

2021 Officer Candidate Biographies

Dottie Bowen, Elder

My husband Frank and I returned to Pennsylvania two years ago to live closer to family. Drawn by many strengths at BMPC, we were thrilled to join and become active. I sing in the Sanctuary Choir and Bryn Mawr Singers and serve on the Music and Fine Arts Council. I am involved in educational offerings, a racial justice small group, Holy Leisure, serve as a small group facilitator and as a tutor at the Village (now Gemma Services). I have been active in church communities since childhood and find joy in ministry participation and leadership. My career in pediatric nursing included clinical and administrative positions and developing a company that provided executive search services and consultation for children's hospitals nationally. During this difficult time in the life of our country and the world, I am inspired by the resilience and commitment BMPC has shown in new ways to reach inward and outward with the love of God. I cherish the blessing of being a part of the BMPC family.

Elliot Dee, Elder

I love our church and am excited to advance our many wonderful ministries as a member of Session. It has been my pleasure to serve on the Stewardship Committee and as an usher since our family joined BMPC in 2018. My wife MaryJeanette and our youngest daughter Kat are both members of the Sanctuary Choir. Prior to our move to Lower Merion in 2018, I was involved at the Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey, and the Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair in Montclair, New Jersey, where I had the opportunity to serve as a member of Session, a Trustee, and on the Stewardship, Outreach and Buildings and Grounds Committees. In my professional life I work as a consultant to nonprofit organizations, focusing on strategic planning,

program development, fundraising and communications. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve on Session.

Annie Krastek Lee, Elder

My husband Harrison and I became members of BMPC in 2017. Prior to joining BMPC, we were members of Arch Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. I served as a board member of Arch Street Preschool for five years.

I currently serve on the BMPC Children and Family Ministries Council, and I have been an active member of the Y-Group. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I frequently volunteered in the church's Sunday School classes.

Harrison and I have three young sons, all of whom graduated from or currently attend the BMPC Weekday School. I serve on the Weekday School Advisory Council and also serve on the Home and School Association ("HSA"). I will serve as president of the HSA for the 2021-2022 school year.

Professionally, I work as an attorney, primarily practicing personal injury defense litigation. I am a graduate of Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law. I am grateful every day for BMPC.

Olivia Blusiewicz, Youth Elder

I'm a 17-year-old junior at Harriton High School. I moved into the area to live with my stepdad and three stepbrothers when I was six years old and started attending Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. My mother joined soon thereafter. I really loved attending and participating in all the youth programs such as mission trips and Vacation Bible Camp. I have volunteered as a counselor for the Vacation Bible Camp, attended Kirkwood, and my favorite activities have been participating in Mission drives. I'm also a part of Student Serve. I am honored to be nominated and have the chance to grow my faith and leadership as a youth elder.

Jack Stevens, Youth Elder

I am a junior at Harriton High School as well as a second-year varsity basketball player. I have been a member of BMPC since my confirmation in 2018. My older brother Grant was a deacon three years ago, and my sister Natalie was an elder six years ago. My mother, who joined BMPC in 1998, is a very active member who has served as a Sunday School teacher for several years. I believe my lifelong relationship with the church is a great precursor to stepping into the elder position. I have watched my siblings and friends before me, and now it's my turn. My summers at BMPC are awesome, starting with Vacation Bible Camp and ending at Kirkwood, the camp I have been going to since I was in sixth grade. I believe becoming an Elder will not only strengthen my relationship with God but also with other members of the church. I look forward to serving the church in this role. BMPC is my church home, and I want to continue to help grow the church for others.

Ted Collett, Deacon

My wife Lora and I have been members of BMPC for nearly 10 years. Our 11-year-old triplets, Meredith, Charlie and Lindsay, can often be found chasing loose basketballs in the gymnasium during Sunday morning fellowship or following Wednesday Night Dinners. My family and I are very active in many aspects of the Children and Family Ministry and have been involved with many other churchwide activities. I also am an usher during several months of the church year. My professional background is within the financial industry. 2020 was a challenging year personally with the passing of my mother as well as the general difficulties related to the pandemic. With limited in-person interaction, BMPC has supported us throughout the year, and for my family and me, it has fortified my belief that God is always with us everywhere, every day. The church always has our back. Now, I am

honored to be nominated to assist the church propel its mission and "pay forward" the service BMPC has shown us.

