

Northlake Church of Christ
Elder Selection Process
(2025-2026)

Purpose of This Document

This document describes the process by which members of the Northlake Church of Christ select elders who will serve the church as spiritual leaders, overseers, and shepherds. Early in the history of the church, each congregation was under the leadership of a plurality of mature Christians usually designated as elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 15:2; Acts 20:28). The character that elders should exhibit are found in the qualities listed in two passages, I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Although the process for elder selection is not specified in detail in scripture, New Testament examples of the appointment of church leaders and servants include participation of the entire congregation in the selection process (Acts 1:15,23; Acts 6:1-3; Acts 15:22-23). This document provides a process for congregational participation in the elder selection process that is in keeping with these New Testament examples.

Each selection process will begin with an announcement by the existing elders of the need for reaffirmation of existing elders and the need for appointment of new leaders. This announcement will initiate a period of study, prayer, and reflection in preparation for the selection process. The selection process will be repeated at least every three years.

Elder Selection Facilitation Committee

For the selection process, the existing elders will appoint an *ad hoc* Elder Selection Facilitation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Facilitation Committee). This committee will consist of a chairperson and 2 to 4 members of the Northlake Church, none of whom is a current elder or is willing to accept nomination for service as an elder. The committee should reflect the diversity within the congregation. The function of this committee is to assist the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities in the elder selection process.

Approval of this Elder Selection Process document and the membership of the Facilitation Committee by members of the congregation will be confirmed by requesting that any objections to the process or committee be submitted to the elders in writing early in the selection process. The absence of significant objections, as

determined by the existing elders, will constitute approval of the process and of the Facilitation Committee.

Facilitation Committee Responsibilities

The elder selection process shall be administered by the Facilitation Committee under the oversight of the existing eldership. The committee will keep the current eldership informed of its progress throughout the process and will seek the current elders' advice and assistance as needed. The Facilitation Committee shall be responsible for organizing and carrying out the work necessary for implementing the processes and procedures specified in this Elder Selection Process document. Its responsibilities include communications, distributing forms, receiving and safeguarding completed forms, tallying the results, determining the willingness of nominees to serve as elders if selected, and resolving scriptural objections to any nominee or candidate.

The Committee shall distribute an Elder Candidate Nomination Form to the congregation. The Committee shall make provisions for securely receiving and storing completed Nomination Forms. After tallying the nominations, the Committee shall inform each nominee who received a sufficient number of nominations, discuss with the nominee their willingness and ability to serve as an elder if chosen by the church, and ask permission to have the nominee's name on the Affirmation Form that will be distributed to the congregation. If the nominee declines further consideration, the Committee shall accept that decision and hold it in confidence.

The Facilitation Committee shall be responsible for receiving written objections to any nominee or candidate submitted at any time during the selection process. The process for resolving written objections is set out below.

The Facilitation Committee shall prepare an Affirmation Form with the names of the candidates that meet the nomination criteria and consent to being considered by the church, arrange for ample printing of the forms, and distribute the forms. The Committee shall make provisions for securely receiving and storing completed affirmation forms. At the end of the time allotted for affirmation, the Committee shall tally the results.

The Committee shall hold in confidence all information on submitted forms. In particular, the Committee shall not disclose specific information about those who submitted forms and what their ratings of candidates were. When a final determination has been made of which candidates have met the selection criteria (specified in a later section) and against whom no objection remains unresolved, the

Facilitation Committee shall inform the eldership. Members of the Committee shall go to each candidate listed on the form and inform them of the church's decision on their candidacy. To assist the candidates in evaluating themselves and making personal commitments to self-improvement, the Selection Committee will provide each candidate with a transcription of comments associated with any "NO" ratings without disclosing the member who submitted the comments.

Throughout the selection process, the Facilitation Committee may exercise discretion as necessary, but may not make any decision that is not clearly within the intent of this document.

Periodic Identification of New Shepherds

At three-year intervals, the church shall go through the process of evaluating and selecting qualified individuals who have demonstrated elder/shepherd personal qualities and are willing and prepared to serve the church in the functions of an elder. In each selection process, the church membership shall evaluate potential additional elders.

Each candidate who meets all selection criteria as identified in this document will serve for a 3-year term, which is the normal full term of service as an elder of the Northlake Church of Christ.

