

Biographies of Nominees for Church Officers

**Elders, Deacons, and
Congregational Nominating Committee**



**Congregational Meeting
August 30, 2026
12:00 noon in the Sanctuary**

**2050 Oak Street Sarasota, FL 34237
941.955.8119 www.fpcsrq.org**



August 30, 2026



Dear Members,

The Congregational Nominating Committee is pleased to present to you the following slate: six elders in the class of 2029, four deacons in the class of 2029, and five at-large members of the Congregational Nominating Committee for 2027. We are confident that these individuals, by God's grace, will help to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of our congregation and lead us forward in our vital ministry in Sarasota and beyond.

We are grateful for each of these individuals and for their faithful response to God's call to serve our congregation. We invite you to keep them in your prayers as they enter into this new chapter of their faith journeys and share in the leadership of our church.

Blessings,

The 2026 Congregational Nominating Committee

Victoria Turner-Guenther, elder, co-moderator

Seth Stottlemeyer, elder, co-moderator

Kay Dunn, deacon representative

Brent Campbell

Karen Eastmoore

Annette Landes

Adam Martin

Wendy Miller

Jean Raskin

ELDER NOMINEES



MARK CARLESON
Elder, Class of 2029

Mark and his wife, Wende, moved from San Diego to Parrish in July 2023. Married for 25 years, they have a 23-year-old son, and Mark also has two older sons.

Born in Los Angeles County and raised in various California cities, Mark earned a degree in Public Administration from the California State University System. His career was largely spent with the State of California and several large counties, including nearly a decade managing California's statewide Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) enforcement program.

Raised in the Christian Science tradition, Mark found his way to the Presbyterian Church in his late 20s. He previously served as an elder at Christ Presbyterian Church (Carlsbad, CA), where he was part of the personnel committee. At FPC, Mark and Wende have volunteered with the Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, recently joined the usher team for the 11:00 a.m. service, and Mark served as a chaperone for the 2025 Montreat Youth Conference.

In his free time, Mark enjoys golf, softball, hiking, movies, and traveling.



RANDY HUFFMAN
Elder, Class of 2029

Randy and his wife Carol have lived in Sarasota for six years after Randy retired in 2019. They have raised a blended family of four daughters and a son and now enjoy visiting their seven grandchildren scattered across the country.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, Randy earned a registered nursing degree and a master's in health care administration. His healthcare career included various clinical and administrative roles in Toledo, Indianapolis, and Fort Lauderdale. Randy and Carol were members of Faith Presbyterian Church in Castleton, Indiana, before transferring membership to First Presbyterian Church Sarasota.

Randy's proudest achievement is raising his children into productive adults, alongside a fulfilling healthcare career where he supported patient care. He currently serves as an usher at the 11:00 a.m. service and assists with Thursday All Faith Food Bank food distribution when available.

His hobbies include creating stained glass art, golfing, archery, and fishing. Randy brings valuable administrative experience in personnel, budgeting, mentorship, and capital project financing, which he hopes to contribute to FPC's committees and session as the church continues to grow.



HEATHER MANLEY **Elder Class of 2029**

Heather and James moved to Sarasota after deciding they simply couldn't leave following a vacation. They have loved calling paradise home ever since. Their son, Liam, was born in Sarasota, and their family recently welcomed a new member, Jet, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel who happily joins them on many of their adventures.

Originally from Bloomington, Indiana, Heather earned a Master's degree in Social Work and is a certified Special Education teacher. She serves as the Director of Certification for the Institute of Multi-Sensory Education, where she supports literacy educators around the world through curriculum and professional development. Heather is also the Director of Inspired Minds Leadership Academy (IMLA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit homeschool enrichment program that provides engaging educational

experiences while encouraging students to serve others through kindness projects. IMLA has been blessed to call First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota its home for nearly four years.

Heather grew up attending a Methodist church in Indiana. Heather, James, and Liam found their Florida church family at First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota. Heather has been honored to serve as a Sunday School teacher for second and third graders, sharing her love of faith and learning with young children. She and Liam have also enjoyed volunteering together at the church's food pantry, helping serve families in their community.

Heather's greatest passion is helping children thrive. She believes every child deserves the opportunity to become a confident reader and discover the lifelong joy and wonder that books can bring. When she isn't working or volunteering, Heather enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, playing at the beach, reading, and she is a huge fan of both Starbucks and all things Disney. Heather and her family feel deeply blessed to be part of the First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota community and are grateful for the friendships and opportunities to serve alongside their church family.



STAN ROMERO
Elder, Class of 2029

Stan and his wife, June, have been married for 56 years. They moved to Sarasota in 2014 following June's retirement. They have four adult daughters, two of whom live in

Sarasota, along with ten grandchildren, five in the Sarasota area, and three great-grandchildren.

Stan was born and raised in New Orleans, where his family were faithful members of the Church of Christ. He attended Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, where he met June.

