

National City Christian Church

Job Description for the Elder

2011

Historically the Elders in a congregation have rendered a unique service to God's people, both in the early church, in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and at National City Christian Church. The author of I Peter puts it well.

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. (I Peter 5:1-4 RSV)

The key phrase is “tending the flock of God” which here means to guard or watch over them, to be attentive to their needs. Of equal importance as to the way the tending is done: *willingly* (i.e., deliberately, intentionally), without compulsion, *eagerly* (i.e., freely, readily) and as an *example* (i.e., a visible impression, model or pattern to follow).

We want the Elders in National City to reflect just such a spirit of willingness and eagerness and positive service to others. The following describes a number of ways that the Elder of National City may choose to serve the people of God worshipping here in this place:

- **Serving at Communion:** Two Elders both preside and pray in the Communion service at the 8:30a.m. gospel service. At the 11:00a.m. traditional service each Sunday two Elders preside (called walking Elders) and two pray (called Praying Elders). Periodically when a Communion service is held during other times the week, Elders will serve their traditional functions (e.g., Good Friday prayers/communion in Wilkes Chapel). These duties are rotated among all the serving Elders.
- **Prayer:** Elders will personally pray for the National City Christian Church people, congregation and Foundation. Immediately before any worship service, all Elders not otherwise engaged will meet with those conducting the service to pray for that service. Elders will normally pray at communal meals and will sponsor the annual “World Day of Prayer” event which may also involve serving Communion.
- **Teaching:** Elders take an active role in teaching others at National City. Examples include teaching Sunday school, Bible study, and in leading small groups (e.g., Lenten study). Service is distributed among the Elder Board depending on personal interests and subject familiarity.
- **Representation:** Elders periodically serve in the liturgy at worship, read scripture, pray other than the Lord's Table, give devotional messages, and otherwise represent the spiritual needs of the people of God. This is done on an “as needed” basis from within the Board of Elders.
- **Visit the Sick and Shut-ins:** As required, Elders will assist other Church members (notably the Deaconesses) and Church staff by visiting and taking Communion to the sick and shut-ins and their caregivers.
- **Thomas House:** Two Elders will conduct a short worship service at Thomas House on the fourth Sunday of each month.
- **Baptism:** A male Elder will assist the Deaconess board when a male is baptized.

NCCC Elder Job Description (continued)

- **Ministerial Candidates:** The board of Elders sponsors any candidate for ordination at NCCC. A coordinating/caring committee of Elders will be appointed for each applicant.
- **Care and Nurture of Senior Minister and Ministerial staff:** Elders are to extend individual care to the needs of each clergy member of NCCC. Elders will be assigned to specific Pastoral Liaison Committee(s) (PLC) for each minister. Elders will serve on any search committee constituted by NCCC. The Board of Elders will serve to advise the Senior Minister on any issue deemed important to the spiritual wellbeing of the congregation.
- **Elder Board:** The Board of Elders meets monthly for training and enrichment and to identify and address congregational needs, coordinate activities and schedules, conduct business, and pray for our Church. The Board meets annually in retreat for spiritual renewal and training.
- **Serve God by Example:** Elders will in all matters seek to conduct themselves “in a manner worthy of their calling” (2 Thessalonians 1:11). **This will include such personal activities as personal prayer, sober conduct, stewardship (of resources), tithing, reliability and acting responsibly.**

My Affirmation of Commitment: As an Elder of National City Christian Church, I am a servant, steward and shepherd. I am a person of faith who shares a heritage rich in experience and example. If I heed the lessons of yesterday and seek the Spirit's guidance for tomorrow, I can undertake my ministry as Elder with enthusiasm and confidence and thus accept this ministry to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

signed

National City Christian Church Board of Elders

Elder Procedures for the 8:30 Service

The following are the procedures for Elders at the Communion Table at the 8:30 service:

- Meet at the Baptistery Chapel at 8:25 for a prayer with the other participants before the service starts. Then find a seat at the front pew and worship normally until the invitation is given following the sermon. Should someone join the Church hold in place until that process finishes.
- Quietly follow the clergy who is presiding up on the dais both entering on the bread side (the order is usually clergy, Elder for the cup then Elder for the bread but this is not critical).
- The Clergy will say a brief meditation ending with "...let us pray." The two Elders give their prayer for the bread and then the cup. The Clergy then gives the words of institution and instructions.
- As your turn comes, step up to the microphone and speak clearly and somewhat loudly. Your mouth should be about as close to the mike as this paper is *wide* (~9 inches). Should the microphone be turned to the side, step to that side to get to a "straight on" position. Step back to your original position when you have finished speaking.
- Each Elder walks around their side of the table and picks up a Cup and hands it to a Clergy person. Then picks up a bread plate and the Clergy/Elder pair take a position to receive congregants coming up the center aisle. As the line forms the bread will be presented to a person first. The congregant will break off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup before partaking.
- As each person accepts a piece of the bread it is customary to offer a blessing such as "...the bread of life given for you" or "...the body of Christ broken for you." Personalize the blessing with the congregant's name if possible.
- When all congregants have been served, the Elder/Clergy pair on the baptistery side offers communion to the music leader.
- When all have been served and while holding your bread, turn to the Clergy person and offer them communion. Then take communion yourself. Note: neither of you will need to change elements but will continue to hold your respective elements.
- Walk toward the table and accept the cup from the clergy and return them to their original place.
- Turn and remain in front of the table for the benediction. After the closing hymn, you can remain in place to greet the participants. As you serve in this way, you should be especially attentive to needs of the congregation. It is also a good idea to be ready to take notes if necessary for follow up actions or prayers. Also, keep an eye out for visitors. You may be a future new member's first contact with the congregation and your greeting will be long remembered. Above all else, remember that you were called to "tend the flock" and this is perhaps your best opportunity to "touch" almost everyone who worshiped here that morning. And enjoy yourself – what you do is so very important and besides that, you really are good at it.

