

DEACONS – CLASS OF 2024



Andrea Bare

Andrea joined First Pres in the spring of 2020. She lives on the west side of Ann Arbor. Since joining, Andrea has enjoyed memories of reflective and insightful conversations with clergy. Over the next five years she is looking forward to being part of how First Pres continues to grow in depth and creativity as a result of learning through COVID and eventually welcoming a new senior pastor.

Andrea would like to contribute her positive energy and time to support fellow members of the congregation as an incoming Deacon.



Beth Caldwell

A member of the church since 1964 (over 50 years!), Mary Bethia (Beth) Caldwell has lived on the Northeast side of Ann Arbor since 1961, with the last three years at Glacier Hills Retirement Community. Beth remembers fondly all of the families and friends she has met over the past fifty years. She has also enjoyed the many family activities and holidays celebrated with friends from First Pres. Beth is excited about being able to attend worship services in person as well as other church activities again, looking forward to having our new minister on board, and getting to know our new cohort of resident ministers and the gifts that they bring to our congregation.

Beth is looking forward to being a Deacon to the First Presbyterian Church members who are residents of Glacier Hills, baking cookies for Coffee Hour, helping Presbyterian Women with Memorial Service receptions, and being able to share the needs of the GH residents with the First Presbyterian Church Staff.



Heidi Dodson

A member of the church since 2006, Heidi lives on the north side of Ann Arbor with her husband John. Her favorite memory of First Pres is during her first term as a Deacon from 2015-2017 when she learned of all the ways the deacons serve our First Pres community. Heidi is excited to see how the church will grow over the next five years, and how it figures out how to best adapt to all the changes happening within and outside our church community. She also looks forward to the time of new ideas when we hire a new pastor.

It is Heidi's wish to be able to serve this church and all its members with caring, kindness and compassion throughout her term as a Deacon.

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Barbara Eichmuller

Barbara is a relatively new member of First Pres, having joined in October 2020. She lives with her husband Tony in Travis Pointe along with their two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels Ally and Lula. As a member who joined during the COVID pandemic, Barbara was so grateful to be able to walk through the sanctuary on Christmas Eve and experience the community of First Pres. Her other favorite experience was when she attended the first in-person service with live music, which brought tears to her eyes. Barbara is looking forward to learning as much as she can about the Presbytery.

Barbara is hoping to continue to build on the community that first attracted her to First Pres. She wants to help other members feel as welcome as she did when she first joined. She is looking forward to helping to celebrate our 195th Anniversary, participating in the various volunteer activities and maybe a mission trip in the future.



Jesse Feyen

Jesse has been a member since 2017, and currently lives on the south side of Ann Arbor with his family. He remembers a particular time at the 2019 church retreat on Mackinac Island as being such a special time in a special place for his family to spend with their church family. It was great for them to spend the weekend in worship, seminars, and socializing with our faith community. He left that retreat feeling a closer connection to all there. Jesse is excited to see how First Pres will grow and evolve as we enter a new phase of leadership with the new opportunities for ministry and service, both for our current members as well as those we have not met yet.

Jesse's hope is to be able to show God's love to our community by providing support, care, and assistance wherever needed.



Beth Gerwig

Beth was a member from 1995 to 2004, and then rejoined when she relocated in 2019 to Ann Arbor. Currently residing in the south end of Ann Arbor, she is very excited to be moving to her new townhouse in Kerrytown in June of 2022. Beth remembers family night dinners when she created centerpieces, and after-dinner floor hockey, dancing, singing, and laughter, followed by fellowship for the adults and social time for the children. Church was fun, a bit silly, and a safe place to be herself! Normalizing diverse membership is her passion, and Beth looks forward for this to be the standard and not an ideal to work towards. Beth is also excited to see renovations underway in the Main Kitchen, Welcome Center, and other areas that show our building some love.

As a Deacon, Beth expects to demonstrate to each member and visitor that they add value to our community no matter what may confuse them about religious themes. She will practice being present and actively listen.

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Georgia Goodman

Georgia has been a member of First Pres for 37 years! She and her husband live on the east side of Ann Arbor. She remembers fondly the years she worked in the church office when she was able to interact with several members and friends during the week. She is very excited with the continuing and additional involvement in the church's programs and worship.

Georgia would love to see elders who would like a grandchild partner paired with a young person who would like a grandparent close by to form a relationship in the elder's home so s/he doesn't need to travel to meet. Just for fun and new perspectives.



Shana Horan

Shana has lived in a variety of areas around the Ann Arbor area, and currently lives on the south side of Ann Arbor near Briarwood Mall. She has been a member of First Pres for 40 years. Shana looks back fondly when she remembers the baptism of her daughter as a favorite time at the church. She is looking forward to the new senior pastor arriving, as well as meeting new members.

