

## Elders Covenant

1. The purpose of this document is to confirm my commitment to the Northside leadership and to clarify interaction of the leadership body.
2. It is preferred that eldership decisions be made by consensus; however, if a consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be made by majority vote.
3. Once the eldership has decided an issue, I will set aside personal preference in support of the decision. My support will be evidenced in spirit, in voice, and in action.
4. If I am not present for any vote, I will support the decision made in my absence, whether or not I personally would have voted in the same manner as the majority.
5. Within the eldership, I will be lovingly frank and honest and open in expressing my personal feelings and opinions. When my fellow elders express feelings and opinions, I will listen respectfully.
6. I will respect the confidentiality of matters discussed within the eldership, using appropriate judgment in sharing on need-to-know basis.
7. I will refrain from making major decisions on my own, realizing that I have no authority as an individual elder. Final authority resides in the eldership as a whole. Accordingly, I will not speak for the eldership without their prior approval.
8. I will treat my fellow elders with respect and as an equal.
9. I will not speak in a negative critical spirit concerning any elder or the eldership, any deacon, or any staff member. I will speak in a positive spirit about the leadership or I will not speak at all.
10. I recognize the need for the eldership and the ministerial staff to function as a team. I commit to meeting regularly with the elders and the ministerial staff for the purposes of study, prayer, discussion of congregational shepherding issues, to address congregational policy and decisions, and for proactive planning.
11. I recognize the shepherding, eldering, and oversight roles of the eldership. I will lead by example, by teaching, by gentle guidance, by encouragement, and by empowering staff and deacons and members to use their individual giftedness in ministry.
12. Should personal situations such as illness or family situations or job demands restrict my ability to serve, I will feel comfortable in asking for and in being supported in (1) taking a short-term leave of absence, or (2) tendering my resignation, whichever is appropriate based on circumstances. Should I take a leave of absence, I will notify and meet with the elders before re-entering the eldership, re-entering only with their consensus approval.
13. In recognition that my role as an elder is to shepherd the entire congregation, I will make every attempt to avoid personal bias on behalf of family or personal friends. Should matters be before the eldership that may present a personal bias, I submit to the discussion being handled in the same manner as any other situation. In matters of personal bias, I will withhold vote if it is the judgment of either myself or of the remaining elders that I do so.
14. Although I am a shepherd of the members of this local congregation, I am also part of the flock. As part of the flock, I will submit to being shepherded by the eldership. Should a shepherding issue concerning myself arise, I will accept that the majority of the elders may discuss in a constructive spirit, outside my presence, the best avenues of shepherding me.
15. I serve at the will of the congregation and understand that my role may be periodically evaluated for continuance.
16. I also serve with the approval of the eldership. Should it be the consensus of the entire eldership other than myself at any time and for any reason to request my resignation, I will do so immediately without questioning their judgment.

Having read this Covenant, I pledge to abide by it. \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature) (date)

(Every shepherd shall sign two copies, one to be returned to the signer and one to be kept in elders' files.)