National City Christian Church Board of Elders

Procedures for Praying Elder at the 11:00 Service

- Meet in the narthex at 10:55 for a prayer with the other participants before the service starts. Remain in the rear of the sanctuary and process in following the choir. Pace your walk to remain about three to four pews (about ten feet) behind the last choir member. It is customary to walk straight to the table, step up on the Dias and turn right and then go to your seat. Note: there should be hymnals for your use on the tables at the rear of the sanctuary.
- Worship as usual until the doxology following the offering. At this point, watch for the Clergy Person to rise. Join them at the table immediately behind the microphone on your side and about three feet back from it.
- Once the walking Elders arrive with the ceremonial gifts which they hand to the Clergy, they will hand each praying Elder an element. Should they somehow forget, gain eye contact with your partner and simply retrieve the elements yourself.
- The Clergy will say a brief meditation ending with "...let us pray."
- The Elder on the Bread side reads the "Prayer of the People" and the Cup side Elder offers a communion prayer.
- As your turn comes, step up to the microphone and speak clearly and somewhat loudly. Your mouth should be about as close to the mike as this paper is *wide* (~9 inches). Should the microphone be turned to the side, step to that side to get to a "straight on" position. Speak loud enough that the deacons could hear you even without amplification. Step back to your original position when you have finished speaking.
- Stand quietly in place as the Clergy says the first half of words of installation. The Clergy person will take the loaf but you retain the plate. Just after the Clergy person breaks the bread, each of you will be offered the loaf; tear off a piece of the loaf and eat it. The cup Elder will continue to hold the cup and the bread Elder will continue to hold the *plate* (only) as the Clergy distributes portions of the bread to each bread plate that will be passed to the congregants.
- Once all Deacons have received the elements (usually as the communion hymn is ending) the walking Elders will take the element you are holding and will return it to its position on the table. As with receiving the elements earlier, should the walking Elders forget, get eye contact with your Elder partner and you both return your element to its position on the table.
- Return to your seat when the Clergy returns to their seat. Watch the Clergy. When the elements are distributed to all the congregants, the Clergy will return to their position; you return to yours as well.
- The Clergy person will hand you a goblet as you approach the table. Hold it until the Clergy says "...let us all drink together;" drink. As the Clergy person concludes the service, they will retrieve your goblet and return it to its position on the table.

- Stand quietly in place during the final hymn. The choir will recess and again you follow the choir up the center aisle. Each Elder will follow the choir on their side of the table again walking abreast and maintaining about a ten foot separation with the choir. Note: Do not return to your seat. Also, it is best that you not try to hold a hymnal during this time since it is awkward, distracting and it is not necessary that you sing.
- When you reach the back of the sanctuary, the Pastor (and occasionally a visiting clergy person) will greet worshipers in the narthex at the front door. The two Elders will form a line and greet and talk with the people as they are waiting to shake hands with the Pastor. As you serve in this way, you should be especially attentive to needs of the congregation. It is also a good idea to be ready to take notes if necessary for follow up actions or prayers. Also, keep an eye out for visitors. You may be a future new member's first contact with the congregation and your greeting will be long remembered. Above all else, remember that you were called to "tend the flock" and this is perhaps your best opportunity to "touch" almost everyone who worshiped here that morning. And enjoy yourself – what you do is so very important and besides that, you really are good at it.