Kara Udicious, Deacon

My husband Steve and I have been members of BMPC for almost 20 years. We have two adult daughters who grew up in the church and were nurtured by this community. My past involvement in church leadership and service includes chairing the Children and Family Ministry Council and representing families with young children on Session, serving on the Youth Ministry Council, including participating on the long-range Ministry Architects re-envisioning team. I have taught Sunday School for the majority of my years at the church, and I particularly enjoy my post as a Wednesday Night Wizard greeter. For over 10 years I volunteered with West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (WePAC), a literacy program founded with the support of BMPC outreach. This fall, Steve and I led one of the small group book clubs, discussing Ben Myers' *The Apostles' Creed*. I treasured the time being in a genuine community with a group of fellow disciples growing in their relationship with Jesus Christ. I am honored to be considered for the office of Deacon and look forward to continued opportunities for service and spiritual growth.

Aidan Vartanian, Youth Deacon

I am in 11th grade at Conestoga High School. I was baptized in 2003 and confirmed at BMPC in 2015. I have attended services regularly and have been a member of Student Serve at BMPC for years. I've also regularly worked as a volunteer with Upward Basketball. Since seventh grade, I participated in Camp Kirkwood. From these experiences, I have learned a lot about myself and faith. I've also volunteered at the BMPC Vacation Bible camp. In 2018, I was one of two students to serve on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee to search for our youth minister and was happy that we chose the Rev. Leigh DeVries as our Associate

Pastor for Youth and Young Adults and their families. I live with my mother and father, Tom and Kelly, and my sister, Ella.

Paul McConnell III, Youth Deacon

I am a junior at Harriton High School. I was confirmed at BMPC when I was in the eighth grade but have been a part of the BMPC community ever since I was a student at the Weekday School. BMPC's Music and Fine Arts program has been a big part of my life since my days in the Carol Choir. I am currently in the Youth Chorale and also play the carillon. In addition, I attend Student Serve, volunteer as a Wednesday Wizard at the Wednesday Night Dinners and have participated in the Helping Hands Ministry. Having previously ridden the Rosemont Presbyterian Village bus and helped with the Deacons' flower deliveries, I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve God and the congregation as a Youth Deacon.

Peter Cordray, Trustee

I have been a member of BMPC since 1981. My wife, Kelly, joined shortly before our marriage in 2000, and we run a manufacturing business in King of Prussia. Both our children, now a high school junior and a college freshman, grew up in the church, going through the Weekday School and then the youth programs. I have previously served on the Mission Committee and sang in both the Youth Chorale and then the Senior Choir. I also was active in the BMPC tutoring program. I am an avid squash player, beekeeper, nature lover, and thrive on the grace and peace taught by the church.

Rob Gunther, Trustee

My wife Laurie and I joined BMPC in the mid-1980s and served together on the Family Life Council in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I served on the BMPC committee that led to the establishment of WePAC and served on WePAC's initial advisory committee. In 1999 I

represented BMPC, along with the Rev. Patrice Nelson, a former BMPC associate pastor, on the Presbytery's "train-the trainers" program for racial reconciliation facilitators. We worked to prepare and lead a Lenten Series program and a confirmation class program on diversity and racial reconciliation, and I served as one of two BMPC liaisons to Calvin Presbyterian Church in West Philadelphia. I also have served on the Outreach Council for several years. I grew up Catholic; Laurie was confirmed by the Rev. Dr. David Watermulder at BMPC. When we joined BMPC, we found a church home for ourselves and our children. Russell, Paul and Allie attended Sunday School, sang in the choir, taught in the tutoring program and went to church camp. This was exactly what we hoped for when we searched for a church home and, in 2017, our first grandchild was baptized at BMPC. Going forward, I am looking forward to serving the church as a Trustee, deepening my faith and, when conditions allow, worshipping together in person in our beautiful Sanctuary.

