

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BERKELEY

**CANDIDATES FOR DEACON, ELDER, AND
NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

2022



DEAR FRIENDS,

It is with gratitude and joy that the 2021–2022 Nominating Committee of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley is recommending candidates to serve in the annually elected leadership positions of Deacons, Elders, and Nominating Committee members.

The Pandemic continued to pose challenges (in so many ways, right?) for our task of identifying and assessing candidates. In particular, we felt its impact on our face-to-face life together as a congregation and a committee. We braved the outdoors for meetings (always masked!) and supplemented with Zoom, email, and phone calls to encourage participation in leadership. The Nominating Committee is grateful for all who engaged: those who recommended potential leaders, who considered the invitation to serve, and who made the decision to take on a new role in this exciting moment in our life together, all the more so as we anticipate a return to face-to-face life together!

Throughout our process, the Nominating Committee remained grounded in scripture and prayer as we sought to collectively discern those being called into leadership at this time in this place. The Nominating Committee had the privilege of learning from members of our community about how this congregation has spurred and encouraged deeper trust and greater love. It was a gift to hear each person's stories and how they were converging on this call to serve in these expressions of leadership at this time.

The candidates listed in this booklet were selected based on a variety of factors, including where they were in their faith journey, their engagement in the life of the congregation, their life-stage, current leadership needs within the community, and a mutual sense of timing.

Terms of service for newly elected classes of Elders, Deacons, and members of the Nominating Committee will begin in May 2022.

The Nominating Committee enthusiastically endorses these candidates for leadership. We encourage you to read the materials included in this booklet in preparation for the Annual Meeting on March 13, 2022 at 1:00 pm on Zoom.

In God's grace,

2021-2022 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Phillippe Daniel, Elder and Co-Chair
Karen Erickson, Elder and Co-Chair
Arlene Hatfield, Deacon
Angel Johnson
Sylvia Chan Lopez
James Obert
Roland Peterson
Ruth Traylor

CANDIDATES FOR LEADERSHIP PRESENTED BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

FIRST PRES BYLAWS – ARTICLE V – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

There shall be a combined annual meeting of the Congregation and the Corporation during the first quarter of each calendar year, at which at least the following business shall be presented: Election of Elders, Deacons, and members of Nominating Committee.

DEACONS

Class of 2025 (3-year term)

Jane Davis
Patti Engle
Sandra Hearn
Jose Verdin
Larry Wight
Robert Young

Extending service for one year

Liz Ball *
David Eng *
Barbara Pedersen***
Ray Pedersen***
Beth Phimister*
Ted Streeter*
Caroline Taylor*

* 1st year of extra service

** 2nd year of extra service

*** 3rd year of extra service

ELDERS

Class of 2025

Mindy Creson
Sandra Lee Lawson
Jeff Reimer
Matt Richards
Sally Van Etten
Jean Veltema

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

2022–2023

Jenn Draut
Chuck Fry
Angel Johnson
Sylvia Chan Lopez
Ruth Traylor

In addition, Session will appoint two Elders to the Nominating Committee.

DEACONS

From the First Pres Bylaws - Article III - Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall consist of between 30 and 40 Deacons, as determined by Session annually. Deacons shall be elected by the Congregation and shall be divided into three approximately equal classes, each with a three-year term. One class shall be elected each year at the annual meeting. If it is deemed necessary to fill any vacancy that may occur during a year, Session may elect an Elder or Deacon to fill such vacancy until the next annual meeting.

CANDIDATES FOR DEACON – CLASS OF 2025



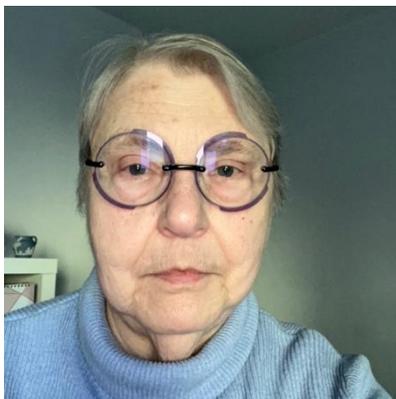
Jane Davis

Since 1980 I have been a member of FPCB. Activities include singing in chancel choir, being in a Sunday morning fellowship and several small groups, participating in and later helping lead the mom's group, one term as elder, women's retreat planning, VBS and Teddy Bear Lair volunteer. I am retired, spent most of my life as a stay-at-home mother. Being a part of this church, my whole adult life has given me rich opportunities to learn, test, follow God and his word. Yes, I believe and identify as a Christian. What is essential right now is the relationship, knowing I am beloved and being held tenderly in difficult times.



