



East Liberty
Presbyterian Church

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NOMINATED OFFICERS



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2026

BOARD OF DEACONS

CLASS OF 2027

Youth Deacon
(1 year term)
Samantha Brake-
Hoffman

CLASS OF 2029

Ryan Booher
Jim DiGiorgio
Keith Irvin
Polly McQueen
Travis Simpson-Hunt



Renewing for a 2nd Term:

Janet Pollard

Samantha Brake- Hoffman

she/her



Occupation: High School Student

I am well engaged when learning new things, and excited to grow my knowledge. My family has taught me to be kind, empathetic, and welcoming to new people. When starting in the journey of my deacon role, I am eager to hear and learn from knowledgeable people, about the work that goes on in the church.

Questions for Nominees

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

In the future I would hope that ELPC is able to give teens more of a voice in decisions or some kind of social media that could help the church. I would also be excited to see more community work around ELPC especially in these estranged times in the country right now, involving more volunteer, charity, and donation work.

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

Last summer I had the opportunity to volunteer at vacation church school at ELPC, and I am very glad I did. I was grateful to be a part of such a loving community, singing, dancing, and creating in our faith together. And being able to help and also learn from kids much younger than me. In many formative years of my childhood I had never been able to go to vacation church school, and my recent experience really made me wish I had gone more often. However when I was younger and even today, I have regularly gone to Sunday school. I have always thought the teachers did such wonderful jobs and I enjoyed the time with peers on those frequent mornings. Along with this I have been confirmed during my eighth grade year and got to learn many important things while growing in our faith with peers the same age. In the community, I have helped box and donate food for families in need during Novembers for Thanksgiving, through ELPC. I have also helped with the local Forest Hills Garden Club.

Ryan Booher

he/him

I grew up in the Presbyterian Church getting confirmed at First Presbyterian Church of Ada, Oklahoma. Most of my time outside of the church activities is spent running my small business of heating and air design for commercial buildings. Outside of church and work I like to spend time with my friends, catching a show in Pittsburgh's Cultural District, and supporting my teams NBA Champions Oklahoma City Thunder and WNBA Champions Las Vegas Aces. My talents of waking up early without an alarm, being able to reach items on the top shelf at the supermarket, and being a novice juggler are not super useful in any current leadership roles as ELPC that I am aware of, however, my passion for helping people most likely is.



Occupation: *Managing Member of
R.A. Booher Company*

Questions for Nominees

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

In my 10+ years at ELPC I have served a three year term on Nominating Committee and serving as a co-chair for a year, was a long time member and chair of Mission Board, and was an active member of the Young Adult Ministry back when it was age appropriate for me to be. This past summer I was on the Associate Pastoral Nominating Committee that ultimately brought Pastor Sarah to ELPC. I currently am a member of the Bell Choir and weekly mid-week youth programming. You may also see me selling Cafe Justo coffee after service on the second Sunday of the month once their supply chain issues are resolved. For the last eight years, I have been an honorary member of the Happy Wanderers where we explore our community, share a meal, and most importantly enjoy each other's company.

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

I look forward to seeing how ELPC can continue to grow in helping the community in challenging ways where God leads us that may stretch us outside of our traditional avenues while also continuing to foster a safe and welcoming space where all of God's people that walk through our doors are able to find their place and become involved.

Jim DiGiorgio

he/him

On one of our first dates, my husband and I took a self-guided tour of ELPC. That tour eventually led Tim to join the choir, and myself to become involved in the church after attending an LGBTQIA+ meeting. 2 years later, we were married by candlelight at ELPC. Since then, our family has grown to include four wonderful cats.

I love running! I try to run every other day, and run at least one race for a charity each year.

I have a passion for design. I went to school for Liberal Studies, with a focus on product development and fine art; and in my career, I was a visual merchandising director.

