

Biographies of Nominees for Church Officers

Elders, Deacons,
Congregational Nominating Committee
and Pastor Nominating Committee



Congregational Meeting
October 3, 2021
11:15 a.m. in Sanctuary and by Zoom

2050 Oak Street, Sarasota, Florida 34237
(941) 955-8119
www.firstpressarasota.org



October 3, 2021



Dear Members,

Your Congregational Nominating Committee is pleased to present to you the following slate of five elders in the class of 2024; four deacons in the class of 2024; and nine congregational nominating at-large members for 2022. This election will also include one elder moving from the class of 2022 to fill an unexpired term in the class of 2023, and one elder filling the vacant position in the class of 2022.

Additionally, we are excited to present the slate for the Pastor Nominating Committee who will choose our next Pastor / Head of Staff. We are confident that these individuals will help to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of our congregation and move us forward in our vital ministry in the Sarasota community and beyond.

We are thankful for each of these people and are grateful that they have responded to the call to serve God and our church in this manner. We ask that you keep them in your prayers as they embark on this stage of their faith journeys and in the leadership of our church.

Blessings,

The Congregational Nominating Committee

Lisa Saba, elder, co-moderator

Dick Clapp, elder, co-moderator

Patti Wrobel, deacon representative

Elaine Barnett

Clare Carter

Kay Dunn

Jean Fulton

Scott McLeod

Carolyn Simmons

Marcia Schaper

Sandi Soper

ABBY CLISSOLD

Youth Elder, Class of 2022

Abigail “Abby” Clissold has been a Sarasota resident since birth. Her parents were FPC members when she was born, and she was baptized here in 2004. She lives with her parents, Ed and Rebecca, and her siblings, Daniel and Caroline.

Abby has been a liturgist at FPC, Sarasota, for several years and has participated in various activities and service projects through First Presbyterian and the youth group. She became a member in 2019 and was confirmed in 2020.

Abby enjoys reading and arts and crafts. She has a second degree black belt in Taekwondo. Thanks to the encouragement of members of this church, she is considering attending seminary sometime after college.

DENISE LANDERS

Elder, moving from the Class of 2022 to fill an unexpired term in the Class of 2023

Denise became a member of First United Presbyterian Church in her hometown of Steubenville, OH and joined the choir at age twelve. Over the years, she participated in civic choral groups in Ohio, Texas, Florida and Germany. She moved to Florida in 1998. She and her husband, David were married at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church in Tampa in 1999. They have two children, Connor, who is a senior at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, and Andrew, a senior at Braden River High School in Bradenton.

While members at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Bradenton, Denise served as Director/Co-Director of Vacation Bible School for seven years, helped coordinate Advent services and served as Secretary of Presbyterian Women. She also worked as Children's Ministry Director for Hope Seeds, a non-profit mission organization in Bradenton.

Denise currently serves as Co-moderator of the Worship and Music Committee and works at Edward Jones Investments as a Senior Branch Office Administrator.

JOANNE SIMONS

Elder, filling an unexpired term in the Class of 2022

Joanne was born and raised in the Boston area. She is a graduate of Drew University, Madison, NJ, with a degree in political science. She and Kent have been married for 23 years. They have one daughter, two sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren.

Joanne has been coming to Sarasota for more than 30 years for visits with family. She and Kent moved here from Arlington, VA, in 2013. Joanne is retired from Northrop Grumman Corp. where she was the business operations manager for a group of unruly engineers.

Joanne was an elder at Christ Presbyterian Church, Fairfax, VA. She served on the Mission Ministry team and later led the Worship and Music Ministry team. At First Presbyterian, Joanne was an elder, class of 2019, and co-chaired the nominating committee. She served on the Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee and on the Mission Study Team and coordinates our church's Family Promise ministry. In non-COVID times she volunteers in the library at Gocio Elementary School. She enjoys reading, baking, and spending time with family and friends.

JEFF BARTELL

Elder, Class of 2024

Jeff, born and raised in Newark and Irvington, NJ, grew up in Sanford Heights United Presbyterian Church. He sang his first solo at the age of three and continued singing as part of the children's choir. As a teen, he sang in the adult choir. Jeff graduated from Irvington High School in 1965, attended Montclair State College majoring in Speech Arts and Sciences, and attended New York School of the Bible earning an Associates Degree in Biblical Studies. Jeff and his wife, Sue, were married in 1973. They adopted two special needs children: Ronald and Melissa. The marriage ended in 2006.

Jeff served as an elder four times at Sanford Heights, was a delegate to presbytery and sat on two pastor nominating committees. Several years later, Jeff became part of a small non-denominational church, The Living Church, where he served on the church's steering committee, assisting in the oversight of the church's financial budgets and preschool ministry. He also served as a substitute preacher and soloist. A number of years later, Jeff joined Covenant Presbyterian Church where he served as worship leader and music minister.