Patti Engle

I sing in the First Pres choir and am active in the Parish 13 ministries. I have been married for 40 years and have two grown children, both of whom have been or are currently on staff. I've been in the legal field for over 20 years and currently work as a paralegal. I am an avid sports nut and musical theatre buff. There have been many ways that I've come to believe what I believe = Bible studies, conferences, being in church, having wise counsel as good friends. As to people, I am thankful for the pastor at my first church, who was first to teach me that God will never desert me, no matter what. As to experiences, what I've learned is that whether joyous or difficult, Christ has been there the whole time!



Sandra Hearn

I've been a member since March of 1982. I am: a widow; a person of varied careers (from clerk, to electronics, to programming, to child care, to stay-at-home mom, to accountant, to retiree, to "grandma" --both to those I have by direct family, and a few more just by attachment.) Perhaps the last in that list is most rewarding. I served as Deacon in the past, while my husband was alive, but have not been very active in that capacity since then and welcome the chance to do so again. Currently I've been helping with the food give-away the Church holds on 1st & 3rd Saturdays in partnership with City Team.



Jose Verdin

I had been looking for a Christian community to be a part of for some time now. I am happy to report that First Pres Berkeley feels like that community even though I have not been around long. I work in Information Technology and have been gifted with a passion for art and story. I enjoy hiking, skating, bouldering, yoga and a good film! Through prayer and meditation I have come to know many things that are True and Real. One of those things is that God is the Realest thing there is. Another is that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour. I am happy to report that even though I am a flawed human being, God and Jesus still love me and are there for me no matter what. It doesn't get better than that.



Larry Wight

I have been a member of First Pres for 50 years, since 1971. I have been feeling a need to be more actively involved in the church community for a while now, and if nominated and elected to the Board of Deacons, I look forward to serving once again with responsible dedication. I was led to Christ by my family's live-in baby-sitter in Seattle, and attended weekly Sunday School classes through high school at my parents' Presbyterian Church. After marrying Mary Ann and graduate school at UC Berkeley, we settled down here, became members at First Pres, and for many years were active in leadership roles in the former Seafarers Class. Eventually I served several terms as an Elder and Deacon.



Robert Young

I have attended First Pres for over 20 years, Stephen Minister since 2020, and recently completed Starting Point to become a member. I have retired from a career in business and want to be blessed with the privilege of serving the First Pres community. I am fortunate as God is patient and generous with His grace and mercy. I was blessed with a Godly wife who encouraged and supported me spiritually, and surrounded me with loving children of strong faith. I am so grateful for all of God's blessings and for the support that I have received from First Pres during my wife's illness and after her passing. It has taken me a long time to realize how he lives in my heart, and how I depend on him for everything.

CANDIDATES FOR DEACONS – ONE YEAR EXTENSION – CLASS OF 2025



Liz Ball

I believe that the Church, one body with many members, is a representation of God's grace to us; an opportunity for us to work out our salvation together as family; a picture of God using our very human selves to do heavenly work. I believe that the proper response to God's love for me, to the true life God has given me, is to offer my whole self to Him as a servant, a vessel, and a dim reflection of His grace. I believe that I am called to walk and learn and struggle and love with the rest of the body of the Church. I believe that together, we are meant to take part in God's work of justice, peace, and mercy in our community and in our world-caring for the widow and the orphan and releasing the prisoner.



David Eng

My faith journey began in college when I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of my life. I am glad to have the Bible as my personal instruction guide on how God wants me to live. And yet I acknowledge that I am still imperfect and that I am still growing in Christian maturity through His grace. Furthermore, I believe that God has called us not only to believe but also to belong. He did not mean for us to walk alone in our journey of faith. As fellow believers we are meant to give encouragement to each other as we travel this journey of faith together. And so I am grateful to have First Pres as my church home. It would be a privilege for me to serve my community of fellow believers as a Deacon.



