



# **Candidates for Boards and Lay Leadership**

**To be presented to the congregation at  
the Annual Meeting,  
June 9, 2019**

*Brief self-introductions to our leadership candidates, who were selected by the Nominating Committee.*

*Find descriptions of Boards, Deacons and the Leadership Council at the back of the booklet.*

## **BOARD OF COMMUNITY LIFE NOMINEES**

### **Michael Crane, 1-year term**

I was baptized at PCC many years ago as a child, when our family were all members, and I have a long history of relatives who have been members. My parents met on a PCC trip to Chicago; they were married in Plymouth, as were several of my uncles and aunts. Our family ended up moving away, and I spent eight years in Chicago and 10 years outside of NYC in jobs with Best Buy, where I still work. I met my wife, Cathy, in Chicago. In 2010, when we moved back to Minnesota, we were looking for a spiritual place where we could feel at home; Plymouth was the only church we went to and immediately felt at home. We joined the church a few years later and are blessed to be a part of PCC. I have worked at Best Buy for more than 30 years, and my wife and I enjoy our three cats, traveling, the Cubs & Twins, music and spending time outdoors.



### **Janice Erdahl Dennie, 3-year term**

I currently live in St. Anthony Village and was born and raised in the Twin Cities! I've been blessed to attend Plymouth Church since I was a wee baby—baptised, confirmed and married by Howard Conn, Minister Emeritus. My two sons, Matthew

and Phillip, were also baptised here, and Phillip was married at Plymouth Church, with Jeff Sartain officiating. I'm a grateful 50-Year Member.



My career background has been extensive, including Realtor and travel director. I currently work with Dominion Inc., the third largest affordable housing company in the United States. I work with new developments and the marketing of apartment communities around the country, including one opening near Plymouth in October 2019. I have served on many of Plymouth's boards and am excited for the opportunity to be a part of the Board of Community Life. Being inclusive and welcoming to new visitors and our members is a true passion for me. I look forward to contributing to this important board.

### **Molly Piper, 3-year term**

I joined Plymouth this year. As a new member, I eagerly hope to bring my energy and pep to the Board of Community Life. I've been married to my husband, Abraham, for 15 years, and we have four children—Orison, 14; Morrow, 10; Cadence, 8; and Whitsun, 8. I'm a speech language pathologist by training and worked at Children's Hospital in Minneapolis for 10 years before we moved to Los Angeles in 2016.



Upon moving back to the Twin Cities this fall, I've been working as a project manager for a real estate agent. I'm organized and like people and logistics, so this has been a fun change for me. But the four kids keep me busy most of the time! I love to knit, sing, hang out with friends, learn about and drink wine, go bowling, attend fun community events, go on trips, take walks and lots more. I have loved being a part of this church, and I'm so heartened by the changes toward deeper and more intentional community happening at Plymouth. We are a vibrant, engaged church with so much to offer our members, attenders and the community around us. Thank you for your consideration.

### **Judy Schneebeck, 3-year term**

I was born in Machias, Maine, and was baptized in the Center Street Congregational Church. My husband, Hal, and I joined Plymouth in January 2017, about 10 years after moving from Des Moines to the Twin Cities. In Des Moines, we were members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ for almost 40 years and were active in the life of the church. I welcome the opportunity to serve on the Community Life board and to participate in the life of yet another Plymouth Church. As a retired public school English teacher and curriculum administrator, I bring a spirit of learning to the challenge. Hal and I have four kids, two of whom are married to our daughter and son, and four grandkids. All live in Minneapolis.



### **Returning Members**

**Heidi McCallister, 2 years**

**Fran Neir, 2 years**

**Remona Weaver, 2 years**

**Matthew Wiandt, 1 year**

**Brad Wieman, new 1-year term**

### **BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION NOMINEES**

**Jean Thomson, 3-year term**

I've been a Plymouth member since the 1963 confirmation class; I feel fortunate to have been part of this wonderful community for a pretty long time! During these past 56 years, I've been at various times a Sunday School teacher (6th grade) and a member of the Boards of Religious Education, Outreach, Deacons and Trustees. I've devoted the most time to working on Stewardship, including annual and planned giving. It's great to observe the strong congregational support that exists for our church. After a hiatus spent caregiving for my husband and mother, I am glad to return to volunteering for Plymouth. Although I am retired, I like staying active through volunteer work, such as being part of the Giving Voice chorus, a community chorus designed for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. Singing for me is a fun challenge, and it makes me



appreciate our choir all the more. Given my upcoming board work, I should probably mention that I don't mind counting offering after church services!

