

Nominees for the 2029 Class of Elders & Deacons

April 26, 2026



Called to Ordained Ministry

“The call to ordained ministry in the church is the act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a council of the Church.”

Deacons:

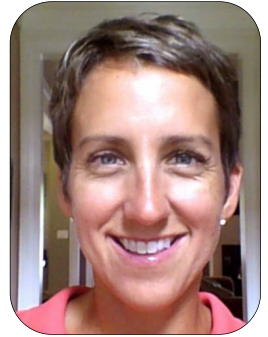
The Ministry of Compassion and Service

“The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress.”

Excerpt from the Book of Order

Deacon Nominees

Missy Dissinger and her husband, Bob, moved to Columbia in 2007 from Cincinnati, Ohio with their two daughters Madeline and Gabrielle. They have been members of the church since 2016 with both daughters avidly participating in youth group. Missy previously served as a Deacon and volunteers for Meals on Wheels during the summer.



Missy is currently an AP Environmental Science, AP Seminar, and Earth Science Teacher at Spring Valley High School. She can often be found supporting the youth through attending sports games and performances in addition to sponsoring the Project Planet Club.

Outside of work Missy loves to be active by doing Pilates, running, tennis, biking, hiking, reading, and gardening. She is looking forward to serving the church as a Deacon.



Craig Howard and his wife Tricia have been members of SVPC since 2017, and they are raising their three children—Hamilton (19), Zan (17), and Hugh (13)—in the church.

Craig is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. He is a CPA that has worked for American SpiralWeld Pipe Company LLC for over 10 years.

Craig has enjoyed volunteering and participating in multiple aspects of his children's sporting activities. When he is not at ASWP, Craig enjoys playing tennis and watching his children compete.

Amy Lytle has been a member at SVPC for almost 40 years. She is married to Bill Whitworth. Her four children, Sarah, Emily, Joseph and Melissa, were raised at SVPC and benefited from the many opportunities: Sunday school, Strikers, VBS, Jr. and Sr. High programs and mission trips. She LOVES being "Mimi" to five wonderful grandchildren.



Amy is a retired teacher from Richland School District Two. In her retirement, she has become a Master Naturalist and enjoys hiking, birdwatching and being outdoors.

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Deacon Nominees

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Amy volunteers at Camp Discovery and various nature-based programs in the Midlands. She is also an avid tennis player.

She feels truly blessed by our church and the church family. The dear friends she has made over the years have enriched and supported her and her family. She has attended and taught Sunday School, taught and directed Vacation Bible School, and previously served as a deacon. She looks forward to serving the church as a deacon again.

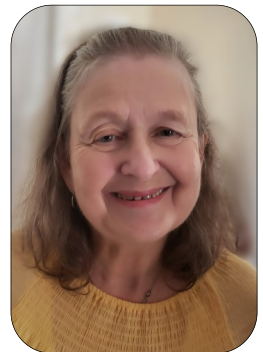


BJ Slovacek became a member of SVPC in 2025, having moved to Columbia in 2024 to be closer to family living in the area. She began attending regularly immediately after the move but had attended for many years previously whenever visiting the area. She attends the Revelations Service and the Take Two Sunday School class. As a family member of both her military dad and her husband she lived many places, but states that SVPC has always felt like a bit of a homecoming.

As a former financial aid officer for an international university based overseas, and a long time Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces volunteer, BJ understands the need for personal and community involvement to create a fulfilling life. She has served as a Girl Scout leader and Sunday School teacher. She and her late husband have four daughters and a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren to add to her joyful life. Looking forward to new opportunities for further involvement in church and community, BJ is an enthusiastic reader, loves baking, and enjoys time spent with family and friends.

Jackie Strickland was born in Charlotte, NC, where she was active at Bethel Presbyterian Church, serving as a deacon, teaching Sunday school, and leading youth trips to Montreat and beyond. Her husband Jim served alongside her as an elder.

Jackie attended Wingate College and East Tennessee University, and worked as a toddler teacher for 24 years. Following Jim's career, the Stricklands lived in Florida, Augusta, and Spartanburg before settling in Columbia, where they found and fell in love with this congregation, joining in 2019.



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Deacon Nominees

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Jackie has a heart for people, whether visiting in person or reaching out by phone. She has three children and six grandchildren that she adores! Along with her love for children, she enjoys dancing, swimming and singing—especially in the church choir.

She is honored to be considered for the role of deacon so that she may continue serving others.



Susan Whittle and her husband John have been married 44 years and have three grown children that were baptized at SVPC, and two grandchildren.