Besides the normal selection of new elders at three-year intervals, special selections may be held at some intermediate time if changing circumstances lead to general recognition of an immediate need for additional elders.

Reaffirmation of Existing Shepherds

Every three years, in conjunction with the normal process of selecting new elders, each elder shall determine if they wish to continue as an elder. If the elder wishes to serve an additional term, they must ask for reaffirmation from the congregation for an additional three-year term. Their name will then be added to the Affirmation Form along with the qualified nominees for service as new elders, and they shall be subject to the same selection criteria as the new elder candidates.

No limit is prescribed for the number of terms that an elder may serve, provided that they continue to exhibit character consistent with the qualities found in scripture and that they continue to be affirmed every three years by the congregation as an elder.

Participation of the Congregation

All members of the Northlake Church of Christ are eligible to nominate fellow members for the role of elder/overseer/shepherd of this church. A member of the Northlake Church is defined as anyone who is a baptized believer in Jesus Christ and who is listed in the current edition of the Northlake Family Directory.

(A Member of the Northlake Church of Christ believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He was executed and buried by humans, and brought back to life by His Father. A Northlake member has been baptized for the forgiveness of his or her sins and failure to live a righteous life as understood in the Christian Scriptures. In baptism, he or she receives the Holy Spirit. A member regularly participates in Northlake's public gatherings and ministry to others if she or he is capable.)

Nomination Forms will be distributed by the Facilitation Committee in a Sunday morning assembly of the church. After this general distribution, Nomination Forms can be obtained from any member of the Facilitation Committee. Every member of the church shall be encouraged to fill out a Nomination Form with the names of individuals whom the member believes meet scriptural standards and are suited for service as an elder. Completed Nomination Forms shall be submitted to the Facilitation Committee (normally by dropping them in a locked box that will be conveniently available for that purpose). The deadline for submission of nominations shall be set by the Facilitation Committee, typically the close of the Sunday morning assembly two or three weeks after the general distribution of forms. All Nomination Forms will be signed by the member submitting the form.

In order for a member to be listed as a candidate on the Affirmation Form for consideration as an elder by the full church, the member must have been nominated by at least 10 individual members, from at least 5 households.

The Facilitation Committee will contact all persons who have met the nomination criteria and determine their willingness to have their names put before the congregation as candidates for service as elders. Those candidates who are willing to go forward in the selection process will be provided with documents summarizing the major currents, directions, and issues that engage the current eldership. In addition, candidates will be invited to attend a meeting with the existing elders for informal discussions of the eldership experience and to address any questions that the candidates may have about serving as an elder. If a nominee has reservations about being able to meet the demands of an elder's responsibilities, they shall be encouraged to discuss their reservations and questions with a currently active elder.

Nominee Self-Identification

Once a nominee is contacted by an elder selection facilitation committee member, he/she can grant permission for the committee to share his/her name with other nominees who may inquire.

Sharing of Nominee Names

Once all nominees have been contacted and have agreed to move forward in the process, their names will be shared with the other nominees. Confidentiality must be maintained, and names can not be shared outside of this group. Each nominee will have a period of three days to confirm his/her nomination before a final list of names is prepared by the elder selection facilitation committee.

Spouses Serving Together

While the partnership of spouses in ministry is valued at Northlake, any appearance of conflicts of interest must be avoided in the eldership. Therefore, if a husband and wife are nominated and receive the required level of support for selection, they will be asked to choose one from among the two who will continue in the elder selection process. The other must withdraw from the process.

When the Facilitation Committee has determined the final list of individuals who are willing to be candidates, the Committee shall prepare Affirmation Forms listing the names of the candidates for new elders and the names of the elders seeking reaffirmation. At the next Sunday morning assembly of the church, following the final determination of the list of elder candidates, the Facilitation Committee shall make Affirmation Forms available to all members of the congregation.

Affirmation

All members of the Northlake Church of Christ (as defined previously) should participate in the affirmation stage of the selection process by submitting completed Affirmation Forms to the Facilitation Committee (normally by dropping them in a locked box provided for that purpose). Forms may be submitted at any time during the period between the general distribution of Affirmation Forms and the termination of the affirmation process at the time specified by the Facilitation Committee, typically the conclusion of the Sunday morning assembly two weeks after the general distribution of Affirmation Forms. All Affirmation Forms must be signed by the member submitting the form.

Affirmation Forms shall offer members the options of marking “YES,” “NO,” or “UNSURE” for each candidate.