### **Returning Members**

**Todd Aldrich, new 3-year term**

**Jen Glaeser, 1 year**

**Jill Hennesen, Chair, 1 year**

**Mike McGettigan, 2 years**

**Rick Neville, 2 years**

**Eric Olsen, 2 years**

**John Schenk, new 3-year term**

**Melinda Wellvang, 1 year**

### **BOARD OF FINE ARTS NOMINEES**

**Mark Larson, 3-year term**

Music is what drew me to Plymouth. I had long wanted to hear



Phillip Brunelle play at the church, and one August Sunday morning we showed up. I was pleased to learn that not only music but also theatre and visual and literary arts played a prominent role at Plymouth. My avocation has always been music, and I previously served on a community concert board

when I resided in West Central Minnesota. I am currently a member of the School of Education faculty at Capella University. Prior to that, I was in an administrative position at St. Cloud State University, worked in corporate outplacement for over 18 years and held teaching positions at two community colleges. My spouse, Susan, and I joined Plymouth in 2001.

### **Returning Members**

**Lynnette Black, 1 year**

**Cyn Bloom, Chair, 2 years**

**Diane Hallberg, new 3-year term**

**Elizabeth Hannaher, 2 years**

**Eric Hugunin, 1 year**

**John Kulstad, new 3-year term**

**Rachel Walker, 1 year**

## **BOARD OF OUTREACH NOMINEES**

### **Chris Church, 2 years**

No bio or image available.

### **E.J. Kelley, 3-year term**

E.J. has long felt pulled towards outreach and service work. He also



is a practitioner of centering prayer and believes that contemplation and action are mutually supportive and reinforcing. E.J. would like to see our community take even more steps to put into practice the radical hospitality and compassion that we espouse on Sundays. E.J. loves spending time outdoors—in all seasons—and finds this time to be an important part of his spiritual journey.

## **Returning Members**

### **Sally Cassellius, new 3-year term**

### **Birdie Cunningham, new 3-year term**

### **Peter Eichten, Chair, 1 year**

### **Mary Jordan, 2 years**

### **Sue Moses, 1 year**

### **Peter Vitale, 1 year**

### **Virginia “Gingie” Ward, 2 years**

## **BOARD OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION NOMINEES**

### **Kristin Bottemiller, 3-year term**

No bio or image available.

### **Anne Cheatham, 3-year term**

Hi! I’m Anne Cheatham. My husband, Jereb, and our two children (son Jack, 14, and daughter Charley, 9) have been attending



Plymouth for about a year, and Jereb and I became members in February. I grew up in the Twin Cities and, after graduating from St. Olaf and marrying Jereb in the summer of 1997, moved to Los Angeles as a Teach For America corps member, teaching elementary school to inner city kids in Compton. Jereb and I stayed in California for six years, then

moved back to St. Paul, where I taught at Adams Spanish Immersion School, then moved back to California (Long Beach) in 2006 where I decided to give up my teaching career for a while to become a stay-at-home mom. With the exception of one year living abroad in Panama, we stayed in Long Beach until our move home to St. Paul almost two years ago. Some of my favorite things to do are run, read, cook, go on long dog park hikes with our enormous German Shorthaired Pointer, Ozzy, and go on adventures with my family. I'm excited to get to know the people of Plymouth and all of its wonderful work better by serving on the Spiritual Formation Board!

### **Renée Macomber, 3-year term**

Almost 40 years ago, Gary, our two young daughters and I came to Plymouth. There are three church experiences that have given me a lot of satisfaction and joy over the years. The first has been the opportunities to go on Plymouth Women's Retreats at the ARC retreat center. The second is volunteering at Lydia Apartments for the past 15 years. It is one of my favorite places to hang out! And the third started just over two years ago when I joined the Committee for Children, Youth and Families. I thoroughly enjoy the people who serve with me and I will be a co-chair starting in the fall. My two now-grown daughters live in Colorado with their families, and we thoroughly enjoy the times we are able to spend with them. My special interests include reading, travel, dinners with friends and getting together with the several women's groups I participate in. In a few weeks, we will be moving into Loring Green West, and I am looking forward to being closer to Plymouth and participating in more of the evening activities, such as 100 Hands.



### **Paige Schuller, 3-year term**

Paige Schuller is a senior at Southwest High School in Minneapolis. She loves music and participates in choir at her school and at Plymouth. She also enjoys being a part of theater productions at her school. She has attended Plymouth with her family since she was in first grade and was confirmed in 2017.



