

Charge to the Elders

After much prayer for discernment and the Holy Spirit's leading, the Spirit has set you apart for the work of Shepherding in this church. We've talked a lot about shepherding over the last couple of months; how it's more of a function than a title. So with those functions in mind, I ask you to respond to these questions in front of the congregation you've been called to lead and serve. At the end of all of the questions, if you affirm that you will do everything in your power to carry out these duties faithfully, please respond by saying, "We will."

Will you commit to following the Good Shepherd, to listening to his voice and imitating his example?

Will you commit to praying over the members of this church on a regular basis, bringing them before the Father and interceding on their behalf?

Will you do your best to live lives above reproach, so as to maintain credibility within the church and win the respect of those in the outside community?

Will you, as Shepherds, protect this flock from harmful teachings and division, laying down your life for the well-being of the church?

Will you, as Shepherds, provide for this flock by teaching them to feast on the Word of God through your words and actions?

Will you, as Shepherds, bind up the injured of this flock by responding in times of crisis, visiting the sick, and bringing back the lost?

And will you, as Shepherds, commit to forming genuine relationships with the members of this flock, so that – like Jesus – you can say, "I know my sheep and my sheep know me"? [WE WILL]

Charge to the Congregation

We too, Church, have some responsibilities to the men up here and to their families. Just as they have publicly affirmed their commitment to this congregation, so must we profess our commitment to them. I'm going to ask you a few questions and – at the end of all of the questions – if you affirm that you will do everything in your power to carry out these responsibilities faithfully, please respond by saying, "We will."

Will you, Church, commit to praying over these men and their families on a regular basis, lifting them up before the Father and interceding on their behalf?

Will you commit to speaking words of encouragement and support when speaking about our Elders?

Will you – as Paul and Peter encourage us to do so – honor them, hold them in the highest regard, and make their jobs a joy and not a burden?

Will you submit to their leading and follow these men as they follow Christ?

And will you, Church, commit to forming genuine relationships with these men and their families so that just as Jesus – the Good Shepherd – can say of his relationship with his flock, "I know my sheep and my sheep know"? [WE WILL]