National City Christian Church Board of Elders

Procedures for the Presiding (walking) Elder at the 11:00 Service

- Meet in the narthex at 10:55 for a prayer with the other participants before the service starts. Find a seat and worship as usual until the hymn of invitation.
- At this point, the Deacons who will be serving will move to the rear of the sanctuary; you should join them. Remember that the Deacons first task will be to receive the offering and you should place your gift in the plate before getting distracted by later events.
- Retrieve the ceremonial gift plates and take your place at the back of the sanctuary as the Deacons retreat after the collection. You will be signaled when to step out. Walk slowly but deliberately up the center aisle. The music will build as you move forward and the Doxology will begin as you get to the table. Hand your plates to the Clergy person.
- Pause very briefly as the Clergy person turns and raises the plates symbolizing our gift to God. *At that time*, hand the element on your side to the praying Elder. Then, remove the lids from both the Bread and Cup trays. The reason is that, symbolically, this “opens” the table for which the other Elders are about to pray. The table has been covered until this moment but this simple act now makes the emblems available to all as they are blessed and served. Sit when the Clergy says “...you may be seated.”
- Following the Elder’s prayers and the Clergy person’s words and as the communion hymn begins, you return to your position. Pick up a bread plate and offer it to the Clergy person who tears of a portion of the bread and places it on your bread plate. Place the bread plate on top of a cup plate and turning together toward the inside, offer the emblems to the central-most Deacons.
- The deacon takes a portion of the bread before taking the two plates. The Deacon then passes the emblems on down the line as you and your fellow Elder repeat the process until all Deacons have a set of emblems. Turn back toward the Table. This is also a good time to “tidy up” the table by arranging the lids and straightening the placement of the emblems. As the Deacons go to distribute the emblems you return to your chair. A deacon will serve you almost immediately.
- Remain seated when the Clergy/Elders return for the cup portion of communion; partake of the cup along with the congregation.
- Stand during the final hymn. As the choir recessed out the praying Elders will follow the choir. This will be your signal to move to the door on your side of the sanctuary to greet the congregants as they leave. Following the Benediction you can help open the side doors.
- Should anyone join the Church on your Sunday the Elder on the Baptistry side should escort the new member(s) to the side door where you introduce them by name to the congregants.
- As you serve in this way, you should be especially attentive to needs of the congregation. It is also a good idea to be ready to take notes if necessary for follow up actions or prayers. Also, keep an eye out for visitors. You may be a future new member’s first contact with the congregation and your greeting will be long remembered. Above all else, remember that you were called to “tend the flock” and this is perhaps your best opportunity to “touch” many of the people who worshiped here that morning. And enjoy yourself – what you do is so very important and besides that, you really are good at it.

National City Christian Church Board of Elders

Elder Procedures for Services Using Three Stations of Intinction

At selected times, often during the 11:00 summer services, there is a need to serve Holy Communion from three stations using Intinction (Note: this service requires four Elders, two Clergy, three large Chalices and three bread plates). The following are the procedures for Elders at the Communion Table:

- Meet at the narthex at 10:55 for a prayer with the other participants before the service starts.
- The praying Elders process normally if there is a processional. If *not*, then find a seat at the front pew and worship normally until the “Moment of Friendship and Welcome.” The praying Elders then take their seats on the Dias and Worship as usual until the doxology following the offering. At this point, watch for the Clergy Person to rise. Join them at the table immediately behind the microphone on your side and about three feet back from it.
- Once the walking Elders arrive with the ceremonial gifts which they hand to the Clergy, they will hand each praying Elder an element. Should they somehow forget, gain eye contact with your partner and simply retrieve the elements yourself. The walking Elder takes their seat with the congregation.
- The Clergy will say a brief meditation ending with “...let us pray.”
- The Elder on the Bread side reads the “Prayer of the People” and the Cup side Elder offers a communion prayer.
- As your turn comes, step up to the microphone and speak clearly and somewhat loudly. Your mouth should be about as close to the mike as this paper is *wide* (~9 inches). Should the microphone be turned to the side, step to that side to get to a “straight on” position. Speak loud enough that someone in the front pew could hear you even without amplification. Step back to your original position when you have finished speaking.
- Stand quietly in place as the Clergy says the first half of words of installation. The Clergy person will take the loaf but you retain the plate. The cup Elder will continue to hold the cup and the bread Elder will continue to hold the *plate* (only) as the Clergy distributes portions of the bread to each of the two bread plate plates on the table and the one you are still holding.
- Each praying Elder walks around their side of the table holding the element for which they have just offered a prayer and takes a position in the center of the aisle. As these Elders pass the (seated) walking Elders, the walking Elder rise and take a Chalice and a Bread plate from the table and move to the side where they will be met by a Clergy person. Hand the Chalice to the Clergy person and the Clergy/Elder pair takes a position to receive congregants coming up the center aisle. As the line forms the bread will be presented to a person first. The congregant will break off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup before partaking.

- As each person accepts a piece of the bread it is customary to offer a blessing such as “...the bread of life given for you” or “...the body of Christ broken for you.” Personalize the blessing with the congregant’s name if possible.
- When all congregants have been served, the Elder/Clergy pair on the pulpit side offers communion to the organist.
- When all have been served and while holding your bread, turn to your partner and offer them communion. Then take communion yourself. Note: neither of you will need to change elements but will continue to hold your respective elements.
- The praying Elder turns and returns their element to their original position and the walking Elders take the cup from the clergy and return both to their original places.
- All Elders turn and remain in front of the table for the “Hymn of Going Forth.” At the beginning of the second verse, the praying Elders move together up the center aisle and the walking Elders move to the side doors where you will greet and thank the congregants as they leave.
- As you serve in this way, you should be especially attentive to needs of the congregation. It is also a good idea to be ready to take notes if necessary for follow up actions or prayers. Also, keep an eye out for visitors. You may be a future new member’s first contact with the congregation and your greeting will be long remembered. Above all else, remember that you were called to “tend the flock” and this is perhaps your best opportunity to “touch” almost everyone who worshiped here that morning. And enjoy yourself – what you do is so very important and besides that, you really are good at it.