## **Returning Members**

**Corbin Dillon, 2 years**

**Becky Dougherty, Chair, 1 year**

**Josh Scharback, new 3-year term**

**Jeanne Wren Schuller, 1 year**

**Johanna Schussler, 2 years**

**Stacy Yoakiem, 2 years**

## **BOARD OF WORSHIP NOMINEES**

**Mary Baker, 3-year term**

I've been around Plymouth Church most of my life, spending my early childhood here and later joining in 1971. During the time my children were young in the 1980s, I chaired a committee that planned retreats and also was on the Board of Deacons. Later, I became one of the Faith Community Nurses and was involved with the Health Ministry Committee of the Board of Member Care. Plymouth has had a variety of changes through the years: The present is no exception. I look forward to serving with the Board of Worship as our church community considers both new ways of worship and the familiar traditions that we know.



**Jenny French, 3-year term**

Jenny French is a member of Plymouth, section leader and soloist in the Plymouth Choir and an interim member of the Board of Worship. Jenny's husband Ryan and their two children, Tilda (6) and Margot (3), are also active in the church's educational programming. Jenny was introduced to Plymouth Church through Philip Brunelle while singing in the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers—also where she met her husband—another credit to Philip! When she isn't singing, Jenny works in leadership development and organizational effectiveness at Ameriprise. For fun, she chases around her children and occasionally has a few minutes to read books. She is excited to be participating in a board at Plymouth to support the legacy of transformative worship in this incredible faith community.



### **Nicole Gjevre, 3-year term**

No bio or image available.

### **Chris Lance, 3-year term**

Chris grew up in northern New York State but lived in the South for most of his adult life, having moved to Minneapolis from Austin, Texas, in the fall of 2016. As an adult, he has worked largely in nonprofit and educational settings and is currently employed with People Serving People, an organization that helps homeless and at-risk children and their families manage crisis situations and build a strong foundation for long-term success.



Chris's studies and experiences have led him to practice mostly in Zen Buddhist communities over the past 20 years, but being introduced to the writings of Father Richard Rohr about five years ago has had a profound impact on his spiritual journey. He became a member last fall after being drawn in by the open-hearted, welcoming spirit of Plymouth (plus the lively music of First Service and the preaching!) and looks forward to benefiting the church and growing together with other members by serving on the Board of Worship.

### **Andy Schou, 3-year term**

Andy grew up a PK (preacher's kid) in a Lutheran church in North Dakota. After meeting at St. John's University/College of St. Benedict, Andy and his wife Brittany have moved around the



country and have had the fun experience of "church shopping" each time. Through those experiences, Andy has seen many different worship services, which will help him bring a unique perspective to the Plymouth Board of Worship. Andy's day job as a Financial Controls Advisor at Cargill keeps him sitting

indoors all day, so outside of work he enjoys anything that keeps him active and/or outdoors. Andy and Brittany live in Golden Valley with their two boys, Oliver (5) and August (2), who definitely help with keeping active. The whole family loves adventures and experiences of all kinds—biking, hiking, traveling, food, drink, museums, Twins games and hanging out with friends and family.

## **Returning Members**

**Jamie Bonczyk, new 1-year term**

**Andrea Bubula, 2 years**

**Nancy Geertz-Larson, chair, 1 year**

**Penelope “Penny” Needham, 1 year**

**Maureen Tanis, 2 years**

## **DEACONS**

**Annette Atkins, 1-year term**

Brought to Plymouth on a date, Annette was captured first by Vivian Jones’s preaching and Martha Hendricks’s pastoral prayers. She



has found and continues to find other buttresses for her spiritual growth in the music, of course, the flowers, the community, the education program, the art exhibits, the Christmas Festival, the retreats.

She served a one-year term as a Deacon (in our previous leadership model) but counts her work on the Lenten Meditation booklets as her most sacred work for Plymouth. After several decades of teaching at Saint John’s University/College of Saint Benedict, she continues her work as a historian, writing and speaking, actively involved with the Minnesota Historical Society and the Stearns (County) History Museum. She lives within walking distance of Plymouth and aspires to walking more often!

**Karen Barstad, 3-year term**

I joined Plymouth Church in 1987. I grew up in the Lutheran Church, but I was drawn to Plymouth because it felt like a place where I



could wrestle with the complexities of faith and be encouraged to ask the hard questions. Plymouth became my spiritual home as well as my launching pad for social action and community care. During my years at Plymouth, I’ve served on numerous boards and committees, most recently on the Leadership Council, Board of Worship, Legacy Giving

Committee and Gun Violence Prevention group. I also volunteer for Third Sunday Meal and am a BeFriender. I’ve lived in Minneapolis since 1981 and have worked in banking all of my career. Currently, I’m a compliance officer for Alerus Financial, but retirement is not

far off. I'm committed to helping Plymouth be a vibrant, relevant and compassionate presence both within and outside our church doors. I'm excited about our future and grateful for the staff and church members who make our good work possible.