As a Deacon, Shana hopes to be able to reach out and serve members of the church and help to provide support for her chapel members in need.



John LeDuc

John has been a member at First Pres for almost 40 years. He has lived all over the area, in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Chelsea, and Saline, but currently lives in the South Packard Area. John's favorite memory at First Pres is attending Easter services with his family and looks forward to attending many more.

As a Deacon, John would like to help grow the Church and witness to more of the acceptance of Jesus Christ as a believer, and spread that Gospel in His name as a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor.

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Deborah MacVey

Deborah (Debbie) has been a member since 1980, and lives on the west side of Ann Arbor in the Wildwood neighborhood. Her favorite memories of First Pres include watching our little ones grow in their love for God and church. She particularly remembers a sixth grader arriving by bicycle one summer Sunday just as the church service was getting started. When she asked if the student was meeting a parent, the student replied “No, it’s just been a few Sundays since we have been to church, and I was the only one in my family who could come this morning, so I asked if I could come by myself.” She got this young worshipper settled in the sanctuary, and marveled at the wonder that had just happened! Debbie remains excited about the infinite possibilities for the church over the next five years.

As a Deacon, Debbie is hoping to be able to connect our members ...one to each other... so our members can get to know and care for one another.



Chloe Majorprice

Chloe, 14 years old, has attended First Pres since she was two. She lives in Manchester, and spends her time swimming and attending school, and also enjoys being with her friends in Ann Arbor and attending athletic activities. Her favorite first time memory at First Pres was at a Wednesday evening dinner where she watched a Veggie Tales video with Miss Debbie. Chloe is excited to spend more time with her friends and church family at First Pres. She looks forward to volunteering as a babysitter and helping out in the nursery as an “older” child. She also looks forward to participating in mission trips.

As a Deacon, Chloe hopes to be able to care for people when they need assistance, to start new fun, meaningful youth activities – like being an acolyte. She would also like to pray with people and make cookies with them, maybe even decorate cakes.



Mary McKeever

Mary has been a member of First Pres for almost 38 years. She lives on the Northeast side of Ann Arbor with her husband Paul. One of her favorite memories at First Presbyterian was participating in the Bethel Bible Series, led by Rev. Lois Colon. She attended thinking she was finally going to get all of her questions answered about the Bible. It turned out to be just the beginning because the increase in knowledge just generated new questions! Lois' class piqued her curiosity and sent her on a journey of study, spiritual development, and service that she expects will last the rest of her life. During the last 10 years Mary has also been a Stephen Minister.

Mary is delighted to be called to serve again as a Deacon during this exciting time for our church, and anticipates that as a returning deacon she will be drawing from much of what she learned and experienced as a Stephen Minister. She is especially excited about the charge to "love with open hearts, learn with open minds and serve with open arms," and will be looking for ways in which to carry out that charge as a Deacon.

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Nancy Oliver

Nancy has been a member for 12 years. She lives with her husband Gary, not far from the Leslie Golf Course on the north side of Ann Arbor. Nancy remembers fondly the deeply meaningful worship experiences and the rich fellowship they have enjoyed in all of their church related activities. She believes the next 5 years will be a critical time for our church as we seek God's wisdom in moving our church towards a viable future, especially given all of the changes our society now faces. Nancy views this as a time of challenge and opportunity to take bold steps!

As a Deacon, Nancy will be seeking to help build relationships with her Chapel members, and help them feel connected to the church family and to the life of the church.



Norm Samuelson

Norm has been a member of First Presbyterian Church for 20 years, and lives on the northwest side of Ann Arbor. Norm became a member at First Pres because of the wonderful people he had met here, the thoughtful sermons he listened to, and because of the opportunity to participate in the choir. Norm is looking forward to our church home continuing to be a place where we can all find peace, inspiration and fellowship.

As a Deacon, Norm hopes to be able to help promote the journey of peace, inspiration, and fellowship through the friendships he makes and continues to fulfill here.



Olive (Scott) Rigotti

Olive is a new member of First Pres, joining in May of 2020. Olive is getting married on September 17 and will be changing her last name to Rigotti. She currently lives in Ypsilanti. She fondly remembers a beautiful Christmas Eve midnight service in 2019 as the first candlelight service she had ever attended. She found it to be simply breathtaking. However, she believes her memories of getting married at First Pres will likely “take the cake” as her favorite memory at the church! Olive is excited to see how the church will grow and work to help our brothers and sisters in the community over the next few years.

