

NOMINATIONS – JANUARY 26, 2020

Elders

Elders comprise the Session of the Presbyterian Church which is, in essence, the decision-making body of the church. They recommend and approve all program and policy implementation and modifications in the church. Elders serve a three year term and the Session meets monthly; Elders generally serve on one or more committees, which also usually meet on a monthly basis.

Ben Coleman

Ben and his wife Lauri have two children, Seth, 16, and Sharon, 13; they live in Bethlehem. The family has been involved at FPCB for 12 years; the Coleman children went through the choirs and Sunday school programs; Ben participated in a men's breakfast group and currently rings in the handbell choir. They attend the Traditional service (yay for organs and hymns!). Ben is a professor of Computer Science at Moravian College and is on the board of the Blue Mountain Jeep Alliance.

Mark Ferguson

Mark and his wife Tammy have two sons, Maxwell and Samuel. He joined FPCB when he was in high school; his father was a minister at First Pres from 1970-1986 and his mother has served as a Deacon. After some time away, he rejoined the congregation during the schism and has been an active member of the choir for three years. Mark was on the Board of Directors of the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts, where Dave Macbeth is on the faculty. Writes Mark: "I'm excited by the energy in the congregation and would like to contribute in sharing this with the larger community."

Richard Hjorth (second term)

Rich and his wife Barbara joined the church in 2011. They sing in the choir and he helps David Macbeth with the contemporary service. In addition, he reads scripture, serves communion, is a member of the worship committee, archives attendance counts, schedules contemporary greeters, is a delegate to Presbytery, and greets. He has just completed a 3-year term on session providing a different perspective to discussions from his career as a Virologist and looks forward to serving another three years under the great leadership of JC.

Gail Watts (second term)

Gail, a Bethlehem resident, has been affiliated with FPCB for over 40 years, and has taught Sunday School and been involved in Koinonia groups and Presbyterian Women. She currently serves on Session and chairs the Discipleship Committee. She is married to Daniel Watts, an artist; they have two adult sons and 4 grandchildren. Gail enjoys a career as a mental health counselor, and management and employee consultant. She writes: "I continue to feel called to serve on Session as we move through this next significant step in our history."

Deacons

The Deacons are the caregivers of the church. They minister to the individual members through home communion and visits, hospital and prayer ministries, and providing support to those in difficult situations. Deacons serve a three year term and typically meet monthly.

Jeff Csatari

Jeff and his wife Kathy are residents of Hanover Township, and have been members of FPCB for 26 years. They have three daughters: Katelyn, 25, Lydia, 22, and Sophia, 13. Jeff served as a deacon ten years ago, and also has been an usher. He is executive editor of *Galvanized Media*, a NY-based publishing company, and an adjunct professor of journalism at Moravian College. He says, "I feel called to serve our church and our members at this time of growth."

Barbara Hjorth

Barbara and her husband Rich joined the church in 2011. She has participated in the traditional worship service as a liturgist, has served communion, and is a member of the chancel choir. She writes: "I am especially interested in visitation ministries and hope to serve in that capacity. I feel honored to be nominated."

Nominating

The Nominating Committee members are charged with identifying candidates for Elders, Deacons, Trustees, and the Nominating Committee itself. This committee usually meets three or four times each year; the term of service is one year, and a member may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Matthew Cascioli

Matt, a Salisbury Township resident, is married and has two sons who also attend FPCB. For 15 years he has served as an usher, and currently he works the computer at the Contemporary service and participates as a reader. Matt is a member of two community bands, one of which has appeared at FPCB many times. He is a retired school teacher and currently serves part time as the secretary/treasurer of AFM Local 45. Writes Matt: "I would like to serve because I feel a strong commitment to helping the church maintain its status as a Christian place of worship where all are made to feel welcome, to come as they are."

Nancy Cramer

Nancy and her husband, residents of Lower Nazareth Township, raised their three daughters at FPCB. Over her 48 year involvement here, she has been actively involved in children's ministry and family life, and been a D group leader. As the staff's Associate for Christian Education, Nancy was involved in building the Children's Center, and helping to develop Kirk Camp and Fall Foliage programs. In 1998, she returned to teaching in the public schools and is now retired. Says Nancy: "I served on the nominating committee several years ago and feel it is an important part of church community. I am happy to be able to help in this capacity."

