



2023 - 2024

Elder Candidates

Our members will vote to affirm Kevin Fitzsimmons, Jim Kennedy and Clay Norman at the June 11 Annual Meeting. They will join the existing Elder Board of 12 members.

**IGNITING A PASSION FOR JESUS IN CONNECTICUT,
NEW ENGLAND AND AROUND THE WORLD.**





Kevin and Giesele Fitzsimmons

Kevin and Giesele Fitzsimmons From Southbury

Kevin was raised in a religious home, but he didn't have a relationship with the Lord until his father passed away in 2010. At that time, he did a lot of soul searching and realized he was going nowhere and achieving nothing. "After dropping to my knees and crying out to the Lord, I began to develop a relationship with Him," said Kevin. "I now feel I have a purpose, a direction and an accountability to be the true person God created me to be."

Kevin, who was born and raised in Liverpool, England, started coming to Walnut Hill in 2011. He and Giesele reside in Southbury with their two children. Kevin holds a bachelor's degree in sports science/coaching science and is the business owner of Soccer Edge LLC. He is also the Assistant Women's Soccer Coach at the University of New Haven and the Boys Head Soccer Coach for Weston High School.



Jim and Laura Kennedy

At Walnut Hill, Kevin and Giesele serve in the DivorceCare ministry. Kevin is also a part of United Soccer Coaches Faith-Based Coaches Community and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. While on the Elder Board, Kevin looks forward to "playing a bigger role in the great work Walnut Hill is doing and contributing to the future direction of the church."

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his family, helping to raise his two children, watching and playing football (soccer), traveling, exploring new countries and cities, hiking, skiing, playing tennis, taking road trips, and having date nights with Giesele.

Jim and Laura Kennedy From Danbury

Although Jim accepted Christ at age 12, it wasn't until his early 20s that he fully surrendered his life to Him. "God blesses me with peace and growth when I do things His way, as opposed to experiencing anxiety and broken relationships when I do things my way," said Jim. "I can't

imagine going through life without the deep, transformative knowledge that God forgives my sins, loves me and has a purpose for my life.”

Jim, who is returning to the Elder Board, looks forward to participating in the prayer ministry of the Elders, teaching, and using his leadership gifts to build up God’s church in New England. A graduate of Amherst College, Jim was the founder and CEO of The Network Support Company. He is now the founder and CEO of Frictionless IT. In addition, he is the founder of the Western CT Prayer Breakfast and the Founding Chairman of The Samaritan Health Center. Jim has been chairman of the board of directors of Danbury and New Milford Hospitals and serves on the boards of Newtown Savings Bank and Ability Beyond.

Jim and Laura reside in Danbury and have four adult children. They started attending Walnut Hill in 2005 and serve as Community Group leaders. Laura is a volunteer receptionist at Walnut Hill, teaches women and children, leads a weekly Bible study at a retirement community, and serves at Walnut Hill’s food pantry. When Jim has a free moment, he enjoys playing golf, strumming the guitar and watching crime shows with Laura.

Clay and Joy Norman From Cheshire

Clay and Joy Norman have been faithfully serving the Lord at Walnut Hill since 1985. Many have been blessed by Clay’s helpful hand and servant’s heart. He volunteers on staff as our chaplain and has been an Elder and our property management director. He has also been a part of Men’s Ministry and Church in Action. Joy volunteers in the Children’s Ministry.

Born and raised in Woodstock, CT, Clay grew up in a home where Jesus was honored, and he

surrendered his life to Jesus at age 7. At 14, he dedicated his life to full-time Christian service and trained for and spent 10 years on the mission field. Throughout Clay’s life, he’s found that Jesus needs to be central in all he does.

As an airline pilot for 21 years, Clay traveled all over the world. Israel holds a special place in his heart, and he and Joy have gone there often to lead trips, hike the land and find spiritual refreshment. Clay is a board member and volunteer with Mission Safety International, and he is on the board of SOAR International Ministries. In his free time, he enjoys reading, woodworking, traveling and gardening.

According to Clay, “Having watched Walnut Hill grow, I look forward to serving beside the Elders as we continue to proclaim Jesus in an area that desperately needs a Savior. It is a privilege to help shape the direction of Walnut Hill and share the goodness that Jesus brings to our lives.”



Clay and Joy Norman

Elders are elected by the congregation and given authority to:

Oversee
the church

Provide spiritual
leadership and
oversight

Scripturally
shepherd the
care of the church

Oversee the
teaching of the
Word of God

Guard the purity
of the doctrine
and the life of
the church

Discipline
church members
in accordance with
the Word of God

Counsel
those in need

Comfort the sick

Pray

In all congregational matters, the congregation is to be accountable to the care and leadership of the Board of Elders as the Elders themselves are accountable to Christ.

