



The LINK
August 2025

Nominating Elders and Deacons

In August we open nominations for elders and deacons for the class of 2031. (By “class” we mean that the man’s six-year term concludes at the end of that year, or at the latest when the new class is installed early the next year.)

The task of nominating men (and later electing them) for office is a weighty one. Typically, as the officers go, so goes the church. That is why the choice should be made with prayer and an eye on the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Does the man display these marks of Christian maturity?

With those qualities in mind, here are some other things to think about when considering nominees:

- The nominees should be men. The 1 Timothy and Titus passages certainly imply this requirement, and other passages teach it explicitly (i.e., 1 Timothy 2:12). We value and need the gifts of the women of our church and this requirement in no way denigrates their abilities or diminishes their usefulness. It simply reflects our commitment to obey the Scriptures in all we do, even when that teaching may not be culturally popular or acceptable.
- Is the man active in the life of the church? That is, is he present in Sunday School? Usually present for worship? Evening Worship? Small group? Does he attend special events like the church picnic? Does he stick around after

services to interact with other members? This is not to say he must be present at everything we do, but it stands to reason that an elder or deacon should be among the more active, not less active, members of the church.

- Does he already serve in a deacon-like or elder-like way? It is a mistake to nominate and elect a man in the hopes that being put into office will motivate him to be more active in the church or to act like an officer. You want the man who is already active in that way: serving, teaching, shepherding.
- Is he already an ordained deacon or elder who is currently not active on the diaconate or session, but would be willing to go back on? Don't overlook men who have served and may be willing to serve again.
- Is he one of the men whose term is ending? We do not require a man to take time off when his term ends. He may want a rest after six years (or more) of service, or he may want to continue on. We leave that up to him and the congregation.
- We do not require a man to serve as a deacon before serving as an elder (I have heard of churches that do.) The office of deacon is not a stepping-stone to elder but is its own calling, requiring specific gifts. A deacon may be nominated as an elder, but there is no reason an elder may not be similarly nominated for the office of deacon. Many men are better suited for one or the other, but some men have gifts for both offices.

After nominations close, the nominees will go through a period of training and examination. Later this year or early next year we will hold the election, to be followed by ordination and installation. Please pray for the officer election process, that the Lord would raise up the men of *his* choosing, men who will serve our church faithfully and well.

Alan Johnson

ANDY AND BEV WARREN

Andy and Bev Warren from Ethiopia ACT and MTW spoke during our OPPC Sunday School on May 4.

The Warrens are planning to retire in several months after a career of over 40 years in the mission field. They began their ministry in 1984 with an assignment in Kenya, then moved to Budapest and finally on to Ethiopia in 1996 where God had a challenge waiting for them to help solve.

When they went to Ethiopia, 20 percent of the adult population was HIV positive, and the disease was 100 percent fatal. Andy and Bev started their mission known as Ethiopia ACT and started respite and hospice care homes for those suffering with the disease as well as providing food and schooling for their families. By 2005-2006, when research had resulted in treatment plans and prevention for the disease, Ethiopia ACT had developed several additional programs to meet the needs of their clients:

Their **Healthcare** program tracks HIV positive members to ensure they receive treatment and includes their families for testing and medication.

The **Income Generating Activities** program provides skills, small grants, and advocacy to enable members to start and grow their own small business. Each participant is required to open a savings account to learn to manage their money.

The **Housing** program assists members in finding and maintaining clean, dry, and safe homes for their families.

The **Basic Income Grants** assist members in managing and using a bank account to budget rent, food and basic needs for their families. This program helps families learn to be self-supported and decrease their poverty.

The **Counseling** program helps members address issues like depression as well as reconciliation of families. One-on-one counseling is provided which includes

treatment adherence and issues that come with current HIV positive stigma.

The ***Children's Education*** program supplies tuition, school supplies, new uniforms and shoes for each child. Their grades are tracked to ensure success, and they are invited to a local VBS every summer.

Bev Warren headed up the Ethiopia ACT Leadership Community as curator and, along with about 20 Community members, started a new local church and eventually five church plants. Andy estimated that they had about 2,500 families and estimated 8,000 people move through the Ethiopia ACT program during their years there.

Andy concluded with Lamentations 3:22: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Their ministry has touched many lives during their career, and we wish them many happy and healthy years of retirement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIRST SUNDAY LUNCH Please join us after the service on Sunday, August 3 for our First Sunday fellowship meal.

COMMUNION SUNDAY We will observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday, August 10 in the morning service.

MISSIONARY SPEAKER Jeff Thompson of RUFI at UGA will join us for Sunday school on August 3 with a presentation on his work with international students. He will be joining us for First Sunday lunch as well.

CONNECTIONS! Join us this August for our elder and staff led Sunday school

class called “Connections! Conversations with Jesus.”

OFFICER NOMINATIONS Nominations for elders and deacons, class of 2031, will be open August 10-24. A man must receive at least two nominations to be in nomination.

DULUTH SMALL GROUP will meet at 7 p.m. on August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10. For more information, contact Owen Malcolm at owenmalcolm@gmail.com.

OPPC MEN’S BIBLE STUDY will begin on Tuesday, September 9, at 7 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom at 7:30 p.m., and Thursday, September 11, at 10 a.m. in fellowship hall. The men will study The Parables of Jesus by James Montgomery Boice.

Save the Date:

- August 15—Young Adult Game Night at the Johnsons
- September 20—OPPC Church Picnic at 5 p.m.