In 1976, Jeff started his own graphic design/typography business, Genesis Graphics. Thirteen years later, following recovery from a major heart attack, he worked for Verizon designing Yellow Page ads. He retired in 2007 and moved to Sarasota where he continues his hobbies of reading and singing. He joined the Church of the Palms, singing in the choir and two smaller groups and Sarasota Choral Society's annual productions of *The Messiah*. In 2018 he transferred his membership to First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, where he actively sings in the Chancel Choir and occasionally serves as worship liturgist and soloist.

Jeff maintains his strong faith and belief that God is, and always has been, working in and through his life.

FRANK FREY

Elder, Class of 2024

Frank retired from the Greater Valley YMCA in May of 2016, after a 47-year career with the YMCA. Since his retirement, Frank has helped YMCAs and communities serving as a Y-USA CEO Coach, Interim CEO and Consultant. During the last five years, Frank has served YMCAs in Lake Wales, FL; Naples, FL; Hartsville, SC; Bradenton, FL; and the YMCA of Southwest Florida in Venice, FL.

Prior to retirement, Frank served as the CEO with the YMCA of Nazareth, PA from 1990 to 2010. While in that position, he merged five area YMCAs, and built the Slate Belt YMCA, to form the Greater Valley YMCA. Prior to coming to Nazareth, Frank served as the CEO of the YMCA in Carlisle, PA from 1982 to 1990. He started his YMCA career in 1967 as the Aquatic Director of the YMCA in Hackensack, NJ. Then, in 1969, he assumed the position of Physical Director until 1979 when he became the CEO of the YMCA in Lock Haven, PA. Frank is also a founding member of the Pennsylvania State Alliance of YMCAs and served as Chair of the Alliance from 2008-2016.

Frank and his family were members of the College Hill Presbyterian Church in Easton, PA for over 20 years. Frank is an ordained elder. He served on the Finance Committee as chairperson of the Stewardship Committee. He has served on the Worship and Music Committee at FPC Sarasota.

Frank and his wife, Annette Landes, moved to Sarasota in July of 2016, from Nazareth, PA. Together, they have three children: son, Frank, who lives in Hamilton, NY and is a tenured professor at Colgate University; son, Kris, who lives in St. Louis, MO and is a systems engineer for Equifax; and daughter, Kate, who lives in Zorneding, Germany, just outside of Munich and is a marketing specialist for Sourceability, a US-based company. Frank and Annette have two granddaughters, 14-year-old Cora and 12-year-old Lily, both of whom live in St. Louis; and a grandson, 10-year-old Lucas, who lives in Oneida, NY.

KAREN OLSON

Elder, Class of 2024

Karen grew up in West Orange, NJ. She has a brother living near Los Angeles, CA, and a sister living in Lancaster, PA, plus five nephews, one niece, four great-nieces and one great-nephew. Karen was a voice major and piano minor graduating from Susquehanna University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education.

She began teaching elementary music in Maryland and also participated in non-professional musical theater at the Army Post nearby. After two years, she auditioned and was accepted into the 724th Air Force Band. While there, she completed a Master's Degree in Human Behavior through Pacific Lutheran University. She sang with the band for one-and-a-half years before becoming an Air Force officer. She started her career as an Air Craft Maintenance Officer in 1975. Assignments took her to numerous bases in the US and overseas.

Karen retired from the Air Force in 1993. She then became a Church Business Administrator for her former church, Westminster Presbyterian, Alexandria, VA. She continued with that position for seven years then changed jobs to become a Program Administrator for the Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA.

Karen retired from the Defense contractor position in 2011 and moved to Sarasota. She is a member of the Philanthropic Education Organization (PEO), She volunteers at Selby Library, and also as an usher for Florida Studio Theater and the Sarasota Opera House. Since being a full-time resident, she is singing professionally with Choral Artists of Sarasota and Key Chorale. She also sings in the FPC Sarasota Chancel Choir and plays handbells. This past year, she started working with the FPC Sarasota All Faiths Food Bank. She previously served as an elder and is on the Business Affairs Committee / Property Ministry Team at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota.

EMILY WEITEKAMP

Elder, Class of 2024

Emily and her husband, Todd, are both native Floridians. After moving away for job opportunities after college, they returned to Florida and made Sarasota home in 2015. They have a seven-year-old daughter, Charlie, and a four-year-old son, Wells.

Emily attended the University of Florida where she earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature and master's degree in English Education. After graduating, she taught high school English, including Creative Writing and AP Language and Composition, in Texas and Wisconsin. While she takes a break from the English classroom to be at home with her children, she enjoys teaching Small Beginnings at First Presbyterian Preschool and volunteering with the Junior League of Sarasota.

Emily was raised at First Presbyterian where she attended the preschool, volunteered in the Caritas Food Pantry and Meals on Wheels, sang in the youth choir, and attended West Virginia mission trips and Montreat with the youth group. As an adult, she teaches Sunday School and enjoys greeting at the NewSong Service with her children. She is also a member of the 2021 Mission Study Team.