Dave Reiner, Trustee

I joined BMPC in 2013 together with my spouse, Sarah, shortly after moving to the area from the Finger Lakes area of New York. We quickly fell in love with BMPC and are involved across various areas of the church. I have served as an usher (you might recognize me as the usher who is often joined by our son Charlie), support the Caring Ministries as a Deacon, and recently joined the Stewardship Committee. Our three children, Charlie, 7, Amelia, 5, and Van, 1, were all baptized here and are active in Children and Family Ministry. I am eager to expand my service to the church as a Trustee.

Professionally, I am a senior program manager at Vanguard after having previously worked in higher education at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Colgate University. I attended Hamilton College and received my MBA from the Simon School.

Bill Black, Nominating Committee

I am a lifelong Presbyterian and member of BMPC since 1991. My father and grandfather were Ruling Elders at Wayne Presbyterian and Trinity Presbyterian, Berwyn, respectively, and I had the privilege of serving as a Ruling Elder at BMPC from 2012 to 2018. I also served as a member of the Board and later president of the BMPC Foundation. Prior to serving as an Elder I served as a BMPC Trustee. I also have been active as a member and Chair of the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Children's Village and am currently a member of the Board of Directors of PCV's successor Gemma Services, a child welfare and behavioral health services provider with facilities in Plymouth Meeting, Rosemont and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My "day job" is vice president and general counsel of the Cassatt Companies, a captive insurance group owned by Southeastern Pennsylvania hospital systems.

Karen Dunkman, Nominating Committee

My husband and I joined BMPC almost 40 years ago. Our two sons were baptized and confirmed here, and both were active in the Youth Program and the Youth Choirs. Over the years, I have served the church in many ways: Outreach Council, Board of Deacons, Hunger Task Force (chair for five years), Y-Group and Presbyterian Women, for which I held several offices, including moderator. As an Elder, I was chair of the Worship Committee. From 1999 to 2010, I was director of the Middleton Center. Worship at BMPC has been one of the cornerstones of my spiritual life, and I appreciate that it is a place that welcomes my questions as well as my commitment to Christ. I met many of my closest friends here. I look forward to participating on the Nominating Committee and participating in the process of selecting new leadership.

Whitney Hoffman, Nominating Committee

I joined BMPC in 2007 with my husband Ted. Two of our three daughters were baptized at the church and all attended the Weekday School where I served as chair of the Home and School Association as well as a member of the advisory council. I have enjoyed being an active

member as a co-chair of Y-Group and as a Sunday school teacher. I am currently in my last year of serving on the Children and Family Ministry Council after eight years. One of my favorite weeks each year is Vacation Bible Camp where I have been a group leader and volunteer for so long that I now have the pleasure of seeing my two older children become teen volunteers. I also am a member of the Mission Council. As a lifelong Presbyterian, I value the role of education and mission in my faith and strive to instill those values in my own life and those of my children. I look forward to serving the BMPC community in this new role.

Matt McGuirl, Nominating Committee

I joined BMPC in 2013 but had been attending services and participating in various activities regularly before my wife Peggy Hermann (a former Trustee and BMPC Foundation board member) and I were married at BMPC in 2003. Our daughters Finley, 12, and Katie, 15, are very active in BMPC Youth Ministry. Since January 2014 I have been a member of the group that runs the sound system in the Sanctuary. For nearly 20 years BMPC has been a very significant part of our family life. I look forward to serving the congregation on the Nominating Committee.

Gretchen Steck, Nominating Committee

My husband Paul and I have been BMPC members for 21 years. Our three children, Katie, Kara and Drew also found a home in the church. They were active members of the youth program and choirs, and they enjoyed participating in summer camps and mission trips. I was drawn in by our music program, and I have sung in the choir since we became church members. I also have served several terms as a deacon, one of them as the moderating chair. I am honored to be nominated to further my service to the Lord through additional participation in the life and fellowship at BMPC.