

**EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

**NOMINATED
OFFICERS**

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2024**

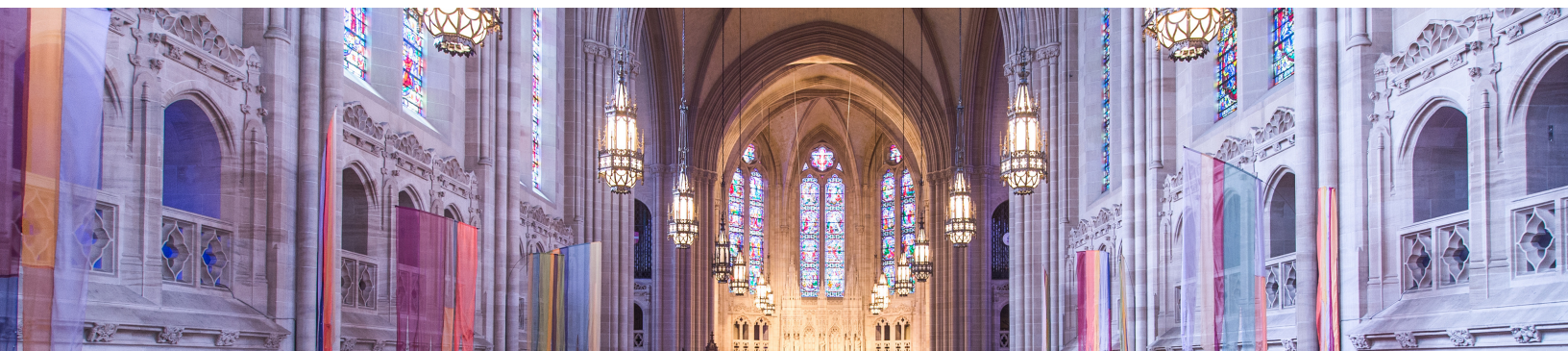


EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

BOARD OF DEACONS

CLASS OF 2027

Amy Bialek
Gretchen Chapman
Eleanor Willson





Amy Bialek

I absolutely love my animals! I have an almost four year old Golden Retriever named Grace whose joyful spirit is truly a gift from God. Grace and I enjoy hiking, paddle boarding, camping, and taking classes. I also have two cats: Pippa the Sassy Cat (aka Pippa) and Rosie the One Eyed Wonder.

I have been a teacher for 26 years in the North Hills School District. As a teacher, I am organized, creative, and an amazing punter. When teaching kindergarten, it is ALWAYS a good idea to have several backup plans for when you need to punt.

Being outside is where I experience God the most.

When it comes to gifts and talents, I think creativity and problem solving are two important ones. I work very, very hard and do not give up. I have a teachable spirit and am passionate about social justice.



Occupation: Teacher

Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

I LOVE being part of the Handbell choir at ELPC. I am especially thankful for the opportunity to ring when needed.

Being on the Children and Family ministry is so much fun! Brainstorming ideas and helping to put all the little details together is exci.

Vacation Church School is a very special time. Getting to know our church family while being creative is a joy.

I am on the Ross Township Democratic Committee where I serve as the chairperson of the new Pride Committee. I am an active member of the North Hills Progressive Neighbors.

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

Our church is a diverse body of believers who all bring different joys, concerns, gifts, and needs to the table. I am consistently moved by the music and message I hear. One area that I would like to strengthen is connection. We all come from so many different places. It is rare to see each other outside of church because we are spread out. This sometimes is hard. I would like to find a way to connect with people - maybe we can form groups based on where people live or even what people are interested in. I confess that getting to ELPC can be difficult- especially after working all day and needing to take care of my animals. I wonder if there are other people who feel the same way and if we can help them connect. I would absolutely love for us to have opportunities to be outside in nature.

*"I am grateful for the nurturing community
I have experienced at ELPC and welcome
additional ways to serve."*

Gretchen Chapman

My work as a professor and academic department head provides me with an evidence-based approach to organizational change and skills in interventions to foster positive behavior, oral and written communication, data analytics, grant writing, and overseeing visionary initiatives.



Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

I attend Journey Worship and Journey with Scripture Sunday School. I help to lead the Connections Ministry and I'm active in the Facing Systemic Racism Committee and Presbyterian Women. In previous congregations I have taught Sunday School and designed innovative worship services.