National City Christian Church Board of Elders

Elder Procedures for Services Using One Intinction Station

- At selected times, there is a need to serve Holy Communion from a single station using Intinction (Note: this service requires two Elders, one Clergy, one large Chalice and one bread plate). The following are the procedures for Elders at the Communion Table:
- Meet at fifteen minutes before the service for prayer with the other participants before the service starts.
- The praying Elders process normally if there is a processional. If *not*, then find a seat at the front pew and worship normally until the agreed to moment.
- At the time previously agreed to, the praying Elders join the Clergy person at the table and each individually picks up an element from the table and takes their position immediately behind the microphone on your side and about three feet back from it.
- The Clergy will say a brief meditation ending with "...let us pray." The two Elders give their prayer for the bread and then the cup while holding their individual elements.
- As your turn comes, step up to the microphone and speak clearly and somewhat loudly. Your mouth should be about as close to the mike as this paper is *wide* (~9 inches). Should the microphone be turned to the side, step to that side to get to a "straight on" position. Speak loud enough that someone in the front pew could hear you even without amplification. Step back to your original position when you have finished speaking.
- Stand quietly in place as the Clergy says the first half of words of installation. The Clergy person will take the loaf but you retain the plate. The cup Elder will continue to hold the cup as the Clergy places a portions of the broken bread on the plate the bread Elder is holding.
- Each praying Elder walks around their side of the table holding the element for which they have just offered a prayer and takes a position in the center of the aisle. As the line forms the bread will be presented to a person first. The congregant will break off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup before partaking.
- As each person accepts a piece of the bread it is customary to offer a blessing such as "...the bread of life given for you" or "...the body of Christ broken for you." Personalize the blessing with the congregant's name if possible.
- When all congregants have been served, the Elder pair offers communion to the organist.

- When all have been served and while holding your element, turn to your partner and offer them communion. Then take communion yourself. Note: neither of you will need to change elements but will continue to hold your respective elements. Return your element to their original place.
- You should resume worship as appropriate to the occasion. In some cases this will simply mean returning to your seat. In others, turn and remain in front of the table for the “Hymn of Going Forth.” At the beginning of the second verse, move together up the center aisle where you will greet and thank the congregants as they leave.
- As you serve in this way, you should be especially attentive to needs of the congregation. It is also a good idea to be ready to take notes if necessary for follow up actions or prayers. Also, keep an eye out for visitors. You may be a future new member’s first contact with the congregation and your greeting will be long remembered. Above all else, remember that you were called to “tend the flock” and this is perhaps your best opportunity to “touch” almost everyone who worshiped here that morning. And enjoy yourself – what you do is so very important and besides that, you really are good at it.

The Elder's Prayer

Prayer is central to everything an Elder does. This is perhaps even more so in those prayers given during the Communion service. This is a corporate prayer offered to God on behalf of all those gathered that day to worship. This is important. These are not personal prayers but are prayers given by one on behalf of all. These are also *not* homilies; all parts of the prayer should be directed *only* to God. Repeating or rephrasing the morning sermon or scripture may have a place outside the prayer, but in the prayer itself, talk to God.

The language of the prayer should be grounded in the common terms of those assembled. That is, it should be typical for a conversation you might have with anyone in the sanctuary that morning. It can be poetic or plain, exuberant or hushed but above all, it should be spoken so as to be easily understood by the congregation. Specifically, don't use a language only spoken in divinity schools or a language of yesteryear, -- in praying at the table, just be yourself and talk directly to God. One should also speak somewhat slowly and distinctly.

The prayer should be long enough to say what you want but not so long as to lose the attention of those in the congregation. Prayers of a minute or less are usually well crafted. This can be easily checked while rehearsing your prayer. Many things will vary from Elder to Elder, but the sincerity of your prayer will often hinge on the simplicity of your message.

There are several obvious parts to the prayer. First, address God from the start in a familiar but celebratory way. Often one gives an attribute of God that is important to the prayer. The prayer also ends on this familiar but celebratory note. One should mention the cup when praying for the cup and mention the bread when praying for the bread; mention both when offering a single prayer for the communion. You can also call on the Holy Spirit in your prayer and as this is a "Table of Remembrance" one should "remember" Jesus in your prayer.

An excellent discussion of the Communion Prayer is contained in the *Disciples Eldership, A Quest for Identity and Ministry* by Dr. Peter M. Morgan (© 2003 by Peter Morgan, Printed by the Christian Board of Publication, #93A2683) with excerpts reprinted here with permission. Item Forty-Two (beginning on page #73) is part of a larger discussion of Elders celebrating the Lord's Supper. The material below is not a verbatim reprint but is based on this text, handouts given at previous training sessions and by applying these concepts to Elder prayers previously given at NCCC. A second source is contained in *The Christian Elder: A Primer* by Dallas W. Hoadley (© 1995 by Dallas W. Hoadley).