In her free time, Emily loves to read, take walks with her dog Murphy, practice yoga, bake sourdough bread, and spend time with her family and friends.

MARY WILLIS

Elder, Class of 2024

Mary was born, raised and educated an Irish Catholic in the Chicagoland area as one of eleven children, where she learned the value of faith, family and community at an early age. Mary is a widowed mother of three and grandmother to five, ranging in age from nine to fifteen.

Mary and her girls, Erin, Katherine and Anne, moved to Sarasota in 1989. In the late 1990s Bob joined them as husband, father and eventually grandfather, providing friendship, guidance, handy-man skills, knowledge of and access to great automobiles—and most importantly, support and loyalty beyond measure.

Mary completed her business degree in accounting at University of South Florida and obtained her license as a Certified Public Accountant. She recently retired, ending her career working with a local land developer after 40 years in accounting and business management. While proud of her success in business, Mary looks back with greatest satisfaction in her role as nurturer to three amazing women.

In 2016, Mary was introduced to FPC Sarasota by a friend. Struggling with the politics that seemed to have lost its commitment to community, and looking for a spiritual spark to reignite the faith of her youth, Mary was pleased to find that her first visit to a NewSong service seemed to answer both needs. Since that very first service, being guided by Jessica (Kingsley) Armstrong, and Jinny and Ron Miller through membership, she has never lost faith that this is her church.

Mary has worked with the Fellowship Ministry Team serving coffee and snacks. She has enjoyed joining the choir for Celtic Christmas, serving Family Promise for an overnight, and lending a hand with food distribution for All Faiths on Thursdays. She plans to continue supporting SURE in its search for a more just and equal Sarasota.

Mary loves walking/running, cycling, kayaking and adventure travel. When not on the go, she loves a good book, listening to great music and time with family.

ROBERT “BOB” BITTNER

Deacon, Class of 2024

Bob and his wife, Diane, have been married for 14 years following the deaths of their respective spouses two years earlier. They have four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandson, living primarily in the Chicago area and Las Vegas, NV. Bob was born and raised in Central Illinois and has lived in several states including Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Nebraska, and Nevada for school and work prior to moving to Florida in 2007.

Following graduate work in clinical and school psychology, he mainly worked with hearing impaired and autistic children, along with being a parental consultant to parents of high-risk babies (birth-age 3). Bob feels that his greatest accomplishments personally have been his family relationships. Professionally, he has had the opportunity to be part of educational teams that helped to instill confidence and abilities in parents of special needs children.

Previously and currently, Bob has been an elder, deacon, Stephen Minister, Brentwood School volunteer, and SURE member at First Presbyterian and other congregations. His hobbies include biking, yard work, and just being with Diane.

STEVE FANTAUZZO

Deacon, Class of 2024

Steve and his wife, Michelle, along with their son, Dominic, moved to Sarasota in 2018. Originally from the Midwest, they relocated here, after a decade in Washington DC, when Steve retired after a forty-year career working for AFSCME, a public service labor union. Their son is finishing his final year at LSU, before starting his master's work in Urban Planning and Disaster Management.

Originally from Michigan, Steve lived and worked in a variety of areas including New Jersey, Upstate New York,

Ft. Lauderdale, DC, and Boston, before meeting Michelle 23 years ago in Indianapolis, IN, and making that their home for over ten years. On a professional level, Steve worked as a labor economist, organizer, field director, and finally Chief of Staff for his national union. While in Indianapolis, he and the mayor earned Harvard University's "Innovations in Government" national award for a competitive bidding program which allowed employees to self-direct and design their work processes. But by far, he is most proud of his son, Dominic, whose drive and determination earned him several awards and who will graduate early, with a straight A academic career.

Steve was raised Catholic, having attended parochial schools for grade and high school. In Washington, DC, he was an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, participating in many of the parish's activities. In Sarasota, Steve and Michelle were drawn to First Presbyterian by its welcoming nature, timely sermons, and the social justice efforts. In addition to regularly helping with the church's food bank, Steve also volunteers at the Senior Friendship Center, sits on the City's Independent Police Advisory Panel (IPAP), and is on the Board of his Laurel Park Neighborhood Association.

ARDIS REA

Deacon, Class of 2024

Ardis Rea is a native Floridian. From the ages of six to ten she lived in Japan. Before retiring to Florida, she has lived in Atlanta, GA; Kansas City, MO; and Rock Hill, SC. She was married to Bob Rea, a Presbyterian minister, for 37 years. They had one daughter, Kathy, who is a licensed clinical social worker.

