

Been Nominated



to be a
Pastoral Elder?

Ten Ways

TO BE A CARING ELDER



Elders are called to provide pastoral care and encourage faith formation in their congregation. This responsibility is a joy and a blessing, but it can also feel daunting at times. Here are 10 ways to help you get to know the people in your care, develop your skills as a spiritual leader, and conduct helpful, warm visits with church members.

1 HOST A POTLUCK WITH HOUSEHOLDS IN YOUR CARE

Invite the households in your care to come together at your home or at church. This provides an opportunity to introduce yourself and for others to share among themselves. Consider including some icebreaker questions like these:

- * When and why did you come to *[your church name]*, and why have you stayed?
- * What was significant about your baptism or profession of faith?
- * What is one of your dreams for our church?

2 GET TO KNOW INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Keep a record of information about birthdays, anniversaries, births, recent deaths, and other significant events in the lives of people in your care. Use this information to send timely greetings and/or notes of encouragement. This record can also guide your prayers for these persons and families. Getting to know one another builds trust with those in your care, and in turn they will be more likely to contact you when a need arises.

3 TEAM UP WITH AN EXPERIENCED ELDER

While your church may provide elder training through a workshop or a retreat, a mentoring relationship with an experienced elder will provide support, encouragement, and feedback to elders who are new to the role.

4 MAKE THE MOST OF CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

At the local shopping center, a sports event, before and after a worship service, or at any church gathering, intentionally seek out the people in your care. Take a few moments to chat. Find out how they are doing; offer a word of encouragement. Connections like these take little time but go far to help you form relationships. Ongoing contact is vital to your ministry.

5 SCHEDULE A TIME TO VISIT TOGETHER

Intentional visiting is as important to your ministry as chance encounters. Scheduled visits provide a way to connect with an individual or a family and to offer support and encouragement. Depending on the person or the type of visit, their home, your home, a room in the church, a coffee shop, a restaurant, or a park bench can serve as a meeting place.

6 COMMUNICATE WHY YOU ARE VISITING

The primary purpose of your visit is to help people strengthen their relationship with God. But for some people in your church, the thought of an “elder visit” may cause feelings of anxiety or fear. Others might find it strange or invasive. Briefly explaining the reason for your visit and setting a specific time limit for the visit (one hour is sufficient in most cases) can help to set people at ease.

7 PREPARE FOR THE VISIT

Spend time preparing your heart. Ask God to guide your listening and speaking, and ask for peace and wisdom. Think about the person or persons you are visiting. What do you want to remember about them? Do you need to follow up on anything from a previous conversation or visit? Are there specific questions that will help to guide the visit?

8 LISTEN ATTENTIVELY AND ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

Your primary concern is the well-being of those you are visiting, and listening is the best way to show that concern and to affirm those in your care. Invite them to do the talking by asking thoughtful questions. (See *10 Ways to Talk with Someone about Their Faith*). Most people are willing to share what’s on their heart if they sense that someone truly cares. Listen well and assure them of God’s grace, love, forgiveness, and faithfulness.

9 RESPECT PEOPLE’S TIME COMMITMENTS

An elder visit should usually be completed within an hour. Keep the conversation focused on the person or family, and avoid digressions or sharing too many stories from your experience. If needed, schedule a follow-up visit for matters that require additional conversation.

10 END YOUR VISIT WITH PRAYER AND WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Prayer is appropriate and always appreciated. Ask what the individual or family would like you to pray for, and include items talked about in your visit. Read a short psalm or another appropriate Scripture passage. And once you have said you will leave, thank your host and depart.

The Faith Formation Ministries team is available to consult and brainstorm with you on these ideas and more. We’d also love to hear your faith formation stories so that we can share them with others. You’ll find our contact information at crcna.org/FaithFormation.



Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

crcna.org/FaithFormation

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Job Description

Pastoral Elder

All church officers (elders and deacons) represent Christ, the Lord, in the corporate life of His people. The office of elder is designed deliberately to promote the welfare of Christ's people in their Christian faith and conduct. Elders represent Christ as Lord of the Church, and give servant leadership in His name and in His place.

As leaders of God's people it is crucial that elders model, teach, inspire, and reinforce the fear of the Lord and the qualities of Christ-likeness, among believers.

Elders serve by governing the church in Christ's name. They are responsible for the spiritual well being of God's people. They must maintain true and pure preaching and teaching of the Word, regular celebration of the sacraments, and faithful counsel and discipline. And they must promote fellowship and hospitality among believers, ensure good order in the church, and stimulate witness to all people.