Barbara Pederson

I have attended First Pres Berkeley since 1983. I am married to Ray Pedersen and we have 3 children. I retired in 2018 after 25 years of service as a nurse practitioner at the UC Berkeley Tang Center and loved working with our university students. I sing in the choir and help with the EC 1-4 class. God gave me a calling in high school to be a nurse, which I did for 40 years-for last 25 years of my career, taking care of our Cal students as a nurse practitioner. I have been blessed with both meaningful work and family with husband and kids. Being with God is like breathing. God beside, inside, all around me. God showing mercy. God of surprises. God of compassion. Mercies new every morning.



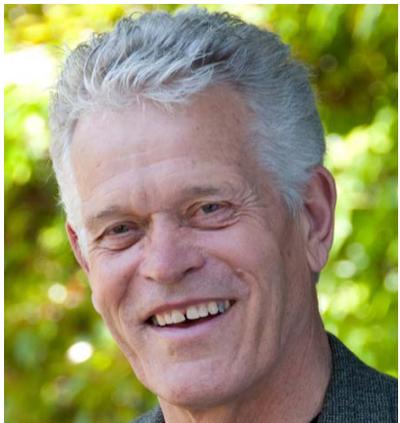
Ray Pederson

I became a Christian at 27 through the friendship and witness of Jack Buckley. I have come to believe and trust in Jesus as the son of God. Through Jesus I communicate directly to God. Being a Christian through the years has meant a certain consistency and regularity to my life, manifest in both behavior and attitude. In times of crisis I turn to God for comfort, reassurance and guidance. I enjoy being part of the body of Christ by both giving and receiving support, encouragement and love. I have been an educator for the last 26 years and have worked hard to give kids opportunities to grow and develop. Raising my own children has been my greatest joy.



Beth Phimister

I joined deacons three years ago and am hoping to extend my term by an additional year. The experience has been enriching. Being active and present to serve both the church and surrounding community has blessed me as much as I hope I have blessed others. I hope to continue to participate in the Parish meetings and support the leadership of First Pres as needed for special services and other community projects to support racial justice and the housing insecure. In our world I see vast opportunities to share love. The movement towards supporting a shift in the church towards inclusivity and general love for humanity supports what I think Jesus really stood for and I want to be part of that.



Ted Streeter

What captures my personal statement of faith is the Apostle's Creed, which starts with "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary." I also believe the following: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." And "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." In my heart and soul I absolutely believe this and yet I struggle every single day to keep these two commandments. And I fall so far short of living my life fulfilling what Christ has asked me to do.



Caroline Taylor

I have been part of this congregation since moving to Oakland 40 years ago. I have experienced so many parts of our ministries as I moved from young adulthood to parenthood and have participated in various programs and ministries that have formed my faith walk. I am married to Steve Taylor and have two daughters, Sophie and Laura. I work as a physical therapist in Oakland and love serving the people from this church and my Oakland neighbors. The Church is a collection of believers who try to follow God's teaching together and to demonstrate God's love to the world. I have been the recipient of the best support and love for my children, and for my husband and I as we parented them, through church staff and many friendships.

ELDERS

From the First Pres Bylaws - Article II - Elders

The spiritual and temporal affairs, government, and discipline of this church shall be controlled and directed by a Board of Directors, known as the Session, consisting of the installed Teaching Elders ("Pastor" and "Associate Pastors") and between 12 and 21 Ruling Elders ("Elders"), as determined by Session annually.

Elders shall be elected by the Congregation and shall be divided into three approximately equal classes, each with a three-year term. One class shall be elected each year at the annual meeting, along with any vacancies which Session deems necessary to fill. If it is deemed necessary to fill any vacancy that may occur during a year, Session may elect a previously ordained Elder to fill such vacancy until the next Annual Meeting.