Preparing Communion Prayers

The Elder preparing to pray at the table is to express the thanksgiving of the church for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The parts of the prayer are thanksgiving, remembrance, calling on the Holy Spirit, and the rededication of life.

Here is a typical Prayer Outline:

Address to God:	Our Heavenly Father,
An attribute of God:	You who has loved us with everlasting love,
Thanksgiving:	We thank you for making your love real to us by the life and death and resurrection of our Lord.
Remembrance:	As we remember this perfection in all ways of life,
Petition:	We are conscious of our imperfections, for which we ask your forgiveness,
Dedication:	So that in the eating of these simple elements we may be reminded of his love for us to be made strong live for him.
Conclusion:	In His name, even the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

Notice how each of these themes is present in the following prayer:

	Creator of all that is, we praise you: For your own self, beautiful and filled with light; For your works, incredibly varied and fruitful; For life itself and consciousness with which to enjoy it;
Thanksgiving	Redeemer of all creation groaning in travail, we praise you; For the justice that holds us to the standard that all things created are good;
Remembrance	For your mercy that forgives and renews us when we fall short; For your promise that all things will be made new. Most of all we praise you for Jesus Christ; Through him you created the world; By his life and ministry you showed us your nature; Because of his suffering and death you saved us; By his resurrection you gave us the power to live.
Calling on the Holy Spirit	We bring you these gifts of bread and wine to be a sign of our gratitude. Oh God, for all that you are and have done for us in Jesus Christ. As we eat the bread and drink from the cup of salvation, renew in us the presence of the Holy Spirit. Cleanse us from all sin. Restore us to new life.
Rededication	And then send us into the world as signs of your creativity and agents of the redemption that you are bringing. Through Christ we pray. Amen.




Some Examples

Address to God:	Our most gracious heavenly father we love you, and continue this prayer to give praise to your holy name.
An attribute of God:	Lord, this new covenant in your blood that we remember here with this cup helps us know just how much you love us.
Thanksgiving:	We see your love at every turn ...in the beauty of this place, in the compassion of people we meet, in the open innocence of children, ...in all these things about us, your love is supreme.
Petition:	Lord forgive us for all those things that we do that separate us from you. Help us to live this day as you have taught us by your love to do, ...kindled a love in us that truly shows that we know how very much you love us.
Remembrance:	And as we drink deeply of this cup Lord, we remember your precious life given for our sins, expressed in that most complete act of love -- the sacrifice that <i>he</i> made for us.
Dedication:	Father we love you, and we raise this prayer as one in remembrance of your son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Conclusion:	..in whose holy name we pray, amen.
Address to God:	Our Father and our Lord – We come together as your family in this place.
Thanksgiving:	We come with individual needs and hopes... some of us celebrating, some of us worried, some of us deeply hurt, but all of us, we pray, secure in the faith symbolized at this table.
Dedication:	In the body and blood of our Savior's giving for us all... in the bread and wine of this meal... we pray that this family finds a real bond and knows itself part of a great whole.
Petition:	Help us discover in the gathering here, O Lord, the joy of sharing in others' celebration, the compassion to help others in their sorrow, the determination to work at problems other than our own...
Remembrance:	It is in remembrance of him we pray... Amen
Conclusion:	





















Elder's Communion Service Guide for the Sick and Shut-In

Your Ministry as an Elder You as an elder in the tradition of the Disciples of Christ are honored to represent a full expression of the priesthood of all believers. Yours is a pastoral ministry. You are a shepherd who embodies the compassion of Christ. Yours is a priestly ministry. You are a host for Christ who invites all to His table.

Getting Ready

-  Prepare your own heart through prayer.
-  Call ahead. Many shut-ins will enjoy the anticipation of your visit.
-  See that you have everything you need.
 - A communion set. Check to see that it has communion wine and bread. (The sets are kept in the communion room across from the baptistery.)
 - The name, address and phone number of the person you will serve.
 - Your Bible.
 - This guide for the service (attached).

Tips for Your Visit

-  Listening is more important than speaking.
-  Remember it's not about you, but about the person you are visiting.
-  Ask, "How are you feeling today?" "How is the family doing?"
-  Remember you represent God and the church of God to that individual. Let that guide what you say.
-  Talk loud enough for the individual to hear.
-  Ask, "What is it you need?"
-  Watch as well as listen: body language and tone of voice.
-  Welcome the silences.
-  Ask, "Is there something you specifically want me to pray for?"
-  Let your prayer be spontaneous and reflect Christ's care for the one you are visiting.
-  After prayer, allow for a period of reflection.
-  Do not correct a dementia patient. Try to "live within his/her world" for the moment.
-  Do not stay too long.
-  During the visit make a connection with their friends at church. Make sure they are receiving church publications.
-  If there is a complaint about the church, do not argue or explain. Simply paraphrase what you have heard so that the shut-in knows they have been heard.
-  Encourage their prayers for the church.
-  Never sit on the bed of the patient.
-  Sometimes a gentle human touch is appropriate.
-  Include others in the room in your conversation
-  Invite others to share the Lord's Supper

Continuing Your Ministry Soon after you leave, write yourself a note regarding follow-up procedures, such as: 1) information to be shared with the pastoral staff and 2) notes you may wish to send those you visited.

