

THALIA LYNN BAPTIST CHURCH

ELDER LEADERSHIP GUIDE

(September 2024)

Acts 20:17:and Paul called unto him the elders of the church.

Acts 20:28: Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

KIND OF ELDER LEADERSHIP
(Elder-led or Elder-rule)

After much research, discussion, comparison and prayer, members of the Senior Pastor appointed Ad-Hoc Elder Leadership Committee unanimously agreed in the **February 26, 2023**, meeting to adopt an **Elder-led governance** for Thalia Lynn Baptist Church.

THALIA LYNN BAPTIST CHURCH ELDERS

The Elders shall be comprised of the Senior Pastor plus a plurality of qualified Elders affirmed by the congregation. They shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church, including the oversight of doctrinal fidelity, shepherding of the congregation and the monitoring of all areas of the church ministry while focusing on the Vision and Mission of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN ELDER
Elders will meet all Biblical qualifications listed below.

ABOVE REPROACH Live an exemplar lifestyle free from sin, deserving respect and a good reputation.	1 Timothy 3:2,	Titus 1:6
HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE Demonstrate faithfulness in marriage.	1 Timothy 3:2,	Titus 1:6
TEMPERATE Exhibit mental, emotional and spiritual stability in words and actions.	1 Timothy 3:2	
PRUDENT Live a righteous lifestyle displaying self-control and grace in ways worthy of honor.	1 Timothy 3:2,	Titus 1:8
RESPECTABLE Demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.	1 Timothy 3:2	
HOSPITABLE Live a life demonstrating unselfishness and generosity.	1 Timothy 3:2,	Titus 1:8
ABLE TO TEACH Demonstrate an ability to communicate truth and sound doctrine with integrity.	1 Timothy 3:2,	Titus 1:9
NOT GIVEN TO DRUNKENNESS Exhibit freedom from addictions that impair your ability to make sound decisions and be willing to limit your ability for the sake of others.	1 Timothy 3:3,	Titus 1:7
NOT SELF-WILLED Avoid being self-centered, stubborn, violent and prone to forcing opinions on others or abusing authority.	1 Timothy 3:3	

GENTLE	1 Timothy 3:3	
Exhibit a sensitive, loving and kind concern for others.		
NOT QUICK TEMPERED	1 Timothy 3:3	
Demonstrate gentleness, patience and self composure in difficult situations.		
NOT PUGNACIOUS	1 Timothy 3:3	
Live a lifestyle not given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.		
UNCONTENTIOUS	1 Timothy 3:3	
Not apt to arouse arguments or conflict.		
FREE FROM LOVE OF MONEY	1 Timothy 3:3,	Titus 1:7
Be content with what you have materially and not be motivated in life or ministry by financial gain.		
MANAGES OWN HOUSEHOLD WELL	1 Timothy 3:4-5,	Titus 1:6
Demonstrate maturity in a well-ordered household and a spiritual healthy family life.		
NOT A RECENT CONVERT	1 Timothy 3:6	
Must be a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of the conversion and depth of spirituality.		
A GOOD REPUTATION WITH OTHERS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH	1 Timothy 3:7	
Live with spiritual authenticity and freedom from hypocrisy providing a respected testimony to unbelievers in the community.		
LOVE WHAT IS GOOD		Titus 1:8
Live a life pursuing Godly activities.		
JUST		Titus 1:8
Desire to make all judgments based on Scripture principles.		
DEVOUT		Titus 1:8
Live a holy and righteous life devoted to seeking God's will. Must be committed to prayer, worship and the study of Scriptures.		

ELDER SELECTION AND AFFIRMATION

Members of the congregation shall be given the opportunity to complete a written Nomination Form or nominate electronically the name of a nominee(s) to be considered to serve as an Elder, being a spiritual mature church member, an active participant in church programs and faithfully contributes to support all ministries and missions of the church.

The nominee(s) is then screened by a Vetting Committee utilizing phone conversations, questionnaires, personal interviews and a background check to determine if the nominee(s) meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9.