CANDIDATES FOR ELDER – CLASS OF 2024



Mindy Creson

After becoming a Christian while at graduate school at UC Berkeley, I spent my formative years as a new Christian at FPCB. I later heeded the call to seminary, studying theology and ethics and finally putting my studies to use teaching Religious Studies. After switching careers to work with older adults living with dementia, I began to experience God in a much different and profound way. Jesus became even more real to me through the faith and worship of women and men who retained their identity as children of God in spite of their loss of other memories. I learned from them to experience God in the present moment, in small and quiet ways, and witnessed the power of the humility of Christ. I humbly pray that God will use me alongside others in living out the church's stated mission, most especially to pursue God's restoring justice.



Sandra Lee Lawson

God has been with me my whole life. God was with me when I was not welcome as a Chinese-American girl living in Texas. My family found comfort with other Cantonese families through my pediatrician's church, and when a Sunday school teacher asked if I wanted God to live in my heart forever, I asked him to do so. In college, InterVarsity at Cal saved my life, and I began attending First Pres. My experience through community, prayer, and Bible study is that God is real and works in our lives. Young Adults at First Pres is where I met my spouse, Nate. A few years ago, I started a fellowship group of members who are LGBTQ allies, affirming congregants, and LGBTQ people. I have two young children and, half the time, I just hope to make it to the end of the day. I work in real estate, but I live for good design, flowers, and bringing people together.



Jeff Reimer

I am a Christian, husband, father, grandfather, friend, professor, and scholar; I have been working at the UC Berkeley campus since 1982. Some of you may recognize my name as being associated with Veritas Forums, "Make a Joyful Noise," Godly Play at FPCB, the Berkeley Faculty Fellowship, serving on Session as an Elder from 2006-2009, or more recently with the Berkeley Palmer lectures. My wife Karen and I have lived in El Cerrito since the late 1990s, and we have four adult children and one grandchild. I am in my 39th year as a professor of chemical engineering at UC Berkeley: I love teaching and research, and in particular the many friendships that have been built over the years with former students and colleagues around the world. Karen and I love hikes at the many Bay Area trails, and now in COVID times enjoy very much a day spent e-biking around the Bay.



Matt Richards

I have been a part of the First Pres community in one form or another since I started as an undergrad at Cal in 1992. My wife, Lisa, and I met on staff as college department interns under Doug Bunnell, and in 1999 we were married in the First Pres sanctuary. I'm humbled by the embarrassment of riches God has poured into my life in the form of all those siblings in Christ who have modeled God's unconditional, radical, dangerous, generous, extravagant love to me over the years. I've sought to respond to God's love for me and for all of creation through my legal career and my commitment to human rights, social justice, and racial equity. I continue to be both called and challenged to give as boldly and completely as I can of myself to a world in need.



Sally Van Etten

I am a long-time member of FPCB and my husband and I raised our family here. I have previously served as a Deacon and as an Elder, sat on the Cornerstone Parent Committee, volunteered at the Street Meal Bible Study, served a term on the First Foundation Board and served as a member of the Personnel Committee. My husband and I were trained and served as Marriage Mentors. Pre-pandemic, we were adult volunteers for the High School group on Sunday mornings and retreats. My husband and I have been EC3 members and are in a FPCB Community Group. I have a City Planning masters and work in municipal and special district financial consulting. I participate in many outdoor activities including running, gardening, hiking, skiing, camping, backpacking, snow camping and bouldering. We are almost lifelong Oakland residents and we have two adult sons.



Jean Veltema

I am the middle child of 5 children, raised by Christian parents in Michigan where I attended schools that were organized by the Christian Reformed Church, this included from cradle through college. My father was an immigrant from the Netherlands and worked hard to support his family. The Dutch were strong believers in Christian education beginning back in the "old country." This created tension for us in the home as we children sought to seek out and explore other communities. However, my Christian education gave me a thorough knowledge of the Reformed Protestant faith and that has been my strength as I moved out into the community. Throughout my career I was a teacher of reading in the elementary schools and served in the district office as Literacy Coordinator in the K-8 schools. My hobbies are reading, knitting, singing, swimming, yoga, camping and hiking. I am active in book clubs, community organizations, Bible studies and choir.

LEADERSHIP NOMINATING COMMITTEE

From the First Pres Bylaws – Article VI – Nominating Committee

Nominations for the offices of Elder and Deacon and for the upcoming year's Nominating Committee shall be made by a Nominating Committee. The Congregation shall, by majority vote at its annual meeting, elect members of the Nominating Committee for a one-year term. No member of the Nominating Committee shall serve for more than four consecutive years. The Pastor shall be a member ex officio and without vote.