After changing his major to a field not offered at Harding, he spent his junior year at LSU in Baton Rouge before returning to Harding for his senior year. Stan and June married, and he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry.

After graduation, Stan and June returned to New Orleans, where he began his career as an engineer with AT&T. While working, he attended LSU New Orleans at night and earned an MBA. In 1984, Stan joined BellSouth Marketing and transferred to Birmingham, Alabama, where he and June lived for the next 30 years.

Although Stan retired from BellSouth in 2002, he soon joined a consulting firm as Vice President of Broadband. He continues to work full-time, conducting market research, managing an Internet Service Provider industry association, and leading broadband marketing seminars.

Throughout their years in New Orleans and Hoover, Alabama, Stan and June were active in Church of Christ congregations. Stan served in numerous leadership and volunteer roles, including usher, small group leader, building maintenance committee member, congregational board member, communion server, and Habitat for Humanity volunteer.

After moving to Sarasota, Stan and June attended several churches before finding their church home at First Presbyterian Church in 2022. They typically attend the traditional service. Stan serves as an usher, food bank volunteer, Arts Advocate volunteer, representative on the Worship and Music Committee, and Cluster leader.

In his free time, Stan enjoys tennis, golf, woodworking, and travel, but most of all, he enjoys spending time with June, their family, and friends.



HANS SCHMEITS
Elder, Class of 2029

Dutch by birth, Hans Schmeits was raised in Antwerp, Belgium. He met his wife Kim over 40 years ago at Eastern Illinois University, from where they both graduated, Hans with a Master's in Economics and Kim with a Master's in Fine Arts. Following international assignments with multinational companies in Mexico, the US and Europe, their family, now with two middle-school aged kids (Mateo and Olivia), moved back to the States and Sarasota in 2013. Most recently, Hans has developed commercial real estate, specifically Wheel Base Garage Condos, while Kim ran her own jewelry business for many years and now helps Via Nova Chorale run their professional choir. Meanwhile, their kids graduated from UF and FSU and are working - Olivia in the Trauma Unit at Sarasota Memorial while she is getting ready for Physician Assistant school, while Mateo lives in Paraguay where he runs his own business. Hans was raised Catholic and attended a Jesuit middle and high school in Belgium after which he took a break from religion for a while. After many years on Sarasota's Southside, Hans and Kim moved the Arlington Park neighborhood and joined FPC in 2023. Hans and Kim enjoy attending the 11:00a.m. service. Hans has sung in the FPC Choir, volunteers for choral events and enjoys helping out on Thursday mornings at the food bank.



SANDRA SOPER
Elder, class of 2029

Sandra (Sandi) Soper grew up in south-central Wisconsin, where she attended the Evangelical United Brethren Church and later became active in the United Methodist Church as a teen, singing in the choir, participating in youth group, and teaching Vacation Bible School.

After high school, Sandi studied sociology and psychology

and earned her teaching credentials in Exceptional Education. She met her husband while completing her degree, and after earning her master's degree in Special Education, they moved to Florida to be closer to family.

Sandi joined First Presbyterian Church more than 30 years ago. Throughout her years at FPC, she has sung in the choir, taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, served as an Elder, and participated in Family Promise, LOGOS, Summer of Service, Habitat for Humanity, SURE, All Faiths Food Bank, and volunteer activities at Brentwood School.

Professionally, Sandi served 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 also a National Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Professional Developer for the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

Sandi has held leadership roles with the International Dyslexia Association, serving as Vice President and as President of the Florida Branch. She currently serves on the Florida Branch Board.

DEACON NOMINEES



CHRISTY BLUE
Deacon, Class of 2029

Christy Blue was born and raised in Sarasota and was baptized as an infant. She is a longtime member of Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, where her parents sang in the choir and served as elders. She has a sister, as well as several nieces and nephews.

Christy attended Montreat-Anderson College, where she

majoring in Christian Education and minoring in Music. She worked in the medical field for many years and currently serves as an ESE Paraprofessional Aide at Suncoast Technical College.

Christy has a strong background in music ministry. She served as Music Director at First Presbyterian Church in Port Charlotte and has also served several times as interim organist at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church.

In her free time, Christy enjoys crossword puzzles and playing the piano.

Christy feels blessed to be part of the loving church family at First Presbyterian Church and looks forward to serving as a deacon.



LAHNEEN GLENN
Deacon, Class of 2029

Lahneen Glenn was born in Laon, France, and has lived in Florida, Texas, Holland, England, and Virginia. She moved to Sarasota in 1976 and graduated from Sarasota High School. Lahneen and her husband, Gary, married in Sarasota in 1979 and have been married for 46 years. They have two children, Catie and James, a granddaughter, and twin grandsons.

Lahneen serves as the administrator, office manager, and nutritionist for her husband's functional medicine practice, the Carroll Institute, where they focus on cognitive decline. She is also a licensed Realtor.

Her commitment to church music began while living in England in 1998, when she began playing drums. She has continued playing drums and percussion in every church she has attended and currently plays with the New Song Band at First Presbyterian Church Sarasota.