Susan is now retired but taught preschool for more than 15 years and loved working with the children!

She is a member of Kerygma Light Sunday school class and also enjoys attending the Wednesday morning Bible study class. In addition, Susan takes pleasure in volunteering with the Meals on Wheels program that takes place in the Potts Hall Kitchen at SVPC.

In her spare time, she enjoys hiking and visiting many national parks across the country with her husband. She is looking forward to serving the church as deacon.

Youth Deacon Nominee (2-year term)

Emma Claire Randall is a junior in the discovery program at Spring Valley High School. The Randall family have been members of the church since 2019.

Emma Claire plays lacrosse and is an active member in youth group, including participating in the Montreat youth trip every year. She is excited for the opportunity to grow in her faith and involvement in the church as a youth deacon.



Ruling Elders:

The Ministry of Discernment & Governance

“As there were in the Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so that New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people . . .

Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matthew 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.”

Excerpt from the Book of Order

Elder Nominees



Brian Clark and his wife, Erika, have been members of SVPC since 2013. They have four children who are very involved in the youth program at church. Brian has served previously as both an Elder and Deacon within the church. As an Elder, he served on the worship committee. He has also served with the Kairos prison ministry and is planning to take his kids on the Belize mission trip this coming July. Brian is also enrolled as a student in the Lay Pastor School of Theology sponsored by the Foothills Presbytery.

Brian has been a tennis coach his whole career and is currently the assistant pro at Forest Lake Club. He loves teaching and connecting with players and sharing his love of tennis with them. He considers it a blessing to be able to serve God's people and the church in any capacity. Brian and his family are so thankful for the church. They have met many wonderful people, built lasting friendships, and grown in their faith through the years. They are excited to see how God grows SVPC and uses it for His good in the community and around the world.

Paula Cox and her family have been members of SVPC since 1990. She has served previously as a Deacon, teaches youth Sunday School, attends the Wednesday morning Bible study and delivers Meals on Wheels as time permits. She attends the Revelations service and serves on the committee.



Paula is a retired nurse practitioner, working with oncology patients for over 40 years. She spends a lot of her time with her local grandchildren, Cameron and Kennedy and travels as often as she can to Jacksonville to see her son, Christopher, his wife Nicole and their 2 children, Ella and Everett. Her greatest joy is watching her grandchildren grow up in the church her children grew up in.



Jonathan Ewaldz has been a member of SVPC since 2007. He and his wife, Susanne, have been married for 21 years. Their children Parker (17) and Molly (13) are active in the church. He previously served as an elder and moderator of Building and Grounds. He has been active in the church's Habitat for Humanity events and serves as an usher for the Traditional service. He is excited to serve again as an elder.

Elder Nominees



David Gordon is a lifelong Presbyterian and active member of SVPC since 1988. David has served the church as a Deacon twice, Sunday school teacher, usher, Revelations Planning Committee member and has been a member of the Praise Band since the beginning of the Revelations service. Additionally, David served as the Youth Elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

David is a retired educator and served various roles during his 30+ years in the profession. He was a teacher, coach, Athletic Director and Assistant Principal spending most of that time in Richland School District Two. David began his career in 1985 at AC Flora High School as a teacher and a coach before moving on to Richland 2 in 1990. During that time he served as a school administrator and Athletic Director at EL Wright Middle School, Windsor Elementary School, and Ridge View High School. David was actively involved in the improvement of athletic facilities at Ridge View and was the creator of The Bojangles Bash, a National Elite high school basketball showcase.

David and his wife Jamie have been married for 41 years. Jamie is also actively involved at SVPC and is a past Elder and Deacon. David and Jamie have two sons, Tyler and Andrew, who grew up at SVPC and were actively involved in the church. David and Jamie are also blessed with two wonderful granddaughters.

Stevie Johnson has been a member of Spring Valley for more than 20 years. Originally the travel soccer schedule of her two sons dictated the need to attend the early Revelation service - a creature of habit, she continues to attend that service loving the contemporary service and music. Her passion is Missions and Outreach work where she has served for many years and teaching in the current event Sunday School class with her 'partners in crime' Mike Brackett and David Hedden. As her free time has expanded these last few years she is enjoying supporting Vacation Bible School, the Memorial Garden and The Chosen. Reducing her work-load to part-time recently allows her to still have her finger in residential development. Free time is spent on the tennis courts, playing with her three dogs, gardening and filling in the holes from the new puppy, and laughing with friends.