*Occupation: CMU Professor
Spouse: Paul Breslin
Children: Amos Chapman (20); Boaz
Chapman (18)*

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

I'm passionate about creating inclusive community, including adopting inclusive God language, creating worship that represents all congregants, and facing and dismantling racism.

Eleanor Willson

I am an eighth grader at Dickson Preparatory STEAM Academy, where I am secretary of the Eighth Grade Class Council and a member of Student Council. I am also a part of the Gifted and Talented program. I participate in the junior musicals and the Marching Band. I am also a member of the Middle School Jazz Band and I am a part of the Dickson and Forest Hills Swim Teams. I also dance at All About Dance Studio and am a member of Pittsburgh Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (PYPO).



Occupation: Student

Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

I am currently getting confirmed. In the past, I have taken part in Sunday School, Food for Thought, VCS (attending and volunteering), and I acted as an Acolyte. In my community, I have participated in Earth Day, and I consistently volunteer at school events. As a Girl Scout I made care packages for at risk people.

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

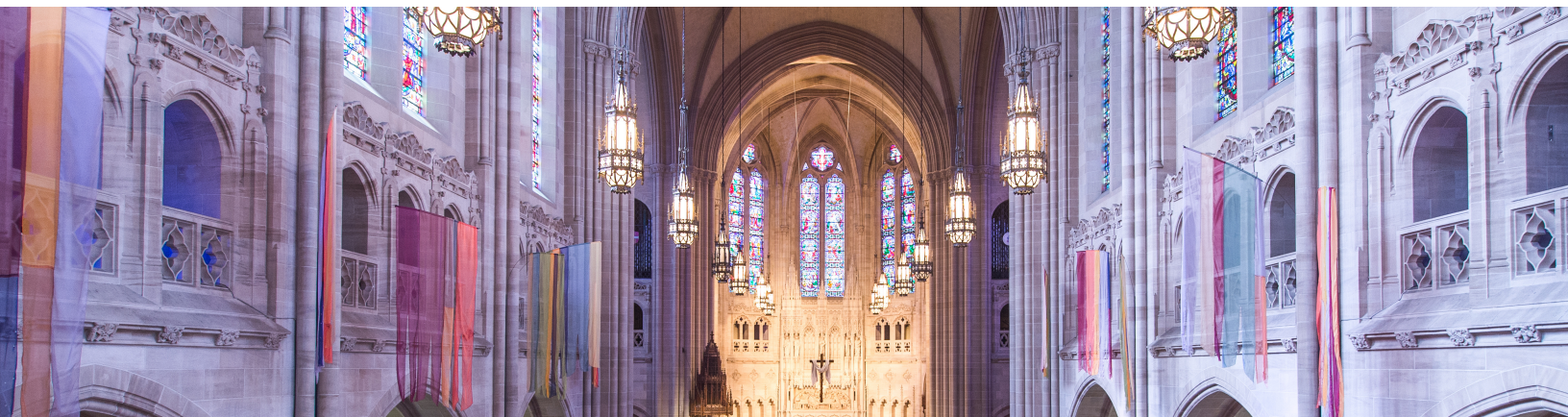
I want ELPC to continue being a place where everyone is accepted, and no one is turned away. I want it to stay a place where you can question the scripture and be met with supportive people and answers. I want it to continue to be a place where everyone finds a way to reach out and be nice.

EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SESSION

CLASS OF 2027

Trish Buben
Dee Flaherty
Barbara Griffin
Bryan Lawrence
Jason Van Ness





Trish Buben

I am a stay at home mom for our two daughters. While they (and their activities) keep me busy, I have begun working towards becoming a Board Certified Genealogist. I am skilled at planning things – dances, Book Fairs, family reunions and lacrosse seasons to name a few – and am looking forward to using those skills as a member of Session.

Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

I have been a member of the Family Children and Youth Ministry for more than five years. I have led crafts at VCS for the last few years. I have also been the facilitator for Parenting Circle for the last three years. Prior to that, I was a deacon. At home, I am an active volunteer with the PTOs and booster groups for my kids' schools.



Occupation: Stay at Home Mom

Spouse: Stephen Buben

Children: Mabel (14) and Margo (10)

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

The world has shifted since the pandemic. Many of our families have left. I would like to bring them, and new ones, back.