Elders must "guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Elders should:

1. be a friend and Christ-like example to children and give clear and cheerful guidance to young people,
2. by word and example, bear up God's people in their pain and weakness, and celebrate their joys with them,
3. encourage the aged to persevere in God's promises,
4. be wise counselors who support and strengthen the pastor(s),
5. be compassionate, yet firm and consistent in rebuke and discipline,
6. know the Scriptures, and
7. pray continually for the church.

Pastoral Elders:

Pastoral elders have the responsibility to "watch" over souls. They must be faithful in connecting with and visiting the church family, encouraging them in their spiritual walk with the Lord and showing compassion toward those who are experiencing difficulties of various kinds. They must give good counsel and admonition when appropriate for guarding the spiritual safety of church members.

Job Description:

Specifically, the Pastoral Elders are responsible to:

1. Provide for regular family contact by Pastoral Elders. Such contact could be electronic (email, telephone) or in personal.
2. Pastoral Elders will find many reasons to contact members in their ward:
 - a. Requests for prayer
 - b. Notices of funerals
 - c. Encouragement to attend church services or meetings and other church functions
 - d. Encouragement to attend and assist with community service functions
 - e. Birthdays
 - f. Births
 - g. Marriages
 - h. Anniversaries
 - i. Provide for the care and support of persons who are sick or in spiritual need.



3. Whenever possible, elders should find reasons to convene their group (ward) because consistent contact will eventually create a feeling of belonging to the group (ward).
 - a. afternoon or evening discussion of a sermon
 - b. supporting the pastor at Huronview on a Sunday afternoon
 - c. having a potluck at someone's home
 - d. doing a community service project.
4. At least one personal visit should be made with each household every 18 months.
 - a. Where families want formal visits these should be provided formally in a mutually agreed upon location.
 - b. Where families or individuals indicate that they would prefer to meet less formally such informal visits will also be appropriate.
5. Accounts of contacts and of visits are to be documented and regularly reported to the Pastoral Elders Meeting.
6. Assist the pastoral staff in the administration of the sacraments.
7. Exercise church discipline with the assistance of the pastoral staff.
8. Supervise the life and doctrine of the ordained pastoral staff. This includes associate pastors who have their ministerial credentials at Clinton CRC.
9. Elect annually, from within the membership of the Pastoral Elders, a chair person, vice-chair person and a secretary.
10. One of the Pastoral Elders is to be a voting member of the Administrative Team, elected annually.
11. Meet at least quarterly as a Pastoral Elders' Team to discuss, set goals and plan strategies designed to achieve the mission and vision of Clinton CRC.
12. Meet at least quarterly in the Full Council setting in their governance role of visioning, planning, and supporting.

Lead Elder Duties

1. Be present in the Meeting Room at least 30 minutes prior to the service.
2. Sign the monitor record.
3. Ask for updates on any urgent prayer concerns and have any announcement ready to be read before the Prayers of the People.
4. Pray with all those participating in the service before entering the sanctuary.
5. Lead all those participating in the service into the sanctuary. Give a word of encouragement to the speaker/pastor and take your seat.
6. Be prepared to lead the Prayers of the People. The Admin Secretary will contact you early in the week with details. Be sure to inform the Admin Secretary if you are not the person doing the prayer.
7. Be prepared to host the speaker/pastor for lunch. Admin Secretary or Lead on worship will inform Lead Elder.
8. Lead Elder is on duty from Sunday to next Sunday. The Chair of Council is the contact person in case of emergency or need in congregation.