As Deacon, Olive hopes to be able to help the church achieve its mission of being a welcoming place for all people to learn and grow in faith. She looks forward to being the hands and feet of Christ as a church officer.

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Nicki Sorter

Nicki has been a member of First Pres for about 15 years. She lives in Monroe. Nicki's favorite memory of the church is actually her children's memories. She remembers them coming home from a church group evening activity talking about playing hide and seek and sardines in the sanctuary. Nicki remembers growing up Catholic and being so scared to go into the sanctuary. The difference between how comfortable her kids are with church and how comfortable she was is amazing. They like going and they feel at home. She knew she made the right decision joining First Pres. Nicki is so excited to meet the new minister - whoever it ends up being. For her it's always exciting to see new perspectives.

As a Deacon, Nicki wants to help others get excited about the new minister and get to know him or her.



Jeanette Swartz

Jeanette has been a member of First Pres since 1999, and lives in Saline with her husband Barry. She looks back at fond memories when she thinks about how many ministers she and her husband have been guided by who were connected to this church; Rev. Malcolm Brown from Central Michigan University, and Rev. Budge and Anne Geer from Farmington Presbyterian Church. What joy fills their hearts! Jeanette is looking forward to seeing and feeling God's work in the regrowth and togetherness in mission of our congregation over the next 5 years.

As a Deacon, Jeanette wants to be a good steward of God's Love and Grace.



Sara Vander Voort

Sara has been a member of First Pres since 2001. She lives in the far northeast corner of Ann Arbor. A favorite memory of First Pres for Sara is of Michael Lindvall holding a little girl, dressed as the Spirit of Christmas (including tiny bells around her ankles) on his arm as the Christmas Eve Service lights went out and only a halo of light shone behind them. She is encouraged to see First Pres begin to do the kind of soul searching necessary to create and sustain a truly inclusive church, and equally excited to see the increasingly new and innovative ways we are integrating our children and young people into many more church activities. Her wish is that First Pres might become a second home to them.

Relying on her background in social work and community organization, Sara hopes as a Deacon to participate in plans for radical hospitality, and become involved in networking among other organizations supporting social justice.

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Julie Wheaton

Julie has been a member of First Pres since 1981. She lives on the west side of Ann Arbor. Julie has found First Pres to be a warm and supportive community that cares passionately for members and for the community at large. She will never forget the support that she and her husband Jim received as they braved nearly 20 years of Jim's Parkinson's disease. Julie is deeply committed to First Pres and enjoys the feel of the church as it integrates into the fabric of the community. She is looking forward to the future as part of this vibrant and caring church.

Julie is currently serving her third term as a Deacon and is excited to be entering her fourth. She loves being a Deacon and having the chance to be with families in times of joy and grief.

ELDERS – CLASS OF 2024



Jim Cameron

Jim has been a member since 2010. He lives on the west side of Ann Arbor in Scio Township. He remembers fondly attending the first meeting of his New Members class, and how welcome he felt. Jim also appreciates the ongoing relationships he shares (especially on the golf course!) with all of the wonderful friends he has made here. Jim is very excited for the future of First Pres, and sees only a positive growth and community. Jim describes his outlook as both “forward looking” and “looking forward.”

Jim has served on the Session before, and is energized and excited to serve once again.



Callie Feyen

Callie has been a member of First Pres since the spring of 2017. She lives on the south end of Ann Arbor. Callie is not a seeker of answers, but is always looking for “What Else?” She is a writer, and recalls a special memory of the first time her two daughters took communion. She writes: “I prefer to return to the story, as Dorothy Piatt explained to Hadley and Harper one winter morning in Monteith Hall, moments before they would take communion for the first time. Every time you take communion, a different part of you will be ready for it,” Dorothy said. “Nobody understands all of it. You’re stepping into a mystery and you’re standing there for a while.”

Callie asks “Why not believe the beauty you see? The beauty of dancing to make words known, the communion I’m never sure I’m ready to accept but take anyway, the dark and the silence, the spring air that arrives unexpectedly, the voices of those who don’t question what they’ve been given but instead, relish in it, the part of the story I’m looking for, and the part of the story that finds me.”



Steve Gerhardt

Steve has been a member of First Pres for most of his life. He lives on the east side of Ann Arbor with his wife Suzie. They have been married almost 50 years! As a member of the property committee for the last two years, Steve has seen first-hand some of the issues that the church faces going forward: aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, no air conditioning, aging membership, financial instability and a projected general decline in religious participation. Fortunately, I’ve seen the positive side of our church, too; an updated mission statement, a new strategic plan, a comprehensive maintenance/capital budget matrix, and a significant increase in church management cohesiveness, common vision and direction.

