

Electing New Elders at Westminster Presbyterian Church

" Loving God, Loving our Neighbours' "

What does Elder mean?

The word *elder* is biblical and refers to *someone who is in a position of responsibility and authority in a congregation*. Presbyterian Churches are led by elders. In fact, the word "Presbyterian" means governed by elders or of elders. It is a biblical model for how we organize and oversee churches. Contrary to what is implied in expressions like "respect your elders", in the church it doesn't refer to ones' age.

There are two kinds of elders. One is a 'teaching elder' who is the pastor. The other is a 'ruling elder'. This is kind we will be covering here.

We already have elders , so why are we electing more?

At Westminster we have a pastor who is a teaching elder and 9 elders who meet to oversee the direction, mission and well being of the congregation. Every two years, one third of our elders have their 6 year term expire plus other elders may retire. Those elders whose terms expire may choose to retire as well or may decide to put their names forward to be elected to a new term. In 2019 we will be electing four new elders. (A helpful guide to how eldership works and what the four elders will do is in the brochure called 'Becoming an elder... what you need to know')

What is the Process for electing new Elders?

1. **When is the nomination period?** it stretches over 3 Sundays. (May 12th, 19th and 26th). Nominations are to be returned in person to a member of the nominating committee.
2. **Who is eligible to be nominated?** All professing members of the congregation are eligible to be nominated. "Professing members" are those who have gone to membership gatherings with Rev. Ruttan or one of his predecessors and have professed their Christian faith in front of the congregation or those who have officially transferred their membership certificate from another congregation.
3. **Who can fill out a nomination ballot and nominate someone?** Only professing members may nominate someone. (For a definition of "Professing Member" see above.)
4. **Can I nominate more than one person, and do I need to get their permission first?** You may nominate more than one person and you do not need to get their permission first. They will be asked if they would like their names to stand or not.

5. Why can only professing members nominate someone? Professing members have met with Rev. Ruttan or one of his predecessors through the membership or transfer process, have learned about Westminster and are following Christ, have made a commitment to Westminster as their church home and professed their faith in front of the congregation. Elders are elected *from* the congregation *by* the congregation.

6. How does the nomination process work?

- a. A nominee would need to be nominated by two *different* professing members or by the Nominating Committee of Session. They would need to agree to the 'Character Traits and responsibilities' of church elders (see the 'Becoming an elder... what you need to know' brochure)
- b. They would need to be a suitable nominee (as per the required Character Traits and Responsibilities)
- c. They would need to agree to let their name stand after a conversation with a member of the Nominating Committee.

7. How is the election carried out?

When nominees are established, their names will be published in the church bulletin along with their picture and a bit of information about them. Then there will be an election on June 9th. The four nominees with the most votes would be selected. They would be ordained on June 16 during the service. They would then begin their term of leadership for 6 years.

8. Who do I speak to if I have questions?

Any questions regarding the election process or what an elders' responsibilities will be should be directed to a member of the Nominating Committee listed below:

Wayne Hope
Bethany Touchette
Cathy Clark