The name(s) of the qualified nominee(s) shall then be announced to the congregation for an opportunity to comment their concerns regarding the nominee(s) to the Vetting Committee. After two weeks and a review of any comments, a final decision is made by the Vetting Committee regarding whether to move forward with the installation process.

A Church Business Meeting shall be called, and the name(s) of the nominee(s) shall be presented to the congregation for affirmation by a written ballot(s). The tenure of service for a new Elder begins immediately following the affirmation. Plans will be made and announced for a service to ordain the nominee(s) to the office of Elder.

ELDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Elders of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church are responsible for the following but may delegate to other qualified persons in the body of the church, so duties are carried out effectively and in a timely manner.

Provide Spiritual Oversight

- * Confront false teaching and behavior inconsistent to biblical truth.
- * Facilitate the stages of conflict resolution and implement appropriate church discipline as necessary.
- * Implement and monitor compliance with Elder policy and procedure.
- * Plurality of leadership and mutual accountability.

Shepherd the Flock

- * Participate (as needed) in a biblical process of conflict resolution outlined by Jesus in *Matthew 18*.
- * Direct members into appropriate process for spiritual health, assistance, and problem resolution.
- * On-going assessment of our mission doctrine.
- * Able to teach and defend sound doctrine.
- * Encourage the staff and ministries of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church.
- * Pray for others and model Christian behavior.

Manage the Church

- * Affirm the annual church budget as developed by the Church Finance Committee.
- * Approve Church policy and ensure that all ministries align with Thalia Lynn Baptist Church's mission, vision, values and beliefs.
- * Lead church unity, settle disputes and resolve conflict.
- * Provide wise counsel to ministers and staff.
- * Recommend and affirm By-law changes and management for congregational approval.
- * Encourage and conduct an annual review of the senior pastor.
- * Affirm and review annual evaluations of ministerial staff.
- * Facilitate with the congregation, the nomination and selection of new Elders.
- * Delegate to qualified assistants, staff, and/or outside experts as needed on church matters.
- * Manage situations where members, particularly active members, are experiencing significant relational difficulties or moral failure.
- * Affirm new ministries and staff positions as recommended by the Church Personnel Committee.
- * Elder Chairman or a representative shall attend Church Council Meetings.
- * Execute senior pastor duties in absence of pastor as needed to preach, teach and affirm pastoral search committee recommendations prior to presentation to congregation.

- * Oversee recommendations for seminary admission applications and the processes of licensing and ordaining of church members entering the Ministry.

NUMBER OF ELDERS

The number of Elders shall be determined by the Elders to meet the needs of the ministry. Such number shall include the Senior Pastor and shall not be less than five (5) people or more than nine (9) that satisfy qualifications of office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

ELDER TERM OF SERVICE

Elders shall be affirmed by the congregation for a five (5) year term of service with a minimum of a one (1) year sabbatical to become eligible to serve again. Eligibility for re-election to another five-year term shall follow a status evaluation by the current Elders.

The term of a new Elder begins immediately following the affirmation. The terms assigned initially shall be staggered to assure continuity as only a portion of serving Elders will expire each year.

ELDER MEETINGS

Elder meetings shall be held regularly for the purpose of prayer, shepherding, discernment and ministry guidance.

The Elders shall elect a Chairman among themselves to preside in Elder meetings. In an absence, the Elders shall appoint another Elder to temporarily fulfill these duties.

The Elders shall elect a Secretary to record minutes of regular and special meetings and provide a copy of the minutes at the next meeting. A written copy shall be filed in the Church Office.

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held monthly. Active attendance and participation are required.

Special meetings of the Elders may be called at any time by order of the Chairman, or by a majority of the Elder membership.

Elder meetings may be held utilizing electronic communication or conference telephone calls. All Elders participating in the meeting must have the ability to simultaneously hear/see each other and respond vocally. Members participating in such meetings are deemed present in person at the meeting.

Any emergent action required of the Elders may be taken if all Elders, individually or collectively consent in writing to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same effect as the unanimous vote of the Elders. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the Elders' meetings.