Elder Nominees



James McCallum has been a member of SVPC since 2001. He has been actively involved in many aspects of the church for many years, having previously served as an Elder. “Mr. Big James” was also a long-time youth advisor, and considers Christian education and youth fellowship to be among the most important things to the life of a church. He continues to teach Sunday School for the Coffee Talk Sunday School Class. He has been a frequent member of the church’s mission trips to Belize and the yearly Montreat Fall Retreat.

James is a physician and long-time medical educator, serving as a faculty member for several medical schools within the state. He is most proud of his role as Dad to Jane (a second year medical student) and Lizzie (a senior at Furman University). He lives in Ridgeway with his dog, cat, turkeys, peafowl, and sheep.

David McNeice and his wife Delacie became members of SVPC in August 2013. Their children, Parker and Emily, were both baptized at SVPC, and the family has felt a deep sense of belonging since their very first visit.

David served as an elder on the Building and Grounds Committee from 2016–2019 and as its moderator from 2017–2019. During his tenure, he supported the wide range of internal and external missions and outreach efforts hosted at SVPC’s facilities, giving him the opportunity to meet and work with the individuals who are hard at work behind the scenes.



Both David and Delacie were active members of the Road Race committee and participated in the event until the final race was held. David also previously served as moderator of the Habitat for Humanity mission and has participated in Habitat projects whenever possible.

He considers it a blessing to serve alongside fellow members of the congregation and to contribute to God’s work within the community. David is passionate about being engaged locally and values the time he spends supporting his family’s activities. Most evenings and weekends, he can be found at a baseball field, soccer field, futsal court, training facility or somewhere outdoors.

Elder Nominees



Dean Nass moved to Columbia about five years ago from South Florida to spend time with his father. He feels blessed to have had over four years of quality time with his father, including many rounds on the golf course. He is grateful to SVPC and the congregation for their support during his father's funeral memorial service. Dean currently serves on the Building and Grounds Committee at SVPC, and he looks forward to continuing to serve the church.

Dean had a career in various financial markets that took him to many places including New York, London, Los Angeles and Miami, before relocating to Columbia. He received a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).

Thomas Sanderson has been a member of SVPC since 2015. He and his wife, Becky, have three children—Patrick, Carolyn, and Robert—who are growing up in the life of the church.



Thomas works as a software engineer and supports the church by helping manage and maintain the technical aspects of the AV systems and network. He attends the Revelations service and plays a key role in ensuring that the technology behind worship services runs smoothly.

Outside of church and work, Thomas enjoys Yoga & Pilates, home-brewing beer, reading, and has a broad interest in electronics and technology. He looks forward to continuing to serve and support the church in this new capacity.



Powers Tanis has been a member of SVPC since 2016. She is married to James and they have two children, Adam (16) and William (9). She currently teaches the elementary Faith Formation class and has served the church as a Deacon in the past. Powers is the Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives at McAngus Goudelock & Courie by day, and an artist in her spare time. She looks forward to continuing to serve this amazing church community as an Elder.

Youth Elder Nominee (2-year term)



Greta Clutts is a rising junior at Spring Valley High School. She has been a member at SVPC for two years and is excited to serve as a youth elder.

Her favorite things about the SVPC church community are the friendships and relationships made with the people around you. Greta shares her love for the energy and bond of our youth group. Her favorite events is the Youth Montreat Trip in June.

In Greta's free time, she plays soccer and enjoys time with friends. She is looking forward to serving her church community in a meaningful way!

Current Elders:

- 2026** Jaq Bailey, Louie Bartlett (youth elder), Mike Brackett, Doug Caviness, Randi Conniffe, Ryan Holroyd, Rick Mathis, Ken McManus, Tom Moore, Mike Ryback
- 2027** Julie Coffey, Richard Coulter, Cathy Epps, Elizabeth Houck, Doug Lybrand, Susan Moore, Ken Murawski, Coleman Raley (youth elder)
- 2028** Leigh Bartlett, Helen Foard, Tricia Howard, Cathy Jansen, Mark Riley, Nick Sipe

Current Deacons:

- 2026** Ron Duncan, Jackie Moore, Lance Roper, Belinda Rutledge, Wendy Sherman
- 2027** Ruth Adams, Jo Ann Caviness, Angela Fomby, Stephanie Ryan, Jim Strickland
- 2028** Anna Bower, Erin Bower, Laura Griese, Lois Harmon

Trustees: Doug Caviness, Laura Griese, Ron Swinson

Nominating Committee: Ruth Adams, Drea Bender, Chris Campbell, Brian Clark, Cathy Epps, Ken McManus



SPRING VALLEY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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