Ardis graduated from Park College (Sum Cum Laude) and completed the training for lay preachers. Her work history had been spent in positions in the church at all levels of the church. She has served as an elder in three churches, serving as Clerk of Session in one. Other positions

held have been serving on nominating committees including on a General Assembly one. She has enjoyed teaching all ages and serving on numerous committees of local churches, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. She enjoys sending cards to the LAMBS of FPC Sarasota, as well as birthday cards for her Presbyterian Women circle.

JAMES “TOM” SINGLETON III

Deacon, Class of 2024

Tom was born in Sarasota. Having no siblings, Tom considers his many friends at First Presbyterian Church his family. Tom’s father, James T. Singleton, Jr., was Property Committee chairman for many years. His father was also a deacon and an elder. Tom’s mother, Mildred, served as “assistant” to the Property Committee chairman and was a circle member. They joined the church in 1955.

Tom attended Tuttle Elementary, Brentwood Elementary (our *Invest in Children* partner where many FPC members volunteer), Brookside Junior High School, Riverview High School, and Manatee Junior College (now State College of Florida). Tom finished his education at USF Tampa, majoring in Visual Communications.

He began working at Storer Communications (now Comcast) in 1979 as a TV studio camera operator, leaving in 1986, but returning in 1988 as a Converter Control Clerk. He retired in 2008.

Tom has been a member of First Presbyterian, Sarasota, since 1967. He was previously a deacon from 2013-2015, and 2019-2021, and has engaged in different volunteer positions for the past few years, including transportation for some members, taking the *Cross Connections* newsletter mailing to the post office, and even (happily) laundering the church’s linens.

ELAINE BARNETT

Nominating Committee (2022 - 2ND Year of Service)

Elaine and her husband, Jim, have been members of First Presbyterian, Sarasota, since 2000. They have been married 59 years and have resided in Bradenton for 36 of those years. They have one terrific son, one lovely daughter, one wonderful daughter-in-law, and five amazing grandchildren.

Elaine and Jim moved to Florida from Monroe, NC, a small town just outside of Charlotte. Before that they lived in Chapel Hill, NC and Bad Kreuznach, Germany. Jim is a retired banker who failed at that retirement and served four years as a Development Officer for the Presbyterian Foundation.

Elaine is a life-long Presbyterian who has served two congregations as their Director of Christian Education and two presbyteries as an Associate Executive Presbyter for Education and Mission. She is a Certified Christian Educator and an Ordained Elder in the PC(USA). She has served on the session at FPC Sarasota four different times and on search committees for two of our Associate Pastors and a Director of Music.

Currently, Elaine is on the Education and Formation Committee and the Leadership Team for our Faith Focus Weekend/Pastoral Development Seminar, and has chaired the 2021 Mission Study Team. At FPC, Sarasota, Elaine has taught Sunday School, Logos and Adult Education classes. Elaine has served Peace River Presbytery as the Moderator, on COM, Committee on Preparation for Ministry and on the Personnel Committee.

Elaine and Jim have enjoyed traveling, going to the beach to watch sunsets, and visiting friends and family. During this last year they have enjoyed quieter activities closer to home.

MICHAEL BROWN

Nominating Committee (2022 - 1ST Year of Service)

Born in Port Jefferson, NY, Michael grew up in Miami, where he became a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church. After attending the University of Florida, he served for three years as an air traffic controller at Eglin Air Force Base. Following his military discharge, Michael attended Stetson College of Law on the GI Bill and then practiced law in St. Petersburg for 22 years before relocating to Sarasota in 1997. Today he is semi-retired after 45 years in legal practice.

Michael came to FPC Sarasota from St. Petersburg's Maximo Presbyterian Church 24 years ago. He served multiple terms as elder and clerk of session at both Maximo and FPC Sarasota. He is a past member of FPC's Finance, Endowment, and Nominating Committees, and he currently serves as a member of the Mission and Justice Committee and as a director of the FPC Foundation. Michael has traveled to Nicaragua and Kenya on FPC mission trips and he participates in FPC's support of Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE). He has long been interested and involved as a volunteer in matters of environmental and social justice.

Michael has three children and four grandchildren, two of whom live in Tampa. In his free time, he enjoys being with family and friends, travel, nature, outdoor activities, photography, reading, and Florida Gator sports.

ED CLISSOLD

Nominating Committee (2022 - 1ST Year of Service)

Ed Clissold is married to Rebecca and has three children, Abby (17), Daniel (12), and Caroline (12). A lifelong Presbyterian, he grew up in Tennessee, but also has lived in New Jersey, Illinois, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Indiana. After graduating from business school at Indiana University in 2002, Ed joined Ned Davis Research, a stock market and economic research firm in Venice, where he provides analysis to fund managers and wealth advisors.

One of the first things Rebecca and Ed did after moving to Sarasota was look for a church, and First Presbyterian, Sarasota, immediately felt like home. Their three children have all been baptized and raised in the church by loving pastors, Sunday School teachers, and friends.