Your pastoral/priestly ministry is to continue by praying for the person you visited by name each day for the next week.

An Elder's Reflection on the Lord's Supper

Christians generally agree that participation in the Lord's Supper is an important element in the Christian faith. We understand this strengthens us spiritually.

In the old covenant, people could approach God only through the priest and sacrificial offerings. Jesus' death on the cross allowed the entrance of the new covenant or agreement between God and His sheep (us). Now all people can personally approach God and communicate with Him. As we eat the bread and drink the cup, Christ is present with us. As we remember Christ's death for us, we renew our commitment to serve Him. —Warren Brooks



The Lord's Supper

An Invitation In your own words offer Christ's invitation to the table. You may say, *Jesus promised, "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them." We are gathered in His name to commune with our Lord.*

Reverently Set the Table This is not busy work to simply get done. Your actions create visual interest and build anticipation for receiving the bread and wine.

A Scripture Reading You may read a favorite passage of the person you are visiting. If none is suggested, read a text you have in mind. [Scriptures that work well are: Luke 24:28-32 or John 15:1-5.]

Great Thanksgiving Prayer Offer a brief prayer of thanksgiving which remembers Jesus' Life and ministry and calls upon God's spirit to transform our lives.

Words of Institution *The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, he took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me. "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

Sharing of Bread and Wine

Closing Prayer *Grace and Peace to you from God who is, and who was, and who is to come. Unite us in faith and hope through the Holy Spirit, so that we may continue to be guided by your word and will, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, now and forever more. Amen*

The Elder Service at Thomas House

Background: For many years, the Elders of National City have ministered to the residents of Thomas House. This ministry has taken on numerous roles but recently has settled into conducting a brief worship service at 2:00p.m. on the fourth Sunday of each month. This service contains the elements of any worship services: liturgy, scripture, prayer, message, communion and benediction. A typical order of worship is shown at the end. Other area protestant churches hold services at Thomas House the other Sundays and a Catholic service is held at 1:00p.m.



Location: Thomas House is a retirement and nursing home located just across Thomas Circle at 1330 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. The phone number is (202) 628-2091. Although most people usually walk to Thomas House, there is visitor parking in the basement garage. The garage entrance is immediately to the right of the main entrance and is accessed by identifying yourself to the visitor desk over the intercom. Park as directed by the guard and go through the lower lobby to the elevator and then to the main lobby where you will find the reception desk.



Facilities: There is a reception/security area immediately on entering Thomas House. Each participant should sign the guest book and coordinate your visit with the desk staff. The key for the organ is also kept at this desk.

The Chapel is to the right (west) of the reception desk. There are a couple dozen chairs and ample room for wheel chairs. The chapel has an organ and an electronic amplifying system; these are important since most of the residents are hearing impaired. There are also appropriate accessories located in storage bins under the bench at the rear of the chapel. Remember that traditionally when the cross is used at the table it is displayed as an “empty cross” to celebrate the risen Lord (Note: Catholic tradition displays the crucified Christ.). These traditions can be readily accommodated by simply turning the desired side toward the front.

Participation: Two Elders are assigned to Thomas House each month. If neither is able to play the organ (and/or such instruments as a guitar) then a third person must be recruited to help with the music. At Thomas House singing is somewhat challenging so this is an important aspect. Encourage anyone from NCCC who will to accompany the group (spouses, etc.).

Preparation for Worship: Well in advance of the designated Sunday the two Elders should coordinate to insure that the service will flow smoothly. There should be a simple division of labor. Normally, deciding who will give the meditation sets the tone for the other elements of the service. This Elder picks (and often reads) the scripture lesson. The other Elder (i.e., Elder#2) normally would do the meditation for communion and the words of institution; Elder#1 would pray for communion. The third main part of the service is the pastoral prayer. Balancing these elements with the call to worship, leading the singing and saying the benediction is then distributed between you. Selecting the hymns should be coordinated with the musical volunteer.

. The Chalice Hymnal (Chalice Press, St. Louis, MO, ©1995) is an excellent resource in preparing a worship service. This is the hymnal in the pews at NCCC. Pages 769 to 776 are rich with suggested wording for the various elements of the service; numerous special prayers are also scattered throughout. Similarly, meditation themes can be taken by paraphrasing the mornings' sermon (harder and perhaps not always appropriate for Thomas House) or from your favorite daily devotional (usually easier). In season the NCCC Lenten devotional series are a good source for ideas. Remember that if you simply read someone else's words you should give them credit. Conversely, if you use your own words to express an idea that is combined/condensed from various sources then you need not get too technical in its presentation. The residents of Thomas House don't appear to get too much from a perfectly footnoted meditation; they just want the familiar atmosphere of worship with a short message about God.

One of you prints about a dozen programs once you have agreed on what you will be doing. On the date, the deaconesses will prepare communion and leave the elements at the NCCC reception desk in the atrium. If flowers are available they too will be with the communion elements.