The Elder Chairman may call at any time a Called Business Meeting of the Church. Such meetings shall be held only after notice has been posted on the church website or has been printed in the church newsletter at least one week in advance stating the purpose for the meeting, date, time and place.

Those Elders present and voting at a duly called meeting shall constitute a **quorum** for the transaction of business provided two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders are present excluding the Pastor. The Senior Pastor, while serving as a member of the Elders, will be without voting privileges.

To be approved, all actions by the Elders must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

The removal of an Elder shall require the vote of a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the remaining Elders and the approval of the Senior Pastor.

ELDER RESIGNATIONS, TERMINATIONS, DISMISSALS

An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation, removal, death or no longer a member of the church.

RESIGNATION

An Elder may at any time deliver to the Chairman of Elders a written notice of intent to resign, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the Elders.

REMOVAL by church action

If an Elder's faith and daily conduct are against the teaching of the Bible or the ministry and Constitution & By-Laws of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church, the Elder may be removed at any time from the office of Elder. Any two church members with reason to believe that an Elder should be removed should express such concern to the Elders and if need be, afterwards to the congregation.

Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

An Elder shall be removed in either of two ways:

(a) Two-thirds (2/3) vote of the current Elders at a duly called Elders' meeting and approved by the Senior Pastor

OR

(b) Two-thirds (2/3) vote in Church Business Meeting by those members present to meet a quorum.

VACANCY

The Elders shall determine if and when a vacancy shall be filled if there is a sufficient number of remaining Elders. If a new Elder is needed, the selection and election process in accordance with the Elder Bylaws shall be followed.

In the event that a vacancy occurs at any time prior to the expiration of the departing Elder's term of office, the Elders may recommend to the congregation for affirmation a qualified individual to fill the vacated position for the remainder of the term. The affirmed individual is then eligible to be reaffirmed by the congregation to fill one subsequent complete term, but must then take a minimum of one year off before becoming eligible to serve again.

CONGREGATION WILL CONTINUE TO VOTE ON THESE ITEMS

1. Church budget
2. Buy, sell or transfer real property
3. Building construction/major renovations
4. Incur indebtedness
5. Call or dismiss of Pastor
6. Call of ministerial staff members
7. Affirmation of new Elders
8. Church Constitution & By-Law changes
9. Election of church Deacons, Officers (treasurer, moderator, clerk, etc)
10. Election of members for committees as recommended by Nominating Committee:
 - Church Personnel
 - Finance
 - Tellers
 - Endowment
 - Church Nominating
 - Missions
 - Constitution & By-Laws
11. Any other major event or decision as designated by the Elders.

WHY WE WILL HAVE ELDERS

1. Scriptural
2. Plurality in leadership (shared authority)
3. Spiritual health and care of the church
4. Teach and defend sound doctrine
5. Handle staff conflicts
6. Discipline church members
7. Pastoral staff sounding board
8. Oversee financial matters (salaries, expenses, etc)
9. Settle disputes within or against the church
10. Teach, preach when necessary
11. Continuity of leadership
12. Church unity
13. Oversee purchases & maintenance of insurance policies

WHAT ELDERS WILL NOT DO

1. Set the church budget
2. Buy and sell property
3. Borrow money
4. Hire and discharge staff
5. Use funds for building renovations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The content of this **ELDER LEADERSHIP GUIDE** was written and compiled by the seven members of the Ad-Hoc Elder Leadership Committee appointed by the senior pastor in November 2022. With fervent prayers seeking God's guidance for wisdom, understanding and obedience to His Will, the members moved forward researching Biblical Scriptures, eldership articles and speaking with pastors of several local churches. Suggested essential principles for Elder leadership concerning qualifications, responsibilities, tenure of service, method of selection and other topics were gleaned from copies of various other church bylaws, graciously sent electronically to the committee members. Monthly meetings with hours of discussions, questions and sharing of thoughts kept the committee members united in spirit in fulfilling the task placed upon them.