There have been several times I've walked through the church doors feeling sad or stressed, and been greeted by someone with a friendly hello, or a smile. Those simple acts lifted my spirits more than they probably realized at the time. I hope to pay those acts of kindness forward to others.



Spouse: Tim Chaplin

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

I started volunteering at ELPC almost 10 years ago as a greeter at the front desk. Since then, I've volunteered for: Club 116; mission trips with middle and high school youth groups; Vacation Church School; Open Hand Ministries (both as a worker, and as a charity runner in the Pittsburgh Marathon); and EECM dinners. I'm currently serving as a member of the Visual Arts committee.

I briefly worked here as the ELPC Volunteer Coordinator. I'm especially grateful for that time, as I got to see firsthand the passion and the gifts that so many share with our community.

Questions for Nominees

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

Giving hope for a better tomorrow, and continuing to be the light in many lives.

Keith Irvin

he/him

I have attended ELPC my whole life along with my parents and younger sister. I participated in Sunday school, youth group, and youth mission trips. I attended, then volunteered at Vacation Church School. I have worked for almost five years at the East Liberty Family Health Care Center in the medical records department and also assist with computer support. I enjoy working with a group, using technology to assist with projects, and looking for opportunities to help. I like to bake and enjoy outdoor activities including hiking, canoeing, and cross-country skiing.



Occupation: *Medical Records/
Health Informatics*

Questions for Nominees

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

I hope that ELPC will continue to be a caring, welcoming community that utilizes its resources well to continue its mission long into the future.

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

At ELPC, I am a member of the handbell choir and the finance committee. I assist with the stream team for the 11:00 service. I also attend the young adult group events. Outside of church, I participate in a pinball league, an orienteering club, a science fiction club, and games events including Puzzled Pint.

Polly McQueen

she/her

Ever since arriving at ELPC on Christmas Eve in 2014, this church, our staff, and the congregation have felt like family. Being the oldest of 7 children in my nuclear family, I feel that I bring some of the leadership and caregiving skills I developed with my sisters and brothers to my new ELPC family. Having worked full-time for many years, I now teach piano privately in our home; in this work I have learned to be a somewhat more patient person, and I have learned that showing love to my students brings out the best in them. It seems to me that serving as a deacon would be a good way to use my leadership, caring and loving skills to use my leadership, caring and loving skills in serving ELPC and the greater community.

It is an honor and a privilege to be nominated to become a deacon. If elected, I pledge to do the work of a deacon to the very best of my ability, following in the footsteps of the many talented and hardworking deacons who have served before me.



Occupation: Piano Teacher
Spouse: Erich Stein
Children: Carl and Jon
Schoenberger (43 and 41)

Questions for Nominees

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

I have served as an usher and a beadle and have participated in ELPC's weekly Zoom prayer group since its inception in April 2020. I was a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee. I serve on the Visual Enhancement Subcommittee of the Worship, Music and Arts Committee. I am a volunteer at the Community Dinners. I attend Sanctuary Worship weekly and I love going to the retreats that the Spiritual Life Committee arranges.

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

We live in challenging times, and I see ELPC as a beacon of hope in so many ways: serving the struggling folks in our community, speaking out from the pulpit and in political actions about where change is needed, and speaking the voice of truth in social media. It seems that ELPC could possibly do more to help people get back on their feet after job loss, dealing with mental health issues, re-entering society after incarceration and experiencing being unhoused.

Travis Simpson-Hunt

he/him

From an early age, “Service Above Self” was instilled in me and my six siblings. A Christ-centered approach to giving and serving others has shaped my lifelong Christian journey. I am a grateful father to wonderful sons and continually strive to be a supportive and encouraging spouse. I am at my best when serving others, particularly through community-focused ministries.