Lahneen has served on Fellowship and Hospitality Committees at First Presbyterian and at previous churches. She has also been a member of the Junior League for 40 years, where she especially enjoys community service and helping others. She enjoys music, cooking, and traveling. Lahneen hopes to bring her diverse experiences, love of people, and commitment to service to her ministry as a deacon.



SUSAN MCDONALD
Deacon, Class of 2029

Susan and her husband, Jack, have been members of First Presbyterian Church for seventeen years. They have a married daughter, Laurel, who lives in Cincinnati with her husband, Jared, and their children, Abby (14) and Luke (12).

Susan is a retired teacher of Latin and French. She earned her AB from Ohio University and her MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota. Her 44-year teaching career spanned five states and included students ranging from fourth grade through college seniors. Since retiring from Lakewood Ranch High School, she has continued to tutor privately and volunteers in a third-grade classroom at Manatee Elementary.

At FPC, Susan sings alto in the choir and currently serves as its president. She also serves on the Worship and Music Committee. In previous churches, she taught Sunday school, directed Vacation Bible School, and led Bible studies.

Susan's love of travel began in childhood with train trips to cities throughout the United States. By college, she was flying to Europe every few years, with a particular love for France. In addition to traveling, Susan enjoys reading historical fiction, researching her family tree, and cheering on the Tampa Bay Rays.



CYNTHIA MILLAR
Deacon Class of 2029

Cynthia was born and raised in the Midwest and has called Sarasota home since 1982, when she and her husband, Glenn, moved here. They have a son, Matt, and three grandchildren who live in Tallahassee.

After working for a local physician, Cynthia returned to school, earning both her undergraduate and master's degrees in education from USF. She taught fourth grade at Fruitville Elementary School and retired in 2015.

Retirement opened the door to Cynthia's passion for family genealogy and her involvement with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). She served as Regent of her chapter for six years, helping transform a struggling chapter into a thriving organization with increased membership. She also serves as President of the Gamma Upsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society of educators, where she is committed to supporting teachers, students, and the community.

First Presbyterian has been "home" to Cynthia for many years. She volunteered in the church office until she needed to care for her parents. Through the years, her faith has continued to grow, even through difficult seasons. Cynthia is deeply grateful for the love, faith, and support she and her family have received from First Presbyterian.

CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINEES

Returning Nominating Committee
(serving additional one year terms)

BRENT CAMPBELL

Nominating Committee (2027– 2nd Year of Service)

KAREN EASTMOORE

Nominating Committee (2027 - 3rd Year of Service)

JEAN RASKIN

Nominating Committee (2027—2nd Year of Service)

Nominating Committee nominees
(serving one term terms)



RICHARD DULANEY

Nominating Committee (2027 - 1st Year of Service)

Rich joined First Presbyterian Church in 2001 after attending for about a year and participating in a mission trip to Nicaragua in 2000. He met his wife, Irene, in 2006 when she was visiting Sarasota, and they were married in our sanctuary later that summer. Their daughter, Arianna, grew up at First Presbyterian and is currently a sophomore at USF. Rich and Irene have lived in central and northeast Bradenton for the past 21 years. Rich grew up in Kentucky and Indiana before moving to Sarasota County in 1994.

Rich has worked in the construction industry for more than 30 years. He began with a home repair business in the mid-1990s, followed by work as a kitchen designer and project manager for cabinet companies and Yoder Homes, where he worked for 13 years. He later activated his building contractor's license and founded RichBuilt Remodeling & Renovations.

Rich has served as an Elder on multiple Sessions and as Co-Moderator of both the Property Committee and Nominating Committee. He has also served on the World Service and Children's Committees. In addition, Rich has been a Stephen Minister and has had the privilege of participating in two mission trips to Nicaragua. He taught Sunday School to preschoolers for eight years and to middle schoolers for several years.

Outside of church and work, Rich enjoys going to the movies with Irene, attending concerts and music festivals with Arianna, paddleboarding, and spending time with his dog, Patches.



MARCIA SCHAPER

Nominating Committee (2027 - 1st Year of Service)

Marcia is a native of Kansas and a graduate of Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. She taught elementary school in both California and Kansas.

Marcia and her husband, Larry, have two sons, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

At First Presbyterian, Marcia has served as an elder, deacon, and Sunday School teacher. She currently serves on the Fellowship/Membership Ministry Team.

Beyond the church, Marcia has been a Meals on Wheels of Sarasota driver for 25 years. She also previously served as a volunteer mediator in small claims court for the 12th Judicial District.

Marcia and Larry enjoy daily walks in their Amberlea neighborhood and area parks. Her other interests include gardening, book clubs, theater performances, mosaics, stained glass, and quilt making.

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. People 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, (pastors) 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. People 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 six at-large members not currently serving on the session or Board of Deacons. The committee receives recommendations from the congregation and selects names to be presented to the congregation.

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.