Ed has held several volunteer positions at First Presbyterian. He has served two terms on session, including head of the Finance and Business Affairs Committees. Ed has also been stewardship chair, scholarship committee chair, youth leader, and Sunday School teacher. Outside work, family, and church, he enjoys swimming with the masters swim club and playing with their puppy.

KAY DUNN

Nominating Committee (2022 - 2ND Year of Service)

Kay and her husband, Bill, met in high school in Asheville, NC. They married and finished college together at FSU. Kay later went to USF for a degree in Library Science. She retired from the Sarasota County School Board after many years of being a teacher and a Media Specialist. Kay and Bill have three children, Wendy, Barry and Nathan—all raised at First Presbyterian.

Kay joined FPC in 1979 and has been involved with numerous activities in the church since then. She has served on almost every committee of the church including a Pastor Search Committee and the Church Officer Nominating Committee. Kay has taught Sunday School, been a youth leader, and gone on numerous mission trips. She has previously created countless videos for the church. At present, she volunteers with the FPC *Invest in Children* at Brentwood Elementary School and spends time helping to update the collection of the Cowden-Smith Library.

Kay loves to travel and to do long-distance hiking (always with books in her pack). She enjoys her yard, reading, the beach and just being outside. Spending time with their five grandchildren, including taking them all on a trip each summer, has been a highlight of Kay and Bill's lives for the past several years.

PAT HIGGINS

Nominating Committee (2022 - 1ST Year of Service)

Pat was born and raised in Seattle and received her Nursing degree from Emanuel Hospital in Portland, OR. After graduating as an RN, she worked in the operating room. She moved to New York where she met Bruce through Young Life where they both volunteered.

As newlyweds, Bruce's work in banking took them on assignment in Mexico City for five years followed by

three years in Caracas, Venezuela. They arrived back in the States with three children, Jennifer, Leigh and Scott, in tow and lived in Huntington, Long Island, NY, for 33 years while Bruce commuted to New York City before they retired to Sarasota in 2004. After raising their children, Pat returned to school to complete a B.A. in Art and Literature from Empire State College.

During those years, Pat was involved in volunteer work in their church, as a youth leader, Bible study leader, leader of small group ministries, and served on the Committee on Ministry (COM) for the Long Island Presbytery. She also joined the staff as Ministries Coordinator of her church. During that time, Pat was involved with the American Mothers committee where she served on the national board, and served as a volunteer of the National Prayer Breakfast hosting visiting dignitaries from abroad.

At FPC Sarasota, Pat has served as an usher, deacon, Stephen Ministry Leader, team leader for SURE, and liturgist. She volunteered with FPC's mission to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and has done mission day trips to Immokalee and Beth-El Farmworker Ministry.

Pat's interests are sculpting and painting, enriching travel, reading, and music. She enjoys outdoor cycling and water aerobics to keep fit.

PHILLIP “SCOTT” McLEOD **Nominating Committee (2022 - 2ND Year of Service)**

Scott was born in Sarasota and is married to Janice who was born in Bradenton. They have one son, John, who has served on the Church Officer Nominating Committee. Scott attended Georgia Tech. He was an electrical engineer and manager with Florida Power and Light for 39 years.

Scott is a fourth-generation member of First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. He was baptized at First Presbyterian

in 1952. He has served as an elder, deacon, and senior high Sunday School teacher. He has assisted with Vacation Bible School and previously served as a member of the Church Officer Nominating Committee and as Clerk of Session.

Currently, Scott assists with audio and video production during live worship services. He helps out with repairs and technical issues with equipment around the church campus.

JINNY MILLER

Nominating Committee (2022 - 1ST Year of Service)

Jinny grew up near Pittsburgh, PA, and graduated from Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA, where she met her husband, Ron. Three children and six grandchildren later (and after living in PA, OH, MI, and IN), she and Ron moved to Sarasota where they were blessed with the birth of two more grandchildren and a wonderful new church home.

As an ordained elder and deacon, Jinny has served the church at every level from congregation to General Assembly in both Presbyterian Women and governing councils of the church. She graduated from Wabash Valley Presbytery's Lay Pastor Training and served as Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) for the Presbyterian Church of Edwardsburg, MI, and then for this congregation. She was the first elder to be commissioned as a CLP in Peace River Presbytery.

After serving a term as elder at FPC Sarasota, Jinny served as one of the parish associates until retiring in December 2016. Her current involvement at FPC includes coordinating with Ron the *Invest in Children* initiative and partnership with Brentwood Elementary School, Mary/Martha Circle, Presbyterian Women, and serving on the Health and Wholeness Ministry Team. She loves music, theater, books, cheering for the Tampa Bay Rays, and spending time with friends and family—especially with those awesome eight grandchildren!

