders. The following is proposed as a working document, a place to start us thinking about the position of elders for Wake Forest Christian Church.

Description of Elders

Elders

- Exemplify a maturity psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Have a growing understanding of the dynamics and systems within a church community.
- Are listeners as well as persons who respond in thoughtfulness.
- Give counsel to the church and be willing to lead the church through education and example into new areas that they feel we are being called.-
- Confront rumors and behaviors that are unhealthy and divisive within the church community in compassionate and insightful ways.

- May or may not serve administratively in the life of the church, though it is expected elders will be heavily invested and participate in the weekly ministries of the church.
- Elders are not expected to make reports to the Admin Council.

Throughout the Year

- Meet with the minister(s) at least quarterly to ponder and to consider ways to respond and to lead our congregation.
- Work with the minister(s) at least quarterly on processes to deepen the spiritual lives of individuals and the congregation.
- Meet with the minister(s) throughout the year to take on study of the Bible, church dynamics, and the spiritual life.

Process and Terms

The moderator, vice moderator, and minister will meet in confidence to discuss and recommend persons to be nominated as elder.

It is suggested that there be three elders, but it is not mandated. Each elder will be elected by the congregation for a three-year term, and these shall be on a rotating basis, one elder going off each year and one coming on each year. Initially, one elder will be elected for one year, one for two years, and one for three years. Elders may serve more than one term at the request of the three-person nominating committee.