

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S): WOMEN AS ELDERS

MEMBERSHIP VOTE WILL OCCUR AT THE
SEMI ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY JANUARY 30/22

The Women in Leadership Planning Team has noticed a number of common questions being asked by a number of people. The document is to recognize some of those questions and to provide answers in order to provide clarity to the process and potential resolutions.

Q: What is the motion that we will be voting on?

A: The currently planned motion is "That both biblical qualified women and men may be elected to the Board of Elders."

Q. Who Are the Elders?

A: Local Church Constitution of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Canada states:
8.1. Composition and Responsibilities The highest functioning authority of the local church shall be the Board of Elders which may be called by another name and is herein referred to as the "Board". Board members shall be elected, and along with the senior pastor, will provide oversight of the ministry and operation of the local church. Criteria for membership on the Board are the biblical qualifications of elders.

Q: If this motion is passed, will then half the board need to be women going forward?

A: No, the Board of Elders is not about representation of the congregation. There are no requirements for representation of age groups, race, or any other distinguishing factors. The selection for the Board of Elders has always been, and will continue to be, the Biblically qualified people that the Lord is leading us to. This motion simply expands our understanding of Biblically qualified to both women and men.

Q: If this motion is passed, will we then have some men resign from the board to make room for women?

A: No, none are required to resign.

Q: If this motion is passed, will the nominating committee then have a requirement to nominate a certain number of women for the board?

A: No, as stated above, the requirements for Elders are not about representation and the nomination committee is not given any direction regarding representation.

Each spring the nominating committee meets with selected Elders to pray over possible candidates to fill open positions. These positions are voted on by the members at the fall AGM in September of each year.

Q: If this motion is passed, does this allow for women to serve, not just as Elders, but in other roles as well, such as lead pastor?

A: Yes. While the purpose of this vote is to expand the eligibility for women as Elders, this also has an impact on the eligibility of women for lead pastor and ordination. Since, according to the Alliance governance model, the lead pastor is automatically a member of the Board of Elders, the church must allow for women to be Elders in order to hire a woman as lead pastor. Also, an ordination candidate must be recommended by their church to be ordained. It is difficult for a church to recommend a woman for ordination unless they allow for women to be elders.

Q: If this motion is defeated, does anything change at Spruce Grove Alliance?

A: No, the position of Elder would continue to only be open to male candidates. All staffing and policies would be expected to remain the same. We will continue to seek and strive for unity after the outcome of the vote.

Q: If this motion is defeated, can this motion be brought up and voted on again?

A: Yes, this motion can be raised again at subsequent congregational meetings. However, we would not want this to be an ongoing conversation and detract from the mission of our church. As such, we would encourage the congregation to use this vote to settle this issue for some significant period of time.

Q: Would the requirements for selecting Elders stay the same with the only change being gender as stated in the motion?

A: Yes. The only wording change to the policy would be “That both biblical qualified women and men may be elected to the Board of Elders.”

Q: Is it possible that the board could be all women if it can currently be all men on the board?

A: Yes, if this motion is passed this could be possible if all the continuing Elders are women and for the upcoming elder positions, all the nominees are women.

Q: Can a husband and a wife both serve on the board at the same time? Could spouses serve in succession?

A: This would be possible. It will need to be evaluated if we want to establish a by-law around this.

Q: What are the criteria that SGAC follows for Eldership?

A: SGAC follows the local district C&MA guidelines for Eldership and Board governance. Article 8.1 of the local Church constitution states that “The highest functioning authority of the local church shall be the Board of Elders...Board members shall be elected, and along with the senior pastor, will provide oversight of the ministry and operation of the local Church. Criteria for membership on the Board are the Biblical qualifications of elders (as set out in 1 Timothy 3).”

Currently, only Biblically qualified men are elected to the Board of Elders, but according to the C&MA constitution, “The Church may, by a two-thirds majority of the members present at a duly called meeting of the membership, choose to have women serve on the Board.”

Q: If this motion is passed, when would we have women serving on the Board of Elders?

A: If the motion is passed in the New Year, this will allow the nominating committee to nominate candidates, which may include one or more women. These nominees will then need to be voted in during the fall Annual General Meeting to fill any vacancies that may exist on the current board of elders.

NOTE: These questions and their answers are largely administrative and organizational in nature. For more information about the issue at hand and the cases for each position, please refer to the Women in Leadership resources in the [Downloads](#) section of the SGAC.net website.