CAROLYN SIMMONS

Nominating Committee (2022 - 2ND Year of Service)

Carolyn Simmons was born and raised in Sarasota. Her family came to Sarasota in the 1920s. She was active in the First United Methodist Church for the first 30 years of her life. In that time, she sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, served on the library committee, helped serve Communion, and worked with the youth group. Thereafter, church attendance became sporadic. Then around 2006, a friend invited her to visit First Presbyterian, Sarasota; right away, she felt "at home" and soon returned to church on a regular basis. In the summer of 2008, she retired from 37 years of teaching in Sarasota County. Teaching high school students United States history had been her passion.

Carolyn began transitioning to retirement by becoming a member of the church's Peace and Justice Committee, serving as elder from 2009-2011, and volunteering in the church office. While on the committee, she became interested in Fair Trade, and since 2010 she has overseen the Fair Trade kiosk on Sunday mornings. Besides education, Carolyn's major causes are the humane treatment of animals and protecting the environment. For fun, she collects typically American artifacts, plays Canasta and Bridge, watches the Hallmark channel, and pampers her two Chihuahuas and five cats.

SANDRA “SANDI” SOPER

Nominating Committee (2022 - 2ND Year of Service)

Sandra Soper grew up in central southern Wisconsin, where she attended the Evangelic United Brethren Church as a child. In her teen years she attended the United Methodist church, singing in choir, participating in youth group, and teaching Vacation Bible School.

After high school she attended college majoring in sociology and psychology, completing her teaching credentials in Exceptional Education. She met and married her husband, Craig, while finishing her degree. After completing her master's degree in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire, Craig and Sandi moved to Florida to be near family.

Joining First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, over three decades ago, Sandi has participated in choir, taught Sunday School, served as an elder, taught Vacation Bible School, participated in Family Promise, Logos, Summer of Service, Invest in Children, Habitat for Humanity, SURE, and Oak Street Stage. She is currently serving on the Education and Formation Committee and the leadership team for Faith Focus Weekend / Pastoral Development Seminar.

Sandi's professional work included serving as a Specific Learning Disabilities Program Specialist for the School Board of Sarasota County, and as an adjunct professor of Special Education at the University of South Florida. She is a National Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Professional Developer for the University of Kansas-Center for Research on Learning. Sandi has served as the Vice President of the International Dyslexia Association, as well as the President of the Florida Branch of the IDA, where she currently serves on the Board. Having retired from Sarasota County Schools, Sandi serves as an educational consultant for private schools serving neurodiverse students.

MICHAEL FINGERLE

Pastor Nominating Committee

Michael, along with four brothers, moved from Indiana to Sarasota in 1970. In 1981 he met and married Rebecca (Becky) Cummins at a local church. They lived in Chattanooga for over 30 years, then returned to Sarasota in 2014 to be closer to Michael's parents.

Although he and Becky did not have any children of their own, it was Michael's delight to be a middle school educator at Chattanooga Christian School where he taught a variety of subjects, then later worked in guidance and admissions. While at the school he began and built both the cross country and the track and field program. The track at the school was named in his honor in 2012, but his greatest honor is the relationships he had, and continues to have, with former students and athletes. Michael finished his career as a PE teacher at the Island Village Montessori school, retiring in 2021.

Michael has worked as a faculty representative to the Chattanooga Christian School's finance and salary committees. He was a faculty representative to the search committee which brought in the current president of the school. More recently, he has served First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, as a Stephen Ministry Leader for the past two years. He is also a current member of the Mission Study Team, and recently joined the Pastor Development Seminar/ Faith Focus Weekend leadership team.

Michael and Becky love activities which take them into nature such as hiking, biking, kayaking, and nature photography. Traveling in or outside the U.S. is a passion. He has participated in the local performance of *The Messiah* with the Sarasota Choral Society. He loves good conversations with friends over meals and does what he can to take care of his father who was widowed during the current pandemic.

FRANK FREY

Pastor Nominating Committee

Frank retired from the Greater Valley YMCA in May of 2016, after a 47-year career with the YMCA. Since his retirement, Frank has helped YMCAs and communities serving as a Y-USA CEO Coach, Interim CEO and Consultant. During the last five years, Frank has served YMCAs in Lake Wales, FL; Naples, FL; Hartsville, SC; Bradenton, FL; and the YMCA of Southwest Florida in Venice, FL.

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Frank and his wife, Annette Landes, moved to Sarasota in July of 2016, from Nazareth, PA. Together, they have three children: son, Frank, who lives in Hamilton, NY and is a tenured professor at Colgate University; son, Kris, who lives in St. Louis, MO and is a systems engineer for Equifax; and daughter, Kate, who lives in Zorneding, Germany, just outside of Munich and is a marketing specialist for Sourceability, a US-based company. Frank and Annette have two granddaughters, 14-year-old Cora and 12-year-old Lily, both of whom live in St. Louis; and a grandson, 10-year-old Lucas, who lives in Oneida, NY.