RESOURCES

HOLY BIBLE:

Various Translations

CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS:

COASTAL COMMUNITY CHURCH, Virginia Beach, Virginia

CROSS ROADS CHURCH, Norfolk, Virginia

FIRST CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, Virginia Beach, Virginia

GREEN RUN BAPTIST CHURCH, Virginia Beach, Virginia

LEONARDTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH, Leonardtown, Maryland

NEWSONG FELLOWSHIP, Virginia Beach, Virginia

PATHWAYS BAPTIST CHURCH, Gaithersburg, Maryland

SOUTH NORFOLK BAPTIST CHURCH, Chesapeake, Virginia

BOOK:

Getz, Gene A., *Elders and Leaders*, 1960

ELECTRONIC WEBSITES:

Biblicaleldershipresources.com

Thalia Lynn Baptist Church

Elder Vetting and Training

Proposed Vetting Timeline

September – October	Educate the congregation on qualifications of a TLBC Elder •Print/Visuals, possible sermon w/sermon notes
January – February	Open for nominations from congregation •Nomination Form, online on Realm
End of February	Contact nominees, arrange time for initial, brief phone conversation. Send package including questionnaire documenting nominee’s ministry and doctrine beliefs. Nominee submits completed questionnaire, background check, Ministry Safe training, and references for Elders.
March	Questionnaire responses are reviewed by vetting committee. Conduct second phone conversation within 30 days. During conversation, discuss responses to questionnaire and after reading the package, the nominee’s interest in further consideration for Eldership.
April	Face-to-face interview with nominee, to discuss nominee’s Christian experiences and situational questions.
1 st week of May	Vetting committee determines nominees to be presented to the congregation for affirmation at a Business Meeting. Nominees are contacted for final commitment. Nominees are announced to the congregation for feedback. Business meeting announced for final affirmation vote.
May 15	Deadline for congregational feedback. Vetting committee reviews feedback and prepares nominees for final affirmation vote.
1 st week of June	Conduct Business Meeting to affirm new Elders. Tenure begins upon affirmation.

Proposed Training Schedule

Initial training starts with education of congregation – Qualities and Qualifications of Elders

What is required for eldership at TLBC?

What are the responsibilities?

Explore the vision of the church, the future of the church, and possible paths to the future.

Provide Elder documents in the form of a packet, distributed at time of nomination.

Upon affirmation and beginning of tenure, training on the logistics and processes of the Elder body is presented to newly sitting Elders.

Thalia Lynn Baptist Church

Nomination for Elder

In order to nominate a member from Thalia Lynn Baptist to serve as an Elder, please complete this form and return it to the church office no later than February 15, 2025. A Thalia Lynn Baptist Church member may nominate no more than one individual in a calendar year.

Name of Nominee_____

TLBC Member Making the Nomination_____

In making this nomination, I can verify the following:

- () To the best of my knowledge, this nominee meets the qualification for the position of Elder, as approved by the Church Constitution.
- () This nominee is a member of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church.
- () This nominee has agreed to the nomination.

Signature of Member Making the Nomination_____

Date_____

Thalia Lynn Baptist Church

Elder Nomination Initial Phone Call

Upon receipt of an Elder nomination, contact the nominee and schedule time for a brief phone call when it is convenient. The phone call should only take approximately 15 minutes.

Upon calling, identify yourself as a representative of the Elder Vetting Committee at Thalia Lynn.

Share with the nominee that they have been nominated for consideration as an Elder at Thalia Lynn. Ask if he/she participated in the training sessions conducted by the pastor and if he/she is aware of the work that has been going on over the last several years regarding the establishment of Elders at Thalia Lynn.

A member of Thalia Lynn feels that he/she has the qualities needed to serve as an Elder, being a spiritual mature church member, an active participant in church programs and faithfully contributing to support all ministries and missions of the church. The Vetting Committee would like for the nominee to prayerfully consider participating in the selection process. The Vetting Committee isn't looking for perfect people, but members committed to the advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ at Thalia Lynn. Explain the following steps included in the process:

- A packet of information, including the Thalia Lynn Constitution and Bylaws, Elder Leadership Guide and a questionnaire, to include personal references, will be sent to the nominee. A background check and Ministry Safe training will also be completed.
- If the nominee selects to proceed through the process, the questionnaire is completed and submitted by the listed due date.
- The Vetting Committee will review the questionnaire and establish a convenient time for a face-to-face interview with the nominee.
- The Vetting Committee will deliberate on the candidate(s) and make a recommendation to the church for affirmation of the chosen nominee(s). All nominations may not be affirmed.
- All nominees not recommended for affirmation will have a post-interview conference.