Steve is excited and is looking forward to this opportunity to serve and contribute to resolving our issues and setting the church on a foundation for long term theological, financial and infrastructural growth.

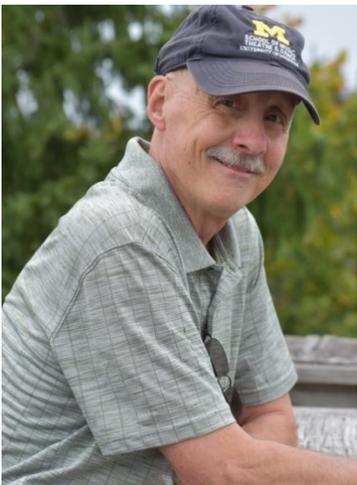
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Gail Grady

Gail has been a member of First Pres since December 2014, and lives on the west side of Ann Arbor. Her favorite memory of First Pres goes back to August last year when Melissa Anne asked her to do a “Faith in Action” announcement. This was back when we were videotaping the Sunday service on Thursday evening. Gail writes: “When I left the sanctuary at the appointed time, I suddenly realized I was IN CHURCH for the first time since March. I decided to sneak down the stairs and back up into the last row of the sanctuary. I sat there for a few moments in awe. Then realized I could stand during the hymns, sing at the top of my lungs with my red and white polka dot mask on, and I thanked God for being there. I was in joyful tears.”

Gail is excited that First Pres is moving to become a more welcoming and accessible congregation in our community, and she’s excited, honored, and grateful to be a part of it.



Rick Ingram

Rick has been a member of First Pres since 2016. He lives on the south end of Ann Arbor in Pittsfield Township. Rick served as the Interim Director of Music at First Pres from August 2018 to February 2019. Rick remembers fondly in 2018 the Chancel Choir All Saints’ Day performance of “German Requiem” by Johannes Brahms. It is one of Rick’s all-time favorite pieces, and to present it on All Saints’ Day was a moving experience for everyone involved, including musicians and the congregation. Rick believes the next five years will be an important era in the history of the church. With the hiring of a head of staff, several newly hired staff members and long serving staff, it will be important that the congregation has strong lay leadership to chart a dynamic future for the church in our community. He believes it will take dedication of all parties to work together to implement a reimagined mission to meet the challenges of our time.

As an Elder, Rick hopes to help encourage a positive, thoughtful influence upon the decision-making process at First Pres. Together he believes that we can build our shared vision of ministry and outreach to the Ann Arbor community and beyond.

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Chris King

Chris has been a member of First Pres since 1991. He lives in southwest Ann Arbor in Pittsfield Township. Chris fondly remembers trips to the Pittsburgh Project as a youth leader. Chris is excited to be approaching a new chapter in the history of First Presbyterian with the selection and installation of our next Senior Pastor. As these changes unfold, he believes our congregation will face new challenges and opportunities.

Chris states that First Presbyterian of Ann Arbor has a strong tradition of congregational leadership that has allowed our church to serve God and our community for the past 195 years. He is hopeful that he will be able to make a small contribution toward continuing that tradition.



Lynne Lande

Lynne has been a long time member of First Pres, was baptized here, attended regularly as a child, and rejoined again after relocation in 1981. She lives in rural Ann Arbor, north near Joy Road. Lynne has countless happy memories of her life at First Pres: potlucks and Christmas pageants, Youth Group, and her wedding. More recent highlights include a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Spain, and a wonderful weekend at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Her most enduring memory, however, is sitting in the sanctuary with her family on Sunday mornings.

This will be Lynne's second term on Session. Serving in the past deepened her connection and commitment to the church. She is excited to think about new pastoral leadership and the implementation of the visions and plans for the future. Lynne hopes to bring a long life of experience, some wisdom, and leadership skills to her role on Session. Most importantly, she will bring her love of this church and faith in God to guide her way.



Marti Wendler

Marti has been a member since 1995. She lives in the Saginaw Hills subdivision west of Ann Arbor. Marti is currently the chair of the Congregational Life Committee. While there have been so many great experiences here at First Pres, Marti remembers the mission trips she took to Peru and Nicaragua as her favorite. She went with the greatest teams each trip and she met so many wonderful people in both of those countries. Marti believes that First Pres is poised to move forward and just knows that whatever path that takes, this church has always been such a vibrant and resourceful place that it will only become even more dynamic! Marti is ready to be a part of that change.

Marti is ready and excited to change the culture of First Pres to make it more intentionally welcoming. She doesn't know what that looks like, but she knows it will feel fantastic and she can't wait!