STEVE KNOPIK

Pastor Nominating Committee

Steve was raised in Sarasota and attended Incarnation Grammar School and Cardinal Mooney High School. He and his wife, Beth, were married in 1993 at Siesta Key Chapel. They have two amazing children, Rogers—a recent graduate with a film production degree from Loyola Marymount University, and Leanna Mae, an incredible young woman who died in 2012 after a month-long battle with a rare heart disease.

Steve and Beth migrated to First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, in the mid-nineties when Pastor Ray Woody transferred from Siesta Key Chapel to FPC. Rogers and Leanna were active in the church's youth groups and attended Montreat summer youth conferences and the Cabell Lincoln work camp. Beth served as a Stephen Minister a decade ago. This was likely a first step towards her current work with grieving moms. Steve has been a member of the FPC tech team for the last five, or so, years.

After earning a BSBA Degree from the University of Florida in 1977, Steve's professional career began as a CPA with KPMG, a global accounting and auditing firm. He joined Beall's, Inc. in 1984 as the Director of Finance and grew with the company over the ensuing years, advancing through a number of leadership roles before being promoted to Chief Executive Officer in 2006. He was elected Chairman of the Board in 2016 and served as Chairman and CEO through his retirement in July 2020.

Steve currently serves on the Board of Directors of Publix Supermarkets, Inc. Prior to his retirement, he was active in board and leadership roles in a number of statewide and national business organizations. He is a member of the Florida Council of 100.

In his free time Steve enjoys golf, cooking, reading, watching his beloved St. Louis Cardinals on TV, and traveling with Beth—often to visit Rogers in Los Angeles. Steve, Beth and Rogers are very active supporters of the Good Work Foundation which provides educational and vocational opportunities to children in small villages in rural South Africa.

DAVID LANDERS

Pastor Nominating Committee

David is a native Floridian. Raised in Bradenton, he was confirmed in Palma Sola Presbyterian Church in Tampa. David attended the University of Florida, then enlisted and served five years in the Army as a Russian linguist in the intelligence field during the Cold War. During this time, David lived for two-and-a-half years in Augsburg, Germany. After his military service, David completed his bachelor's degree in zoology at the University of South Florida and embarked on his career as an Environmental Scientist. He has worked as a consultant in this field for 25 years with a focus on wetlands, protected species studies, and permitting. More recently, he added tree assessment and care to his repertoire by becoming a certified arborist.

David lured his wife, Denise, to Florida from Ohio. They were married in 1999 at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church. David and Denise have two sons—Connor (age 21) and Andrew (18)—both of whom have been participating in the music ministry in the traditional service.

When Connor was born, David and Denise moved back to Bradenton from Tampa and joined Westminster Presbyterian Church. David was ordained as an elder in 2003 and served multiple terms on session at Westminster, serving as Secretary, Building and Grounds Committee Chair, and a member of an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

David has also served on the Board of Directors for Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center for the last 16 years, with occasional one-year breaks. As a board member, David has held officer and committee chair positions and served on a Program Director Search Committee, Executive Director Search committee and several special task forces. David recently served on FPC Sarasota's Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

CARRIE MILLS

Pastor Nominating Committee

Carrie met her husband, Lorenzo, when she accepted a job as a puppeteer at “Das Puppenspiel” Puppet Theatre in Westfield, NY. They married in 2001 and came to Sarasota in 2004. They have two children, Henry (12) and Alice (9), and a chihuahua mix named Hopper.

Originally hailing from Allentown, PA, Carrie attended Penn State, earning a BA in Theatre Arts. She worked for regional and children’s theatres across the country (like the Utah Shakespearean Festival and the Missoula Children’s Theatre) for ten years before attending Arizona State University to earn her MFA in Theatre for Young Audiences. Carrie moved to Sarasota to become the Education Director for Asolo Rep. She jumped into the formal classroom in 2007 and has been heading the theatre department at Booker Middle School since 2009.

Having been born and raised in the Presbyterian Church, Carrie has been singing in the choir and playing handbells since elementary school. She served on the worship committee in Allentown, was a Youth Advisory Delegate to the 1994 General Assembly and has helped coordinate special services/concerts here at FPC Sarasota. She and her family enthusiastically participate in the Rise Against Hunger events.

Carrie enjoys baking, hiking, reading, and napping.

JANET OLSHEWSKY

Pastor Nominating Committee

Janet Olszewsky and her husband, Thomas, moved to Sarasota from Swarthmore, PA, in 2009 and immediately joined First Presbyterian Church, where they regularly sing in the choir. They have been married for 25 years. Between them, they have six children, in Florida, New York (2), Kentucky, Iowa, and California.

Janet comes from New Albany, IN. She is a graduate of Hanover College and has a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Indiana University. She has taught English and social studies at the high school level in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, retiring from Lemon Bay High School in Englewood, FL, when she and Thom married in 1996.