Ask the nominee if there are any questions regarding the process.

Ask the nominee if they know who recommended them and why. What is their reaction to the nomination?

Discern how the nominee feels about the nomination, ask them to prayerfully consider the nomination and discuss the nomination with their family. Ask them to contact you within the next 5 days if they wish to proceed to the next step, reminding them of the due dates for the questionnaire, personal references and completion of the background check. Thank him/her for their time and for their consideration.

Contact the nominee by the 5th day, if contact was not initiated. If the nominee declines the nomination, thank them for their consideration. If the nominee chooses to proceed, review the steps and due dates and thank them for their decision.

Notes from phone call: _____

Vetting Committee Member _____

Date _____

Elder Nominee Questionnaire

Elders at Thalia Lynn Baptist Church are tasked with leadership responsibilities involving the spiritual welfare of the Church, including the oversight of doctrinal fidelity, shepherding of the congregation and the monitoring of all areas of the church ministry while focusing on the Vision and Mission of Thalia Lynn Baptist Church. The selection of Elders will meet all Biblical qualifications from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide Elder nominees the opportunity to express his/her beliefs, his/her ability to communicate those beliefs, as well as understanding of sound doctrine and Elder responsibilities. Please respond to the following questions/statements with honesty and in a manner that communicates your true beliefs. Separate documents are acceptable and you may utilize resources to document your beliefs.

As you have read the information provided in the Elder packet, what is the purpose and calling of an Elder and what will the role be at Thalia Lynn?

Who is Jesus Christ to you and what does His death and resurrection mean to you?

Briefly share your testimony and the current circumstances surrounding your commitment to Him.

Describe how you spend time in the Bible and in prayer.

Share about the last time you shared your faith.

What would you consider your spiritual gifts and how are you using them for His kingdom?

How do you discern the will of God in the daily matters of your life?

Share experiences where you have taught Biblical truths and sound doctrine to a group.

Explain the importance of tithing in your personal life. How does giving to the church compare to giving to other charities?

What do you believe is the role of women at Thalia Lynn?

How would you describe your leadership in the home?

If asked how to become a Christian, what would your response be?

Is there anyone else we should contact that may provide pertinent information regarding your nomination?

Please list the names and contact email/address of up to 3 personal references who would accurately share your qualities and qualifications for the position of Elder.

Thalia Lynn Baptist Church

Elder Nomination Interview

What brought you to Thalia Lynn and how long have you been a member?

Why do you feel called to be an Elder and what will be your unique contribution to Thalia Lynn as an Elder?

How are you serving the Lord at Thalia Lynn?

What parts of the overall direction of Thalia Lynn bring you the greatest joy and the greatest concern?

If you can change one thing about Thalia Lynn, what would it be and why?

How do members of your immediate family feel about you serving as an Elder at Thalia Lynn?

What might distract you from serving effectively as an Elder?

Share an experience where you had to deal with conflict and how it was resolved.

Share anything else about you that might assist the Vetting Committee.

What questions do you have for the Vetting Committee and how can we pray for you?

Elder Reference Form

You are receiving this form because your name has been submitted as a reference by the following nominee. This nominee is currently being considered for the position of Elder at Thalia Lynn Baptist Church. Please review the enclosed list of qualifications for that position and complete your response to the following questions. Your responses will be confidential. You may use additional pages to record your responses.

Name of Nominee: _____

Why were you listed as a reference for this nominee?

Can you share any evidence of practices in Biblical teachings?

How does the nominee exhibit the qualifications of an Elder as listed on the enclosed list?

Can you think of any reason why the nominee should not receive this nomination?

Please return this reference to Thalia Lynn Baptist Church by _____.

Name of Reference _____

Contact Information _____

Date _____