Important! *Realize that you return to National City at around 3:00p.m. Unless you have made some arrangements to reenter the building then the Church may be locked; this is particularly important if you left your car in the NCCC parking garage. Many people stay that late and more have keys but you will need to arrange something specific for your Sunday.*

Turn the amplifier and organ on immediately upon arrival at Thomas House. Test both to assure yourself that they are working properly. Remember, nobody ever spoke too loud at Thomas House.

Please rehearse your part of the service and use/carry good notes. Irrespective of how often you have spoken in public or how few people are there, we owe it to them (and to God) to extend God's grace through worship in this place and at this time. A well known public speaker once confessed that he carried a printed copy of the Lord's Prayer into the pulpit just in case he should "freeze up" at the wrong moment. This is a small, friendly group at Thomas House so prepare, then relax and enjoy the experience.

Arrive early but be patient. Most residents gave up "hurrying" some time ago.

Conduct the Worship Service: Begin by introducing yourselves and bring them welcome from the congregation of National City Christian Church. Mention something about that morning's worship service and the senior minister by name. Tell them of any important events in the Church's life. Make them know how happy you are to be able to join them this afternoon. An older, traditional upbeat hymn often sets an excellent note at this starting point in the service.

Proceed through the order of worship service in a somewhat slower but deliberate pace. Maintain sensitivity to such matters as participants finding a hymn or someone arriving late. Speak directly into the microphone when giving the meditation or praying.



Communion Service: The communion service is among the most meaningful acts we do as Christians. However, there is no set procedure that is universally followed. Your role here is to create an atmosphere that appeals to you as the maximum in spiritual enrichment of the worship experience. The participants at Thomas House will find almost anything one does as acceptable and will be grateful for your ministry. Each of the participants grew up in a tradition different in some way from the ones we do at National City or the one you will be doing today. Indeed, in the three worship services we hold at NCCC each

Sunday, no two of the communion services are the same.

Traditionally there are four main elements to communion: the invitation, prayer, words of institution and sharing of the elements.

(1) *A meditation incorporating an invitation to the table* is often related to the theme of the sermon or to the season of the year. In our tradition, the invitation invariably is extended, at Christ's behest, to all Christians who are worshipping with you at the moment. Also, simple instructions given at this time help the congregant know what you will be doing at this service; this is usually a good idea at Thomas House given the number of churches providing worship.

(2) *The prayer or prayers of thanks for the bread and wine* may be a single prayer, by one elder, following the invitation to the table; or each elder may offer a prayer, one for the bread, the other for the wine.

(3) *The words of institution or the literal act by which the service of remembrance was and is instituted* are given before the elements are distributed. Words akin to Paul's explanation and instructions to the Corinthians or Luke's account of Jesus' last supper are used for this purpose. In Scripture there are five passages that can be used to establish the communion (see insert).

(4) *Distributing the elements to the congregants* is usually less formal at Thomas House. This is made more so by the lack of mobility/difficulty of movement of the congregants. One method found useful is for the Elder saying the words of institution to pick up the bread as the passage is spoken. As it is finished, the bread plate is passed to the second Elder who then offers a prayer. When the prayer is finished, the plate with the cups is also handed to the second (praying) Elder. This Elder then takes both plates to each participant with the first elder assisting as needed. Occasionally, someone will not be able to grasp the element or manipulate the cup. This can be easily accommodated by dipping a piece of bread into the cup and placing it on the participant's lips. However, physically and sequentially, there will surely be as many ways to structure a worship service and the Lord's Supper as there are Elders to perform it; that's fine. Just take it slow and keep it as meaningful as you can for each person.

Fellowship Period: At the conclusion of the Sunday Worship Service, the residents – some of whom are members of NCCC – will usually want to greet you. You will find it best to move to the Chapel door to accommodate them. Inquire if there are any unmet needs of the residents for which NCCC can offer assistance; if so, take note of them and relay them to the appropriate ministers or staff. It would be appropriate to make a count of those present and report that count at the next Elder's meeting.

Departure: After the resident's have all left the Chapel, clean up and return the Chapel to its original condition. Turn off the amplifier and secure and relock the organ. Gather and remove any materials or stray communion cups. Return the lighting to its original position. Return the organ key to the receptionist/guard, sign out the Visitor's Register, and return the communion trays to the NCCC reception desk.

