NOMINATION BIOGRAPHIES – NOVEMBER 1, 2026

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.*

Kate Arrington (first term)



Kate, along with her husband Jim Green and their daughter Lizzie, began attending FPCB when they moved to the Monocacy Hills neighborhood from West Bethlehem in 2017. During the pandemic, she became involved in children's ministries, hosting the Zoom church school throughout that time. She continues her engagement with children and youth, co-organizing the Body N Soul intergenerational Sunday School class. She is completing a term as a Deacon and has recently served both on the Pastor Nominating committee and on the Mission Study team. Kate is a professor of psychology and cognitive science at Lehigh University.

Mark R. Ferguson (first term)



Mark first started attending FPCB when his father became an associate pastor in 1970. He was a choir member starting in 1971 and became a member in 1977. He and his wife Tammy have two sons, Maxwell and Samuel. In addition to his father being an associate pastor, his mother has been and continues to be an active member of the congregation, including serving as a Deacon. Mark retired in July of this year and spent the previous 20+ years as a marketing professional. He recently served as an Elder until he and his wife moved to Delaware in 2020. They moved back to the Lehigh Valley a year ago and he rejoined FPBC as a choir member. He writes, "I'm excited to be part of the transition to new facilities and to help our church community live into our mission."

Norah Hooper (first term)



Norah lives in Bethlehem Township in the Green Pond Traditions of America community with her husband Tony. They been FPCB members for just two years, having recently moved from Virginia. Two of their sons and five of their grandchildren live in Queens and New Jersey. She says, "Our life has been greatly enriched by our ability to spend time with their families since our move." She was a special education teacher, administrator, and professor, having earned a PhD and taught special education at the University of Mary Washington for several years. Since her retirement she has volunteered in various educational capacities such as managing an after school program, leading school evaluation teams and helping students who are pursuing their GED. She also led study groups at her previous church. She says, "We have found a welcoming, like-minded community at FPCB and find the new directions we are heading to be exciting. I am willing to contribute my time and energy to make this transition as successful as possible."

Evelyn Kuserk (first term)



Evelyn, a Hanover Township resident, moved to the Lehigh Valley in 2014 and joined the church in 2019. She currently serves as a Deacon and is responsible for maintaining the church prayer list. She also volunteers as a receptionist in the church office, and belongs to a "wonderful and supportive" K-group. As part of a community group she volunteers monthly at New Bethany preparing and serving lunch. She is widowed with two daughters and four grandchildren. For 25 years she worked as Library Director at a nonprofit health services research institute, and is now retired. Evelyn has been a Girl Scout leader and member of her daughters' high school marching band support group, and was very active in her local AAUW chapter (American Association of University Women) for many years. She writes, "I have felt a deep sense of purpose serving this church as a deacon. As we face another pivotal moment in our history, I pray to be able to offer support to the congregation and work with everyone on Session to help guide us as we embark on a new chapter."

Janet Stahl (first term)



Janet and her husband, Jim, live in Bethlehem. She was baptized in FPCB in 1960, and grew up attending the church with her family. She was confirmed as a member in her teens and got married in the church in 1988. Just after getting married, she was commissioned as a missionary and sent out by the church with her husband; they have been serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators to this date. They returned to the Lehigh Valley several years ago and have attended FPCB regularly. Her husband Jim also attends FPCB regularly and enjoys singing in the choir. Together they work with Wycliffe coaching teams from various language groups to tell biblical stories in their languages. They also share Bible stories in small groups affiliated with Blank ,Slate and are involved in Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering, and the Freezer Ministry. She says, "Belonging to the FPCB community is an important part of my life. I have been warmly welcomed back into the community during our furloughs from working overseas. I am inspired by the community's mission statement and look forward to being a part of the transition into the next phase of church life."

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.*

Connie Gilbert



Connie lives in Carver House in Bethlehem. She was a former member for 20 years, and rejoined in October of this year. She has two grown sons who live in this area and three amazing grandchildren who are starting families of their own. She's a long-time art therapist, working with children and youth as well as counseling couples. She managed the thrift shop at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity for many years. She says, "I am excited by the new adventures awaiting First Presbyterian Church. I look forward to helping make these visions of service to others a reality. I am a life-long believer of Christ's call to feed the hungry, house the unsheltered, tend the sick and clothe the naked. I have been blessed in so many ways and want to see our church be a blessing to others, within our congregation and without."

Theresa Kelly



Theresa and her husband Wayne, who live in Bath, were married in the chapel 28 years ago. They have a blended family with four children and three grandchildren. Before knowing that she would ever live in the Lehigh Valley, she read an article in *Presbyterian Today* magagine about a member of FPCB, Ruth Rusling, who was leading a unique adult learning class on "Spirituality and Presbyterians." When she moved here in 1996 she knew which church to visit and she says she never went anywhere else. The Kellys joined in 1997 and Theresa was the Garden Lady when the community garden was on the south side of the building. Writes Theresa, “During the past nine years I have met and become friends with more of you than in the first 20. You are my very special group of outstanding humans. I am looking forward to serving as a Deacon.”

Pam Phillippe



Pam has been a member of FPCB for more than 30 years, but has become more joyfully connected since the schism. She has enjoyed greeting and ushering, getting to know and supporting our Afghan family, mentoring at Donegan Elementary School, and participating in the intergenerational Body N Soul class. She lives in Bethlehem and is retired from teaching in Southern Lehigh School District. Pam has two children and four grandchildren, and looks forward to contributing to the community of faith and mission that is FPCB.

Nominating Committee

*The **Nominating Committee members** are charged with identifying candidates for Elders, Deacons, 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.*

Rebecca Gorton

Becky joined First Presbyterian in 1977. She writes, “I have the good fortune of being in a K-group during all these years along with my husband Rich.” She has served as a Deacon, with a term as Head of Deacons. She has also been a Session member, Sunday School teacher, Preschool Board member, member of the Kirk Center Building Committee, and a mentor at Donegan Elementary School. She trusts that parishioners will respond to the ‘Call to Serve’ ensuring that First Presbyterian continues to be all that it can be.

Wayne Kelly

Deb Philpotts



Over the course of more than 30 years, Deb - who is a retired US Air Force officer - has served as an Elder and Deacon, been on the Nominating Committee and Worship Committee, and was active in youth leadership in both middle and high school. She and her husband Al, who live in Lower Saucon Township, have two sons and a grand-daughter. She has also been responsible for organizing FPCB's mentoring program at Donegan Elementary school for more than ten years. For six years, Deb has been the JV Tennis Coach at Saucon Valley High School.