Dee Giffin Flaherty

My career passion is leadership development.
My life passions are my ten grandchildren



Questions for Nominees

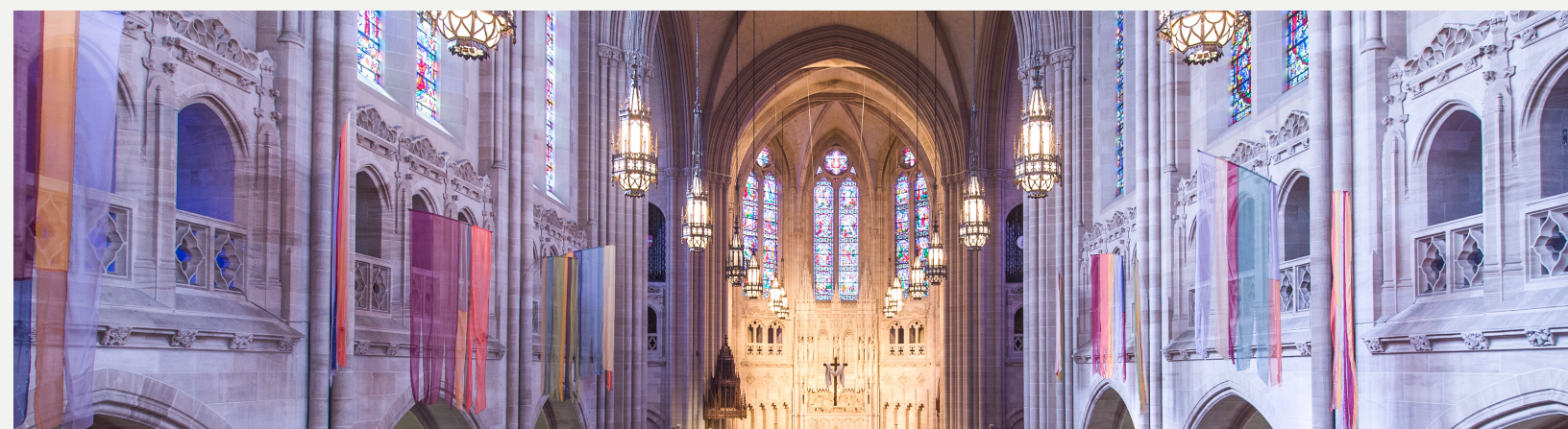
Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

At ELPC I have been an elder and a long time member of the Stewardship Committee.

*Occupation: Consultant/Educator
Children: Philip Flaherty (43) & Nora Tricco (41)*

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

I would like to see us grow in our ability to see conflict as a creative process and grow in our ability to see conflict as a creative process and grow in community.



Barbara Griffin

I've been a member of ELPC for 20 years. My children are the ones who led me to become involved with the church because it was a welcoming and supportive environment for a busy and stressed out mom. My children are now 25, 21, and 19, and ELPC has been a steady presence in their lives. God called me to be a legal aid attorney and my job is to provide free legal services to people with very low incomes.



Occupation: Attorney

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

At ELPC, in the past I have served as an elder and a member of the Spiritual Life Committee. When my children were young, I regularly attended the Parenting Circle on Sundays. I am a frequent liturgist during worship and have also been an usher and a communion server. I sometimes volunteer at events like Cathedral Concerts.

In my community, I was an active volunteer at my children's schools and with their athletic teams. I serve on the boards of several non-profit organizations and was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to serve on a state board.

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

Pittsburgh is a city of neighborhoods, and I would like to see ELPC be a neighborhood church that calls people from all over the region.

Bryan Lawrence

Heather and I have been members of ELPC for over 30 years. Our kids grew up in the church and were involved in a variety of activities. As a lawyer, I have worked for Buchanon Ingersoll & Rooney for over 35 years. My practice focuses on providing strategic and practical advice to business clients in variety of settings.