Linda Filipovits

Linda has been a member of FPCB – and our Chancel Choir for 40 years. Currently she volunteers in the church's Main office and serves on the new Church Directory task force. She lives in Allentown and has three adult children and nine grandchildren. Linda recently retired from 35 years of health care administration with Sacred Heart Hospital and St. Luke's University Health Network. She has enjoyed volunteering for Musikfest and Mayfair in the early days of their inception. Linda writes: "I'm delighted to have been asked to serve on the Nominating Committee. I look forward to helping find the best people for our open positions so that FPCB will continue to grow and flourish in the coming years."

Irene O'Connor Maunz

Irene has been attending FPCB since 1977, and has taught Sunday School and helped at Kirk Camp. She also worked at the FPCB nursery school, before going on to teach kindergarten and first grade in Bethlehem. She and her husband live in Bethlehem, and have four adult children and six grandchildren. She writes: "I am grateful for the direction FPCB has taken and I would like to see leadership that encourages and supports movement in that direction."

Peter McGeary (second term)

Peter's parents met at FPCB and he attended the Preschool program before his family moved away from Bethlehem for the remainder of his childhood. They moved back to the Valley in 1998 and joined FPCB; he was confirmed as a member in 1999 and was active in youth group and the church basketball league. He went away to college for several years, eventually moving back to the Lehigh Valley. Peter and his wife have two boys, Rowan (two) and Finn (five); Finn currently attends FPCB preschool. They attend the Contemporary service on Sundays when not working, and the boys enjoy learning and growing in Christ's love in Sunday School.

Sally Ross (second term)

Sally and her husband Bob joined First Pres in 1984. Both of their children went through the youth program, and she taught Sunday school for two years when the children were younger. Sally has attended various women's Bible studies over the years, and she recently joined the choir. She also participated on a worship committee task force last year. Sally works part-time as a mental health clinical social worker.

Steve Samuelson (second term)

Steve has been a member of First Presbyterian Church since 1995 and has been a Sunday School teacher for 22 years. In a prior life, he was youth director at the former St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. A member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, he serves the 135th District (Bethlehem and Bethlehem Township) and is Democratic Chair of the Aging and Older Adult Services Committee.

Michael Stasak (second term)

Mike has been a member of First Presbyterian since 1988 and has seen three of his children baptized, three children attend Preschool and one child married in the church. He has served as an usher in the Traditional service and a greeter in the Contemporary service for many years. He previously provided transportation and hospitality to Lehigh University students who worshipped here. He currently serves on both the Worship and the Nominating Committees. He looks forward to continuing serving on the Nominating Committee for 2020.

JoAnne Turcotte

JoAnne, a Hanover Township resident, has been a member of FPCB for 33 years. Her involvement has been primarily with children's education, and she has taught Sunday School for 25 years. The daughter of FPCB members, JoAnne is married with four children and three grandchildren. She owns The Knitter's Edge Yarn shop in Bethlehem, where they are very involved in community projects. JoAnne writes: "I would like to serve because I feel we all need to try to do our part to help our church function, grow and prosper."

Trustees

Trustees oversee all financial and property matters in the church including the budget, building renovations and repairs, planned giving, and investment funds. Trustees will meet monthly and members will also serve on one additional committee, such as the property or finance committee, which also generally meet monthly. The term for Trustees is three years. Because the Board of Trustees is being newly established, nominees will initially be asked to serve one, two, or three years.

Alexander "Pat" Dyer (one year term)

Pat, a resident of Kirkland Village, has been a member of this church for over 50 years; he and his wife Shirley and raised their two children, David and Steven, at FPCB. Both boys became Eagle Scouts in Boy Scout Troop 302, sponsored by FPCB. Son David and his wife Dolly were married in this church and are active current members. Pat retired from Air Products as executive vice president and director after 26 years of service, and he and Shirley moved to London for seven years where he served as CEO and Deputy Chairman of the BOC Group and concurrently as Chairman of Bunzl plc. Writes Pat: "Our church needs help and I will do what I can while I can!"