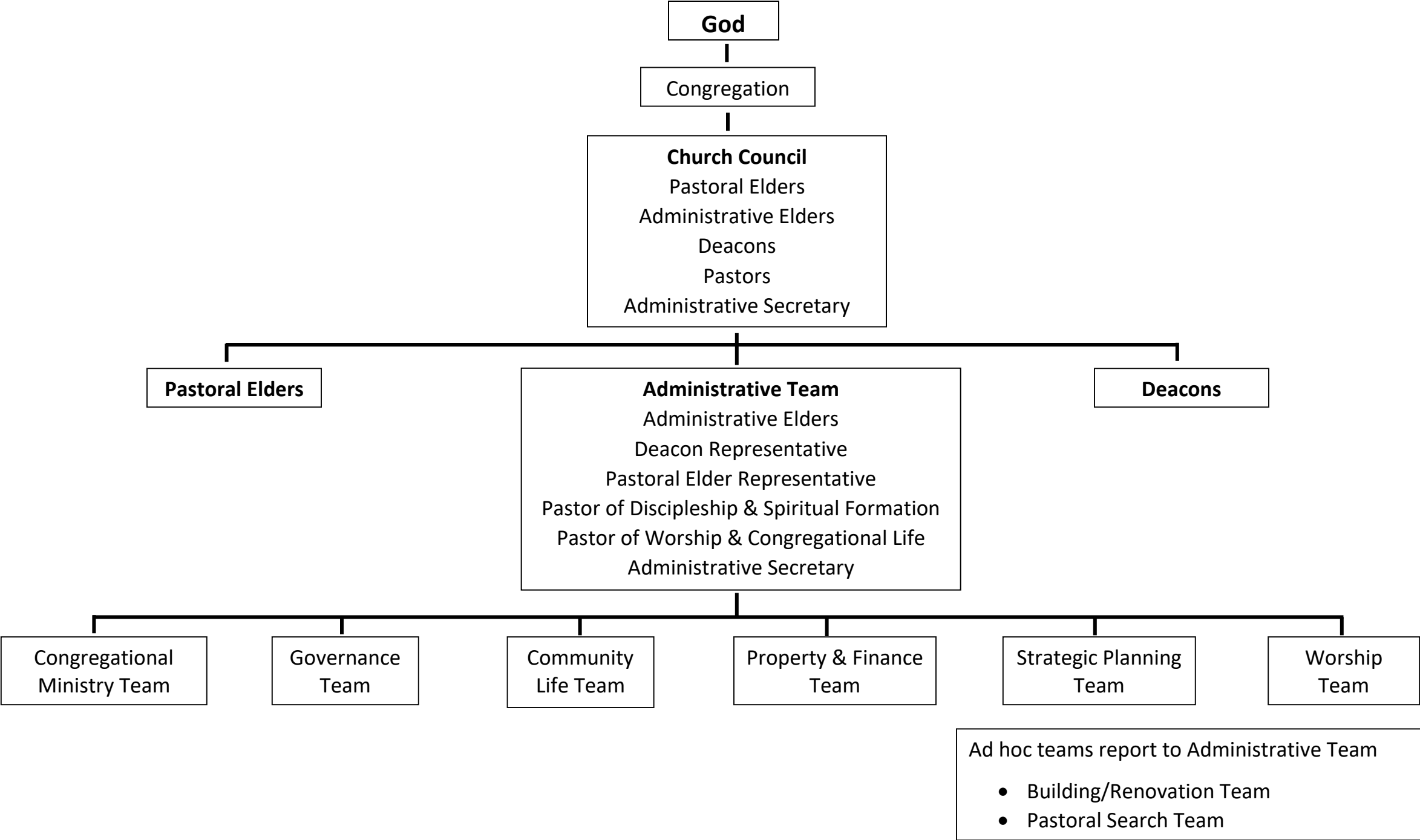
Lord's Supper: Lead elder is to assign each serving elder to a section of the sanctuary to be served. The last elder to be served by the pastor, receives the elements and serves the pastor. Serving Elders are asked to help collect the cups and clean up after the service.



Monitor Duties

1. Lock rear doors at 10:10 am.
2. Duties begin at start of service and finish at dismissal of all classes.
3. Three (minimum) complete circuits should be completed during each service.
4. Check all unlocked rooms on the main, second and basement floors, including washrooms (leaving all doors open for the duration of the service), closets, supply room and furnace room.
5. Check parking lot perimeter.
6. Check in with volunteers in all occupied rooms. (Admin Secretary will collect Safe Church forms.)

Church Organizational Chart





Full Council Meeting Guidelines

1. Full Council meetings are usually held in January, May, June, September, and November.
2. Meetings start at 7:30 pm.
3. The Chair and/or the Vice Chair chairs meetings. In their absence the Vice-all will chair the meeting.
4. The presence of 50% plus 1 of the Full Council members constitute a quorum.
5. The Chair prepares the agenda. A standard agenda is provided in the Agenda & Templates section of this handbook. Any member of Council wishing to add to the agenda must notify the Chair no later than 6:00 p.m. of the Thursday preceding the meeting, preferably in writing. Matters other than those on the agenda will be dealt with only in case of emergency.
6. In order to expedite the proceedings, all reports, minutes and motions must be submitted in writing via email, in time to be distributed electronically, with the agenda 1 week prior to the meeting.
7. Meetings are opened with devotions.
8. Pastoral Elders, Administrative Elders and Deacons must familiarize themselves with the Clinton CRC Council Handbook.
9. Materials given for home study should be returned at the next meeting for discussion.
10. Administrative Elders and Deacons assigned to various teams are to report on the activities of the team if there are any questions related to the minutes of the teams.
11. Business of the meeting will be closed with prayer.
12. Minutes of the meeting are prepared by the Administrative Secretary, and distributed with the next meeting package, and approved at the next meeting of Full Council.
13. Members must notify the Chair if unable to attend meeting two hours prior to meeting.