Occupation: Attorney

Spouse: Heather Lawrence

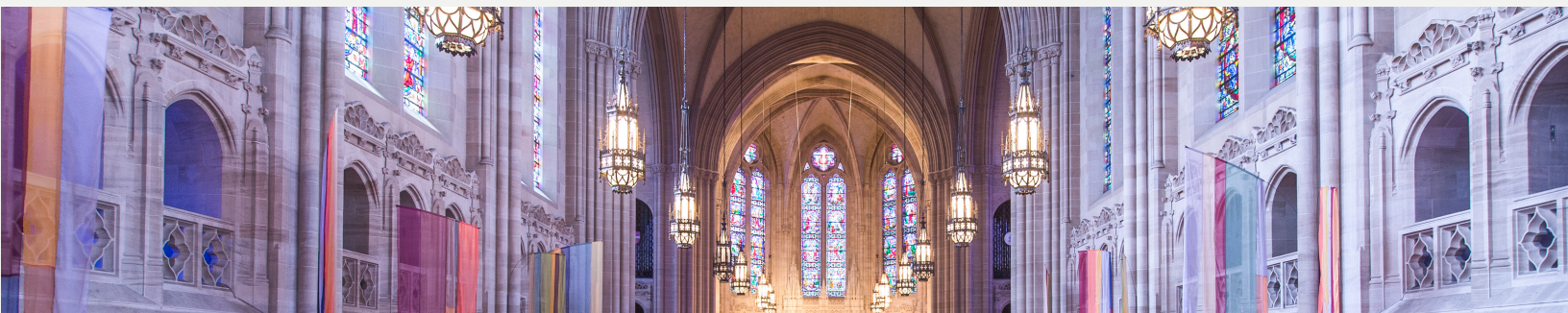
Children: Michael, Ben & Josh

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

I am a former member of Session, as well as a former member and chairman of the Centennial Trustees.

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

That we continue to be a conduit for God's unconditional love, and that we extend Christ's hospitality to all, especially those that are different from us and those with whom we disagree.



Jason Van Ness

I am very invested in ELPC and see service in the name of my faith as an obligation. I have an extensive background in outreach and advocacy, community organizing, public speaking, and an overall familiarity with the resources in Allegheny County. I am committed to applying my skillset in whatever way necessary to ensure ELPC continues to grow and spread the Gospel of Jesus.



*Occupation: Child Welfare Social Worker
Spouse: Ronald Van Ness*

Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

*Member of the Justice Committee at ELPC and have been an ongoing volunteer with youth programming since the Summer of 2021.

*Recent graduate from the MSW Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Served as Vice President of the MSW Student Executive Council. Presented at the 2022 Diversity Forum at PITT on Activist Burnout

*Vice President of MOGI from 2021-2023; which is PITT's campus wide graduate student LGBTQIA+ organization

*Current Board Member for Lawrenceville United which is a neighborhood advocacy organization for Lawrenceville resident. I am in the secretary position and serve on the Governance Committee for the board

*Current Board Member for Allegheny County DHS LGBTQIA+ Resource Group. Create content for professional development and continuing education related to diversity and inclusion efforts

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

My vision for ELPC is that we not only continue to spread the Gospel, teach about being siblings in Christ, but also continue to understand the needs of our congregation past, present and future. Also, that ELPC recognize the importance of making reparations to those who have been harmed. Finally, that ELPC understand the ever changing landscape of religiosity and religious affiliation in the United States and what that means for leadership moving forward.

EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

CLASS OF 2025

Sara Torretti



Sara Torretti

My experience as a social worker serving the needs of refugees, as well as families and youth at risk, helps me to view others' needs in the context of a larger system—one that can either benefit or harm a person based on circumstances beyond their control. My ability to prioritize people and view the world through a community focused lens helps me to identify needs and connect people to resources. I hope to be included in the future planning of programs that aim to close the divide between the haves and the have nots.



Occupation: Student/Mother
Spouse: Jay Miller
Children: Isaac (12) & Ari (8)

Questions for Nominees

Q: In what ways have you been active in your church and in your community?

Since becoming a member in December of 2022 my involvement at ELPC as included regularly participating in Parenting Circle in 2022/23, joining Soul Food in January of this year, volunteering at Vacation Bible School last summer, attending Taize service, and participating in youth and family events. My goal is to meet as many members as I can, and to get to know them on a personal level. My involvement in the greater community includes political activism, organizing basic needs for the Refugee community, serving other marginalized populations such as imprisoned persons and those experiencing food insecurity, families and youth at risk, and supporting public libraries.

Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

My hope is that ELPC can become a stronger "3rd Space" in the community, helping to ease the disparities that community members regularly face so that they can reach their utmost potential. I think becoming a stronger 3rd Space and elevating our role in community service we can grow our numbers as a congregation. I hope for ELPC to also strengthen it's role as a leader in embracing diversity in people and develop more programming for these populations, giving them a place at the table. We can be a leader not only in our East Liberty community, but in the greater Pittsburgh community- a role model in service. Lastly, as a mother of young children, I see a need for ELPC to become a "village" or extended family for members who find themselves living apart from their family of origin and yearn for a forever community, one that does not expire. I hope for ELPC's programming to continue, and get better at, meeting the diverse needs of its members that will keep members active, as well as attract new faces to our vibrant community.