Marking “YES” signifies conviction that the candidate should be selected to serve the church as an elder, that the candidate meets scriptural requirements, and the

candidate's personal qualities make them well-suited for effective service as a spiritual shepherd-overseer-leader. It implies the expectation of being able to support the candidate wholeheartedly by working under their leadership/oversight as an elder.

Marking "NO" signifies conviction that there are valid reasons why the candidate should not be selected to serve as an elder. The person submitting the form must describe, in writing on the back of the Form or on an attached sheet, his or her reasons for marking "NO."

Marking "UNSURE" signifies that the member is not willing to subscribe to either of the foregoing statements of conviction associated with a "YES" or a "NO." Marking "UNSURE" is appropriate if the member feels that he or she does not know the candidate well enough to voice an opinion either way. An "UNSURE" marking would also be appropriate if the member is acquainted with the candidate but holds no strong conviction about whether the candidate should be asked to serve as an elder.

A principle of the affirmation process design is that anyone appointed as an elder must have (a) received enough YES votes to support confidence that in their service as elder they will receive support and acceptance by a very large majority of the congregation and (b) not so many NO or UNSURE votes that there is serious doubt of their ability to serve effectively as a shepherd and leader. To this end the Selection Committee shall apply the following "Standard Criteria."

For a candidate to be recognized as an elder:

- (1) At least 60% of the forms cast shall be marked "YES" for the candidate, and
- (2) No more than 15% of the forms cast shall be marked "NO" for the candidate, and
- (3) No more than 40% of the forms cast shall be marked "UNSURE" for the candidate.

The Facilitation Committee shall examine all forms and tally the results as soon as practicable after the termination of the affirmation period. At all times, the Committee shall treat the results as confidential information and shall take measures to prevent any unauthorized use of the information on the forms. The Committee shall securely preserve the forms and their information at least until after the installation of the selected elders. At any later time, whenever the Committee considers study of the affirmation results is no longer useful, the Committee may destroy the forms.

The Facilitation Committee may exercise limited discretion in its application of the foregoing “Standard Criteria” if specific circumstances warrant and if only small deviations of the “YES” and “UNSURE” percentages from the “Standard Criteria” exist. An example of such discretion might be where it is known from the current elders that additional elders are needed, and a particular candidate barely failed to meet the “YES” and “UNSURE” criteria. The Selection Committee shall make no deviations regarding scriptural objections or application of the “NO” criteria from the “Standard Criteria” above.

Any member knowing of a scriptural reason that would disqualify an elder candidate from serving should submit in writing the nature of the disqualification to a member of the Facilitation Committee during the week immediately following distribution of the Affirmation Forms. The Facilitation Committee will notify the current elders of any objections submitted and proceed as prescribed below.

Resolution of Written Objections

If it is alleged that there is a scriptural basis for the objection, the Committee shall proceed in the following manner. The Committee shall inform the person raising the objection that his or her identity will not be disclosed to anyone other than Committee members, that the Committee will investigate the matter, and that the Committee will inform the person raising the objection of its final disposition.

The Committee shall then attempt, insofar as practicable, to gather enough reliable information to either uphold or dismiss the objection. If the Committee is unable to reach a unanimous conclusion that the objection should be dismissed, members of the Committee shall discuss the matter with the person against whom the objection was made. If the outcome of this discussion is that the accused person maintains that the objection is unjustifiable and therefore will not voluntarily withdraw from further consideration, the Committee shall inform the eldership of the objection and denial. From that point onward, the eldership shall be responsible for any further investigation and for reaching a decision on whether the candidate would be permitted to serve if they meet the selection criteria. The eldership shall communicate and explain their decision to the person in question and to the Committee. The Committee will then inform the person who raised the objection of its ultimate disposition.

Appointment

At the first regular Sunday morning assembly of the church after completion of the process of determining who the church has selected to begin or to resume service as elders, the newly selected elders shall be set before the congregation for formal installation. After the selected elders are solemnly charged with their

responsibilities, the church will be asked to express vocally their acceptance and support. The assembly should conclude with a special prayer, including thanksgiving and invocation of divine blessings for the elders and their leadership of the church.

The Elder Selection Process presented in this document was based in part on a process developed by the Hardin Valley Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tennessee. Permission of the Hardin Valley Church to make use of the material they developed is gratefully acknowledged.