Robert Hunsicker, M.D. (one year term)

Bob has been an FPCB member since 1978, when he also joined a K-group. He has taught Sunday School, played in the original Contemporary Service "Praise Band" with Dave Ogden, served as an Elder for two terms, and has sung in the Chancel Choir for six years. He and his wife Jean live in Saucon Valley, and have five children and 13 grandchildren. A retired Ear, Nose, Throat surgeon, Bob would like to help find creative ways for FPCB to attract young families with children.

Belle Marks (two year term)

Belle and her family, who live in Bethlehem, have attended FPCB for 30 years, and she joined the church in 2001. She and her husband John have three daughters who attended Sunday School and participated in the Choir at FPCB. Belle served as a Sunday School teacher for over 15 years and is currently a member of the Endowment Committee. She is a nurse and works in public health administration at the Allentown Health Bureau. Among other things, she volunteers with the local chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and other international health organizations. She writes: "I am enthusiastic about the direction the church is taking and want to contribute."

Susan Mowrer Benda, Ed.D. (three year term)

Susan and her family have been involved with FPCB for over 30 years. She and Joseph have been married for 36 years and they have two children, Kyle, 32 and Cameron, 28, who are products of the church through Youth Ministries. She served as a Sunday School teacher when her children were younger. Susan is currently the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Pleasant Valley School District. Writes Susan: "I am pleased to support the mission and vision of the church as we move forward into the new decade."

Harold (Bud) Newton, Jr. (three year term)

Except for time away for college or military service, Bud is a life-long Lehigh Valley resident and now lives in Allentown. His family has been attending FPCB since 1978, and they joined several years later; he has most recently been serving on the Property Committee. Bud has BS and ME degrees in Civil Engineering from Penn State. He is a registered Professional Civil Engineer and Professional Land Surveyor in Pennsylvania, with additional certifications as a Professional

Transportation Operations Engineer, Certified Professional in Soil and Erosion Control and Certified Professional in Stormwater Quality. He worked for PennDOT for 17 years, and has been in private practice since 1987, working for major developers and retailers. He writes: "I believe that I have been given the above abilities by our Lord and as a result have the responsibility to use those abilities for his service."

Bob Ross (one year term)

Bob, a Bethlehem resident, was married in the church by Keith Brown in 1984 and joined the same year. He has been a member of a K group for many years, and has most recently participated as a greeter and liturgist. He and his wife Sally have two adult children who were baptized and participated in youth activities throughout high school. Their son was a musician with the contemporary service for many years. Bob is retired from Bethlehem Steel and had a second career as a realtor. He is currently on the board of HOM, which provides low to middle income housing in SouthSide Bethlehem. Writes Bob: "I have an interest in finance and am honored to be a trustee."

Melinda Stitt (two year term)

Melinda, a Bethlehem Township resident, joined FPCB in 1997. She is the mother of two boys and a girl, and her 92-year-old mother is a lifelong Presbyterian. Melinda says the foundation for her faith was laid when she traveled with the Synod, and to an ecumenical center in Portugal during her high school years. She started her own securities firm, MSM Wealth Management, working as a registered investment advisor for over 25 years. She has served on numerous boards in the Lehigh Valley, and says, "God seems to have called me to the church at a time when my needs and the church's have intertwined. I feel blessed to have been welcomed by friends and new friends in order to be able to help the church reestablish and regrow itself."

Mark Swank (two year term)

Mark and his wife Pam, residents of Bethlehem, have been members of FPCB since 1986. Pam is currently a deacon and member of the choir. Their three adult children grew up in this church and benefitted greatly from participating in the youth program and choirs. He writes: "I am a physician who recently transitioned to working part time after a full time career complicated by frequent nights and weekends on call. Now I feel able and the desire to commit to serve our church more fully, working to help sustain it and allow it to better serve God and all his people."

Lisa Titus (three year term)

Lisa and her husband, Rich, started worshipping at FPCB quite a number of years ago while students at Lehigh. Their two daughters were baptized and raised at FPCB. Over the years she has served in many capacities: as a Deacon, Trustee, Sunday School teacher, member of the campaign committee, member/Chair of the Fund Committee, member/Chair of the Planned Giving Committee, and she currently serves as Chair of the Endowment Committee.