1 Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ^[24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ^[25] In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ^[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Matthew 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ^[27] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; ^[28] for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ^[29] I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Mark 14:22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ^[23] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ^[24] And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ^[25] Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22: 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; ^[18] for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ^[19] And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ^[20] And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ^[17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread

Sample with typical text in *Blue*

Order of Worship for Thomas House

Sunday: Month, Day, Year
Elder#1, Elder#2, Volunteer#3

[Elder #1] MOMENT OF FRIENDSHIP AND WELCOME

Good afternoon and welcome to this time of worship! My name is _____ and assisting me this afternoon is _____. We are Elders from National City Christian Church directly across Thomas Circle and bring you greetings from our congregation and senior minister, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle. Our church has had a long affiliation with the Thomas House community and we are honored to share God's word and the sacrament of Holy Communion with you. Also with us this afternoon is _____ who will lead us at the organ in our hymn singing. We hope you all received a hymnal when you came in the door. Let us now prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

[Elder #2] CALL TO WORSHIP

Good afternoon. Would you please pray with me: God of grace and God of goodness: come be with us here in this place. You have promised that grace and peace will be ours in abundance through the knowledge of your love and of your Son, Jesus our Lord. We know that your divine power has given us everything we need for life through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through God's grace and peace we have been given a great and precious promise and an invitation to be one with him. Through God's love may we make every effort to add to our faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, kindness; and to kindness, love. Help us to possess these qualities in increasing measure, so that they will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and in our daily living. We fervently pray that we increase in our imitation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and show forth the example of his love in all that we say and all that we do. To God be all glory and honor, now and forever! Amen.

[OR SUBSTITUTE ANOTHER OPENING PRAYER OF YOUR CHOICE OR CREATION.]

Please turn to your hymnals and let's begin our worship with the raising of our voices in praise of God through the gift of song. We will sing three hymns today. Please find:

[Hymn #1] Title: _____ on page _____. We'll sing all verses [or] verses __ & ____.

Our next hymn is:

[Hymn #2] Title: _____ on page _____. We'll sing all verses [or] verses __ & ____.

And our final opening hymn is:

[Hymn #3] Title: _____ on page _____. We'll sing all verses [or] verses __ & ____.

[Elder #1] Scripture Readings (Either both readings can be used, or only the Gospel of the Day.)

Our first Scripture reading for today is from the book of Psalms, which is the very first song book of the Christian Church. I will be reading Psalm _____.

[A SHORT, FAMILIAR PSALM IS SUGGESTED, SUCH AS 1, 8, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 42, 45, 46, 96, 100, 103, 121, 148, 149, or 150, OR WHICHEVER PSALM IS USED AT N.C.C.C. THAT MORNING.]

Our second reading is from the Gospel of _____, chapter _____, verses _____ through _____.

[Elder#2] INVITATION TO PRAYER (concluding with the Lord's Prayer)

Eternal God, Lord of our lives: We come to you today in praise and in gratitude. We come to praise you for the love and faithfulness you show your people. You are a certain refuge in our daily struggles and meanderings. We come in praise for the compassion exercised on lives all around us, and for the grace extended to the least of us. May our wonder at your mercy rekindle our faith and turn that faith to effort that your name might be glorified and your light seen to shine through us.

We come thankful, heavenly God, for the love of our families and the affection of our friends, this safe community in which we live, for our health and opportunities to serve others in whatever way we can, and for the opportunities to give just as we have received. For those times each day when we can show forth Christ in our lives, we are especially grateful.

God of grace, we offer our prayers for the needs of others and commit ourselves to serve them even as we have been served in Jesus Christ. We especially pray for those closest to us, the many people of Thomas House who care for us each and every day, for our nation and the countries throughout the world that all may know peace and prosperity, for those who are homeless and poor and hungry, for those from whom we may be estranged, and for those of our family and friends who have departed this earth before us and that have entered your heavenly kingdom.

And lend us your strengthening hand, today, O Lord. Strengthen and comfort those who cannot be part of the gathering today; and hold in your arms those hurting folks for whom we have individually prayed. Hear us now as we pray in the words our Savior has taught us saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

[Hymn #4] *Let's turn again to our hymnals and sing hymn number _____, verses _____ and _____.*

[Elder #1 or Elder #2] SERMON / DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

(This can be a short, concise summation of the NCCC sermon, or a devotional taken from another source, or an inspired message created by you based on scripture.)

COMMUNION

[Elder #1] INVITATION TO COMMUNION

As we prepare for Communion, please turn in your hymnals to page _____ and let us sing verse(s) _____.

We now have come to the time to celebrate the life and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ through the sacrament of Holy Communion. This invitation to communion is extended upon Christ's behalf for all believers to partake and all are welcomed to share. The bread and grape juice serve as symbols of the body and blood of Jesus, the one who sacrificed his life that we may have eternal life through him.

Let us now pray: Almighty and loving God, you have created us and redeemed us, and through the presence of your Holy Spirit sustain us in this daily life. Let this same Spirit descend upon us that in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of this cup we may know the living presence of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words of Institution

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took a loaf of bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and blessed it, gave it to his disciples and said: "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

After supper, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said: "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, a symbol of the new covenant, which was shed for you for the remission of your sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

[Elder #2] Prayer after Communion

Let us now pray: Bountiful God, we give thank that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and with your peace always with us. In your most holy name, we pray. Amen.

[Hymn: #5] *As we close our service, let us raise our voices once again in song by singing hymn number _____, verses _____ and _____.*

[Elder #1] Benediction

We thank you all once again for being with us in the service of worship. It is our pleasure to be with you and we hope that you will return to be with us next month. Receive now this blessing:

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with kindness and give you peace. Amen.

[OR]

And now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and remain with you this day and forever more. Amen.