The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of seven or eight active members of the church. Session shall appoint one or two currently serving Elders to the Nominating Committee, including the Chair. The currently serving Nominating Committee shall present a slate of six nominees, including one Deacon, for election to the upcoming Nominating Committee at the annual meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor, in which case a secret written ballot shall be held. Session may, if deemed necessary, appoint an Elder to fill any vacancy occurring during the year.

CANDIDATES FOR LEADERSHIP NOMINATING COMMITTEE



Jenn Draut

When I came to First Pres, I found a home where I was free to explore my faith, express my doubts, and grow with others who were doing the same thing. I loved the diversity of belief that was possible here, even as we kept Jesus at the center. I have weathered many seasons here. The people of First Pres have carried me through some of my hardest days: being an exhausted mom with two kids under two years old and, four years ago, when I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. (I am fine now!). Over my years at First Pres, I have been in the Young Adult group, Mother's Council (now Moms Together), Stephen's Ministry, Greeting Team, and served as an Elder. Our kids, Nora and Tim, are involved in the middle school program. Professionally, I am a research scientist at Berkeley Lab studying how we can design more efficient water systems in a changing climate.



Chuck Fry

The church has developed as the temporal and physical embodiment of Christ in the world. It is the means by which Christ's love and forgiveness are extended to other persons. It is also the community in which the Christian life can be lived and by which each person is supported and refined in the ways of Christ. The church is also the place in which we receive baptism and communion as signs of our belonging to God and our reliance on God's grace and love for each of us. Through the consolidation of oral traditions and with the provision of the Spirit, the Bible is available to believers as wisdom literature to instruct, challenge, and support us as we strive to live more Christ-like lives. I believe that at the end of life I will be welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven to spend eternity with God and the saints who have gone before me.



Angel Johnson

I live in North Oakland with my techie husband, Aaron, and our dog, Barney. I was drawn to First Pres 17 years ago and immediately started volunteering and working with the children. In 2010, I lived in the Taize Community in France, deepening my understanding of prayer, music, and work in service to God. Over the years I've been involved with the CAYAC/Vesper Choirs, Young Adults, Bible studies and classes. I served on the nomination committee last year. An artist at heart, I like to write, dance, make pottery, and have a Master's degree in Creative Writing/Poetry from SFSU. I'm excited to continue exploring ways to connect at First Pres, deepen my spirituality, and serve God.



Sylvia Chan Lopez

I came to faith in Jesus Christ as a college student at Cal and have worshiped at First Pres for over 35 years. I have served in a variety of ministry areas including FOCUS and Missions, and I have also served on a PNC and as a Deacon. I have two young adult children who were raised at First Pres but who no longer attend. I work in Human Resources and have worked professionally in a variety of organizations ranging from a small non-profit to global software companies to UC.



Ruth Traylor

I am a wife to Vent, mother to Brooke and Katie, mother-in-law to David and Rick, and Grammy to Aaliyah and Kauai. I retired in April 2019 after being employed 44 years in the world of mortgages and real estate. Retirement has afforded me to have more time with my grandchildren, travel (pre-pandemic), dabble in learning Spanish and take naps. In January 2020, I was fortunate to travel with Vent and the rest of the Thailand team to build a house for one of the pastors we've partnered with over the years. We also had the opportunity to visit other mission partners in northern Thailand. I've been a FoCUS partner for the past 6 years in support of our university ministry, a Deacon for the past year and previously served as an Elder. I'm looking forward to tutoring a young student through our ministry with Harbor House.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BERKELEY – OUR MISSION

WE ARE CALLED BY GOD,
TRANSFORMED BY GRACE,
STRENGTHENED IN COMMUNITY,
CONFIDENT THAT CHRIST IS MAKING ALL THINGS NEW,

NOW GO:
LOVE CONCRETELY, EVEN WHEN IT'S RISKY
SERVE GENEROUSLY, WHOEVER HAS NEED, AND
PURSUE GOD'S RESTORING JUSTICE.



2407 Dana Street | Berkeley, CA 94704
fpcberkeley.org | 510 848 6242