Janet's first husband, Don Kastner, was a PC(USA) pastor, and Janet has been an elder since 1998. She has served one term on FPC Sarasota's session, when she chaired the Adult Christian Education Committee. She served on the Pastor Nominating Committee for interim pastor in 2011. She is also a Stephen Ministry Leader and is a member of Sisters of the Road, a weekly prayer group in FPC. Most recently, Janet served on the Mission Study Team. In Swarthmore, she served on the church's self-study committee.

Janet's hobbies include knitting, reading (she and Vicki Wacksman organized the Manasota Interracial Book Club), travel, entertaining guests, and writing. She has authored two published books, *More Than an Average Guy* and *The Snake Fence*, as well as several articles.

Janet believes that First Presbyterian of Sarasota is a vibrant, lively, Spirit-led congregation and looks forward to finding just the right pastoral leadership to help us fulfill God's vision for our impact on individual lives and in the community.

KAY STEINMAN

Pastor Nominating Committee

Kay has been a member of FPC Sarasota since she and her husband, Dick, moved to Sarasota from Michigan over 35 years ago. They have two children—Kara Fokianos, who lives with her husband in St. Petersburg, and Nick, an electrical engineer in Ann Arbor, MI. Kara is an Academic Advisor at USF St. Petersburg and mother of Kay's beautiful granddaughter, Lyra Sage.

Kay graduated from Central Michigan University (CMU) with a degree in Secondary Education. She and Dick met at CMU and married a few years later. They moved to Sarasota from Saginaw, MI in 1984. Dick retired in 2017 from the Sarasota County School Board where he began as a science teacher, then became a Professional Development Specialist. Kay retired in late 2018 after more than 23 years with the Sarasota YMCA, beginning in the accounting department, followed by numerous years working with Risk Management and Human Resources.

Kay's community activities have included serving as a group leader for the Compassionate Friends, an organization for bereaved parents. She has also served on the founding board of directors for the Greater Sarasota Women's Golf Association.

Since becoming a member of this church in 1985, Kay has served on and/or chaired various committees including: Mission Committee, Children's Education Committee, Youth Education Committee, Worship Committee, Finance Committee, Endowment Committee and the 4th Service Committee. She has previously served on session, been a Sunday School teacher and Vacation Bible School teacher and music leader, participated as an instructor for the communicants' class. Kay currently serves as co-moderator of the Personnel Committee and enjoys singing in the NewSong band.

Kay continues to play golf and was in a weekly league prior to COVID-19 impacted Sarasota. She and Dick enjoy gardening in their BBB (birds, bees and butterflies) garden as well as taking nature walks at various parks in the area.

ELDERS

The name Presbyterian comes from the Greek New Testament word *presbuteros*, which means “elder” and refers to the leaders of the church. A Presbyterian church is a church governed by elders.

Elders provide Christian leadership to the congregation in all areas of church life. This requires dedicated effort by each individual elder and by the elders as a group. Men and women of committed Christian character are elected, ordained, and installed to serve according to chapter 2 of the Form of Government in the *Book of Order*. “Ruling Elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships” (G-2.02).

DEACONS

Deacons, as officers of FPC, also provide Christian service and leadership to the congregation. Our constitution describes the deacons’ work as “set forth in Scripture as one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ. . . . Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry” (G-2.02). This is the responsibility of each individual deacon, as well as a coordinated effort by all deacons together. Men and women of committed Christian character are elected, ordained, and installed to serve, according to chapter 2 in the *Book of Order*.

CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Two elders currently on the session serve on the Congregation’s Nominating Committee, one as the Moderator and one as the Vice-moderator. In addition, there is one deacon representative. The congregation also elects nine at-large members not currently serving on the session or Board of Deacons. The committee receives recommendations from the congregation and the various committees, and selects names to be presented to the congregation.

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), representative of the whole congregation and elected by the congregation, has the ultimate responsibility for nominating a minister to the congregation for election as the next pastor. Over a number of months, the PNC will journey through the pastoral search process, seeking to hear the call of Christ and “to participate in God’s own choice” for our next pastor.

First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota ***Mission, Vision and Core Values***

Our Mission

We believe we are called to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, giving glory to God.

Our Vision

We desire to be a leading, faithful, witnessing, diverse and growing community of God's people.

Our Core Values

Leading

We have an ongoing tradition of leadership in the community. We are committed to meeting the ever-changing spiritual and physical needs of our community.

Faithful

Our life together centers on vibrant worship and praise as we glorify God.

We are a dynamic community of faith – reformed and always reforming.

We strive to be faithful managers of the gifts that God has provided for us.

Witnessing

Through compassionate service and working for justice, we share the hope we have in Jesus Christ seeking to become spiritual partners with our neighbors.

Diverse

As a community of Jesus Christ, we unconditionally welcome all people, in the manner of our Lord and Savior.

Growing

We seek spiritual growth for children and adults through prayer, the teaching and study of Scripture, and the sharing of our faith's journey.



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