Our family enjoys traveling and serving together through Scouts and Rotary, finding joy in working alongside others for the common good. Each summer, we spend time in a small mountain village in southern Spain, where we welcome foreign exchange students and visitors. There, I lead in-depth walking tours that explore Spain’s rich spiritual heritage, with a focus on the Muslim conquest and the Christian crusades. I bring to ELPC a heart for service, a passion for community engagement, and a deep appreciation for faith, history, and building meaningful relationships.

Questions for Nominees

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

I envision our church continuing to live fully into its name as the Cathedral of Hope—a true sanctuary where all people across the city of Pittsburgh can come to meet their spiritual needs. I am especially encouraged by the growth of the Taizé service, which has helped ground my own role in the life of our church, offering a meaningful space for reflection, healing, and prayer. I hope to see our unique ministries continue to grow and evolve, making a tangible difference in both our community and individual spiritual lives. My vision is for us to reach beyond societal labels, focusing instead on people and their spiritual needs, and responding in all things with love, compassion, and grace embodying the spirit of Jesus Christ.



Occupation:
Volunteer
Spouse:
Stephen
Simpson-Hunt
Children:
Parker-13,
Michael-14,
Mads-16

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

Service is my calling—an invitation to meet Christ in the lives of others. Both within my church and throughout my community, I strive to serve with compassion, humility, and love.

At ELPC, I’m excited to volunteer with a dedicated team at the Chapel Market, where we provide free clothing and essential items to our unhoused neighbors, offering not only practical support but dignity and care. Beyond ELPC, I organize food collections and deliveries for SHIM (South Hills Interfaith Ministry), organize coat drives for veterans, prepare care packages for unhoused individuals, and help deliver and set up donated furniture for newly arrived refugee families, transforming empty spaces into welcoming homes. Through my Rotary membership, I also organize the distribution of dictionaries to local third-grade students, supporting literacy and a lifelong love of learning.

My most meaningful ministry is with John the Baptist Ministries. Visiting nursing homes and private residences, we offer bedside prayer, foot washing, and anointing with oil to those seeking peace and companionship, and assist with baptisms and funerals during life’s most sacred and difficult moments.

Service is also central to my family life. We open our home by hosting foreign exchange students for a full school year, and this year we are honored to welcome Mads, a 16-year-old student from Denmark. Through each act of service, I am reminded that when we care for one another, we become living reflections of Jesus Christ. Matthew 25:40

SESSION

CLASS OF 2027

CLASS OF 2029

Youth Elder
(1 year term)
Michael
Simpson-Hunt

Don Breitbarth
Andrea DeVries
Deborah Hurrell
Lenore Williams



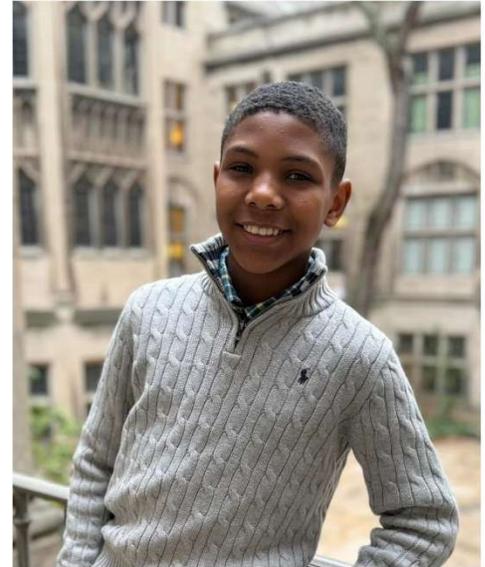
Renewing for a 2nd Term:

Charma Dudley
Tim Engelhardt
Carol Mullen

Mario Seneca
Nancy Wright

Michael Simpson-Hunt

he/him



Occupation: Student & Pianist

I am 14 years old and love music. I've studied piano for eight years, played classical bass for five years, and recently started learning electric bass guitar. I enjoy attending the opera & sport events. I am a PGA Jr. golfer and love playing in tournaments. I'm a certified sailor and hope to own a sailboat someday. I also love reading, my current book I'm reading is *Night* by Elie Weisel. I live in Mt. Lebanon with my two dads, my younger brother, our Danish exchange student Mads, and our dog Joey. Our family spends summers in Spain, where I make lots of friends from around the world especially at sail camp in Marbella. I hope to bring my musical talent, and enjoyment for volunteering and leadership skills from Scouts to The Cathedral of Hope. And maybe help start a program to help families foster or adopt kids. My faith, my love of music, and my desire to help others all shape how I hope to help our church. I'm excited about welcoming more youth and families with kids, building our youth programs, and encouraging kids to take active roles in worship. Whether through acolyting, music, or leadership, I hope to use my gifts to support a church family that is growing and inclusive. I like to see our church thriving.

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

At The Cathedral of Hope, I participate in the Christmas Pageant, attend Confirmation classes and retreats, and serve as an acolyte during Sunday Worship Services. Outside of church, I am an elected Patrol Leader in my Scout Troop in Mt. Lebanon. I also help collect food for SHIM (South Hills Interfaith Movement), and once a month I volunteer to play the piano during lunch at Rotary's Student of the Month award ceremony. I am also a member of student council.

Questions for Nominees

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

My vision for the future of ELPC is to help grow our youth involvement by encouraging more young people and families with children to attend our church. I want our youth programs and retreats to have more members. I also hope to serve as an Acolyte Captain one day and help train other kids so they can participate regularly in Sunday worship like my brother and I do. I would also like our church to help with foster kids and encourage families to foster and adopt like I was by my family.

Don Breitbarth

he/him

ELPC has been a big part of my life for over 25 years. My first experience of our congregation was at a Taize service on a cold January night. The warm, simple, and inclusive atmosphere of that service pierced my heart, and I knew I'd found my church home. Beth and I moved to Shadyside 17 years ago, partly so we could be within walking distance of ELPC. When I'm not at home or church, I work at the Community College of Allegheny County as an educator and Academic Advisor, helping students get and stay on track with their school work and find their way into their professional lives. Before switching to higher ed, I managed stores for Borders, Inc. -- including the company's flagship store in Chicago -- where I developed my skills in operations, human resources, property management, risk management/compliance, and budgeting. The common thread that runs through my resume is my ability to nurture relationships across systems. I'm interested in seeing how my skills can translate into furthering the mission of ELPC.



Occupation: Academic Advisor and Assistant Professor of Critical Reading at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)

Spouse: Beth Buchwach

Children: Amy & Andrew, plus grandchildren Brooks, Nelle, and Clark

Questions for Nominees

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

My vision for the future of ELPC is that we continue to reach up and reach out with all our might to help our neighbors; that we remain committed to peace justice and the human dignity of all people; that our congregation continues to grow and prosper so that, with the grace of God, we can do even more good works.

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

I worked at ELPC as the Facilities Manager for a couple of years after I moved here from Chicago in 2000 to be with Beth. Since then I've been active at ELPC in a variety of ways as a volunteer. I'm a founding member of the volunteer Landscape Team, which is part of the Property Committee. I lead/coordinate our indefatigable landscape volunteers on seasonal workdays. Along with several other dedicated regulars, I've been cutting the grass around the church and taking care of the grounds for almost 20 years. It's satisfying, and our crew contributes a significant financial savings to the Church's bottom line. I still participate with the loyal group from the Church that periodically prepares meals for the residents at East End Cooperative Ministries, because my experience volunteering at our former Men's Shelter was so rewarding. I've served on Session before, and I'm familiar with the way our governance system works.

Andrea DeVries

she/her

Most people at church know me through the Membership and Outreach Committee or prior committee work. Outside of church, I lead a research team that carries out public health studies focused on drug safety, as well as other public health topics such as exercise programs, and strategies to support people with Alzheimer's disease. This work requires data skills and clear communication. I manage a diverse team, and collaborate with academic and federal organizations. At work I am considered an effective and approachable leader.



