

How do we know what happens at Session?

The pastor and elders try to keep the congregation informed with what is happening through a variety of means—conversations, announcements, etc. In addition, a short summary of non-sensitive items from the elders’ meetings is also regularly included in the weekly bulletin.

I don’t think I know who my elder is. How do I find out?

If you don’t know who your elder is speak with the pastor. Or, you can check the Elder List posted on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary. Your elder should be someone you know and who knows you.

I don’t have an elder. What do I do?

If you don’t yet have an elder it is probably because you are fairly new to the church family and haven’t yet been introduced to the elder relationship. Please simply speak to the pastor and he will discuss it with you.

When should I contact my elder?

You can contact your elder whenever you’d like! Perhaps it is when you have a question about church life or your own journey. Or perhaps to say you would like prayer for something. Elders treat your personal concerns with sensitivity and, if you would like, confidence.

Consider your elder someone who has responded to a call to leadership within Christ’s church, has had that call confirmed in the election and ordination process, and who is willing to listen and help.



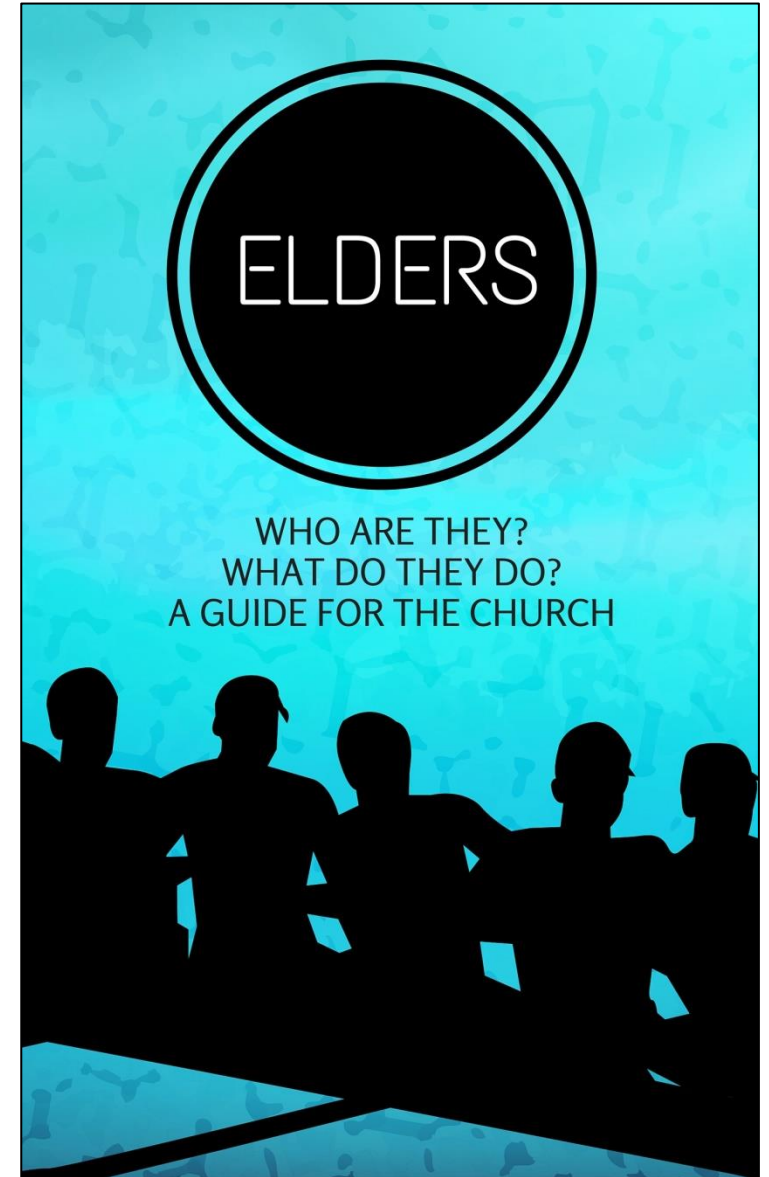
My Elder Is: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Church Website: _____

My Church Prayer List:





How It Works

The word *presbyter* is a Greek word from the Bible that means *elder*. So the word *presbyter-ian* means “of elders” or “governed by elders.” It refers to how some Protestant churches operate, including this one. It is a system where, instead of one person making decisions of oversight, *many people* are selected by the congregation to oversee the well-being of the church. Together, elders try to guide the church in a way that is pleasing to Jesus. After all, it’s his church!

Who is an Elder?

When a congregation wants to elect new or more elders, there is a call for nominations. Church members nominate those they feel have a well-grounded Christian faith and gifts for leadership. Those who are elected (by members of the congregation by vote) become elders. So the word “elder” doesn’t refer to someone’s age, but a position of recognized leadership in the congregation.

At Westminster, our elders are: The Rev. Matthew Ruttan (Pastor), Rob Adamson, Wanda Anderson, Jim Bewick, Cathy Clark, Don Hickey (clerk), Wayne Hope, Colin Leonard, Judy Pringle, and Bethany Touchette.

Are There Different Kinds of Elders?

Yes. There are two kinds. First, there are “teaching elders.” These are pastors. Second, there are “ruling elders.” These are the elders discussed earlier. All elders are ordained to the position. When someone is ordained as an elder, they are an elder for life—even if they stop actively serving in that capacity.

What Do You Call an Elder Who No Longer Serves Actively?

They’re still an elder—it’s just that they are no longer *actively* serving in that way. At Westminster we call these individuals “sustaining elders.” They are sometimes called upon to give continuing (sustaining) advice or help to the leadership of the church.



At Westminster, among other things, elders...

- Read the Bible and pray every day
- Have a personal relationship with Christ
- Are an active part of the church’s life
- Serve as an example to others “in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12)
- Are in regular attendance at worship
- Oversee at least one program area in the church
- Participate in monthly elders’ meetings
- Develop a personal relationship with people in their district

What is a “District”?

It is a group of people connected with a specific elder. In addition to the pastor, elders are a support for individuals and families as they journey through life.

Your elder may want to meet with you. Or maybe they will want to connect with you in other ways (whether it be on Sundays, on the phone, at work, over email). Each elder relationship will vary, depending on the gifts of each individual and the needs of the situation.

What Happens at the Monthly Elders’ Meetings?

When all the elders get together it is called “the session.” The meetings are led by the pastor. There is a time of prayer and devotion; minutes are reviewed from the previous meeting; an agenda is followed; and elders proceed to discuss the life and direction of the congregation.