Occupation: *Research Director at Humana Healthcare Research*

Spouse: *Howard Degenholtz*

Children: *Isaac, Sonia, Annabel*

Questions for Nominees

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

At ELPC I have served on Membership and Outreach Committee, Pastor Nominating Committee, Officer Nominating Committee, and Finance Committee. When my kids were in school I volunteered regularly at Obama Academy (High School) and St Edmund's Academy (Primary/Middle School)

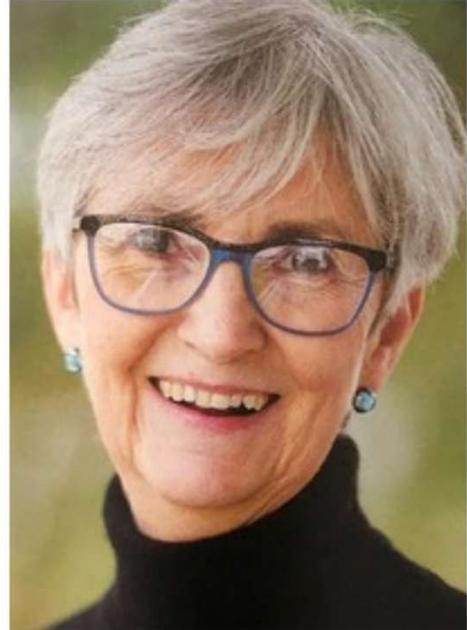
Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

The two greatest commands that Jesus gave us are to Love God and to Love thy neighbor. In recent months we have been called to show our love and stand up for our neighbors in new and different ways, and I am proud of how our congregation has risen to this challenge. My vision is for us to continue to be a beacon in the community for people to both experience and demonstrate God's love and also our love for our neighbors. I especially hope that we can connect with people in our community who have not had a traditional religious background but feel welcome and find purpose here at ELPC.

Deborah Hurrell

she/her

Although I grew up and started my career here in Pittsburgh, I left a few years after college and lived in NYC and Stamford. I returned to Pittsburgh after retirement. I worked as a department store buyer, in design and finance at an apparel manufacturer and as finance officer at a computer software firm, a menswear design company and finally a school. At the school I was CFO, operations officer, and also designed and made costumes for all the school plays. I think I bring ELPC my background in finance, design and non-profit management. I also bring a great appreciation of the value of the PCUSA as a connectional church, not just being a member of a local congregation but part of a greater whole on the Presbytery, Synod and GA level.



Occupation: *retired (CFO of private school)*

Questions for Nominees

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

Since joining ELPC in 2020 I've been a choir member and have participated in the Finance/Stewardship and VES committees and volunteer at the Chapel Market dinners . I am a 412 Food Rescue and Community Food Bank volunteer. I also help a local school with costumes for their musicals. Prior to ELPC, I was a member of First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, CT. At FPC, I was a choir member, ordained as a Deacon and Elder, served/chaired many committees including Worship Music & Arts, Finance, Mission, and Stewardship. I was also a member of a Committee of Counsel and Interim Search Committee.

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

I think the arrival of Pastors Michael and Sarah has brought fresh, new leadership to an already great team and congregation. I look forward to a process of discerning where the Holy Spirit will lead us next.

Lenore Williams

she/her

Native of Pittsburgh. Currently a member of church A/V Committee, Worship, Music and the Arts Committee, Co-Chair of Facing Systemic Racism Committee, current President of ELPC Corporation, former member of Session, former deputy clerk of Session. Currently President of the Board at East Liberty Development Inc., member of Presbytery Amos 5:24 Mission team, Anti-Racism Transformation Team, Vice President of Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus, Treasurer of Northeast Region of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus



Occupation: Broadcast Manager
Spouse: David Fabilli

Questions for Nominees

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

see above

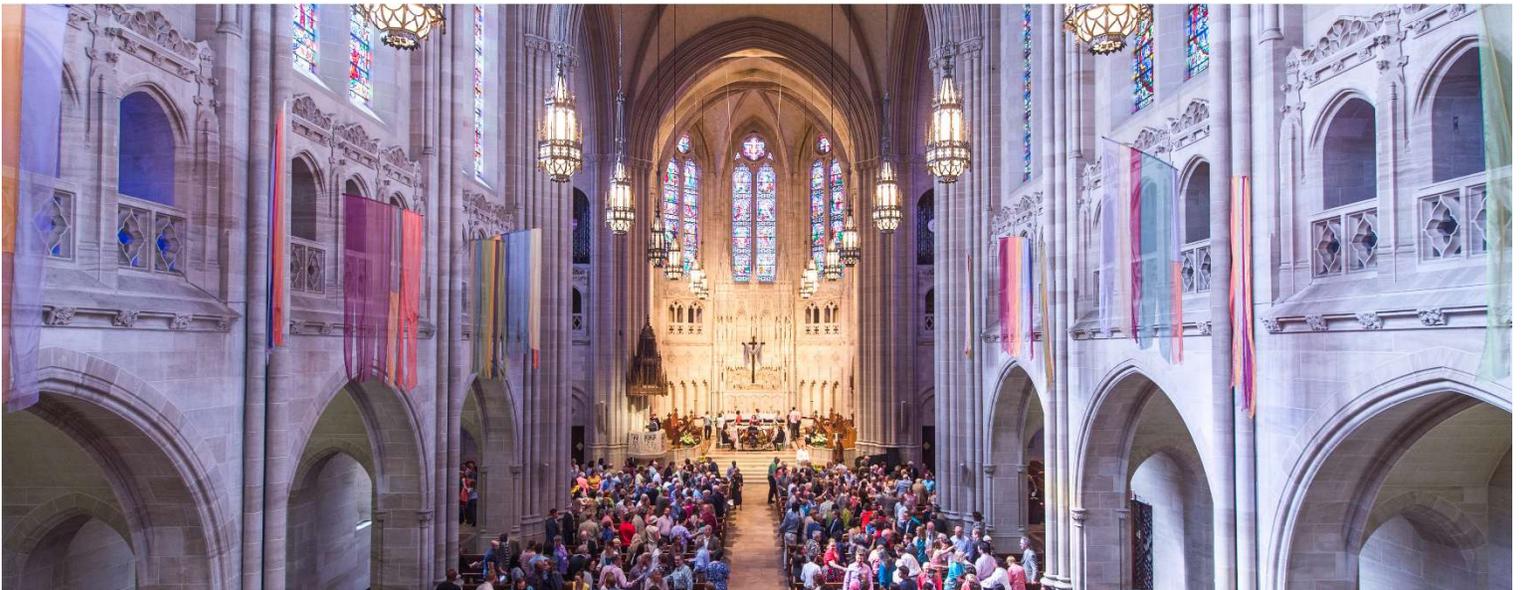
Q: What is your vision for the future of ELPC?

To still be a welcoming branch of God's family and to grow into being even more inclusive

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

CLASS OF 2027

Jim Eng
Laura Ristau



Renewing for a 3rd and final year:

Lynne Chadwick
Liz Hopkins

Jim Eng

he/him

I have been a member of ELPC since 1987 and have experienced the growth and development of our church. While I feel that most of the changes have been for the good of the church and congregation, I am aware that some of the changes were painful to some. I believe change is necessary for ELPC to continue as a thriving church, but I value historical perspective. As a healthcare practitioner and educator, I think I possess the skills of listening, discerning different perspectives, and I am a kind and accurate communicator. My leadership style is collaborative.

Questions for Nominees

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

Served on Session twice which included being on Mission Board and chairing the Neighbor's committee. Served on the 2023 Pastor Nominating Committee. I served on the advisory board of the LGBTQIA+ Ministry.

Currently I'm one of the co-teachers to Teens Sunday School. I continue to serve on the ELPC Breakfast Team that serves breakfast to EECM shelter once a month. I currently serve at ELPC Chapel Market dinner.

Outside ELPC, I serve dinner to underserved community folks at First Presbyterian Church under an organization "Outreached Arms." I volunteer as a supervising physical therapist twice a month at Slippery Rock University's student-run Pro Bono Physical Therapy clinic. I am a rapid responder/observer for ICE raids for Casa San Jose. I visit and look after an elderly man with a disability once a week in an effort to keep him at home.



Occupation: *Retired Physical Therapy Professor*
Occasional Therapist on Call for Small Practice

Spouse: *Heather Eng*

Children: *David Eng - 38 years; Robin Eng*
36 years

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

I imagine ELPC to continue as a beacon of hope for all God's children. I see a congregational family that continues to invite and reflect the full diversity of God's family, racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, in sexual orientation, and in neuro- and physical-divergence. I imagine ELPC continuing to provide spiritual leadership and justice advocacy, operating within its means so that funds and congregational energy are used wisely and not over-extended.

Laura Ristau

she/her

I like to invite people to connect to each other and to projects and causes. I firmly believe that people like to feel included. I also think they like to have fun. I consider myself a cheer-leader.



Occupation: Fundraiser and Music Teacher

Adult Children: Carolyn and Ben

Questions for Nominees

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

I have been active in church no matter the denomination or the location my whole life and I thrive on the learning and growing and stretching the different roles have provided me. I like to think I reflect that influence out in the community.

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

I have been a member at ELPC for 20+ years. I like how it evolves with and because of the people and programs that are at its core. I hope it continues to evolve and provide relevance for members and the community through teaching, singing, dancing, giving, praying, reflecting and showing up for years to come.

CENTENNIAL FUND

CLASS OF 2029

Susan Apel



Renewing for a 2nd Term:

Gene Harris

Susan Apel

she/her

My husband and I raised three children in Pittsburgh -- Phoebe (31), Sophie (29) and Nathaniel (25) -- who are currently in Albuquerque NM, eastern PA, and Austin TX (respectively) pursuing careers/education. I spent most of my career at K&L Gates as a corporate/M&A lawyer, and also spent 10 years as General Counsel for one of our clients. Eight years ago I left the firm to engage in public service as an attorney in the Consumer Protection division of the PA Office of Attorney General. Especially as a corporate lawyer and General Counsel, I spent a fair amount of time looking at financial statements, etc. and am hoping those experiences will be helpful for service on the Centennial Fund Committee.



Occupation: *Attorney*

Spouse: *Adrian Roe*

Children: *Phoebe (31); Sophie (29);
Nathaniel (25)*

Questions for Nominees

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

I am currently serving on the Board of three local non-profit organizations: Neighborhood Legal Services, Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting, and the Harvard Club of Western PA. I am an alumni of Kenyon College and have been very active in the regional association. I also served in a variety of volunteer roles when my kids were younger, in connection with their activities.

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

My husband Adrian Roe and I joined ELPC only about 4 years ago. Given our limited tenure, I do not presume to have a vision for ELPC, but I do appreciate this opportunity to become more involved in the church.



East Liberty
Presbyterian Church

www.ELPC.church

THANKS TO OUR RETIRING OFFICERS FOR THEIR SERVICE!



Retiring Deacons

Brady Conley (youth), Todd Hoffman, Hannah Moon,
Nate Stephens, Linda Sanders, and Tom Sturgill

Retiring Elders

Mabel Buben (youth), Bill Buchanan, Kristin Cummings,
Sonia Degenholtz, and Jan Irvin

Retiring Nominating Committee Members

Jessica Giannotta, Bill Johnson, and Sara Torretti

Retiring Centennial Fund Member

Doris Dick