### **Jeff Hall, 3-year term**

Jeff grew up attending a Methodist church the Philadelphia suburbs, then attended Amherst College in Massachusetts, where he met



Margaret Truesdell. After serving in the U.S. Peace Corps in Sierra Leone from 1987 to 1989, Jeff attended business school in Boston. In 1992, Jeff became a member of Plymouth and married Margaret with Vivian presiding, Philip Brunelle playing and Maria Jette singing. Their kids are fifth-generation Plymouth members, and all three—Madeline, Isabel, Christopher—completed confirmation with Paula

and joined the church. Jeff has served on what was then called the Neighborhood Committee, Jim Gertmenian's task force to increase Plymouth-neighborhood engagement, and on the board of Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation (before it was renamed Beacon) for several years as it was being formed and hired Lee Blons. Jeff is a real estate developer. He is also the founder/Board Chair of OneVillage Partners, a community-led international development non-profit helping 18 villages and 25,000 people in Sierra Leone work towards self-sufficiency. Jeff leads annual trip to the villages, and over 35 Plymouth members have traveled to Sierra Leone.

### **Jim Lawrence, 3-year term**

Born in Philadelphia and raised as a Methodist, James "Jim" Lawrence was highly influenced in college by the controversial



liberal sermons of Yale University Chaplain William Sloan Coffin, Jr.

Jim, his wife Mary, and their three toddler sons moved to Minneapolis in 1997 when Jim joined Northwest Airlines. In 1999, after Jim accepted the CFO role at General Mills, and after attending Plymouth for two years, Mary and Jim became

Plymouth Church members. Hoping to accommodate active young families (including their own!), the Lawrences helped to establish

Plymouth's First Service.

Jim and Mary left Minnesota temporarily from 2007 to 2015 to pursue new jobs, variously, in London, NYC and DC. In London, they attended Holy Trinity Brompton, a progressive Anglican church led by Vicar Nicky Gumbel.

Plymouth Church has been a central part of the Lawrences' spiritual life. All three sons were confirmed at Plymouth, and Jim's father and mother's memorial services were conducted at the church. This past November, they celebrated the short life of their youngest son, Thomas, who took his life after a 5-year struggle with bipolar disorder.

Jim believes that Plymouth Church embodies the sentiment of his college chaplain: "The world is too dangerous for anything but truth and too small for anything but love." He says, "I am honored to have the opportunity to serve Plymouth Church, a great church in a great city."

### **Returning Deacons**

**Peg Birk, 1 year**

**Claire Colliander, Treasurer, 2 years**

**Katie Dillon, Clerk, 2 years**

**David Homans, 1 year**

**Brian Siska, Moderator, 2 years**

### **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OFFICERS**

**Sarah Lehman, Leadership Council Chair, 1 year**

Sarah lives in South Minneapolis with her husband, Matt Thomas, and children Ellie and Peter. She served on the Transition Planning



Taskforce and the Board of Outreach for four years, two years as chair. Currently she teaches Church School, organizes 100 Hands and serves as Leadership Council Chair-Clect. Sarah is very excited to continue working with the Leadership Council, to support the work of the boards and to explore the church's future during this time of transition.

### **Jason Schuller, Chair-Elect, 1 year**

Jason and his family joined Plymouth Congregation Church because of its focus on social justice and its incorporation of the arts and other religions in its worship. He served on the Board of Finance and Administration and has also taught Sunday School. During the week, Jason works as lawyer in the wealth management department of a bank. He looks forward to serving the church as it continues to evolve. Jason and his wife, Jeanne, live in Southwest Minneapolis with their teenage children, Paige and Aaron, and their two dogs.



### **Nancy Gores, Secretary, 1 year**

I joined Plymouth in 1986 in order to be a Stephen's Minister (our current BeFriends). Under our prior governance, I served as a Deacon, Trustee and played second base for the Plymouth Rocks softball team. I served on the search committees for Jim Gertmenian, Paula Northwood and Dan Wolpert. Recently, I have been secretary for the Interim Task Force and serve on the new standing Nominating Committee. I have been a litigation attorney for 40 years and am in my 16th year as a member of the St. Louis Park School Board. I met Kent in Guild Hall, we were married at Plymouth, and our community helped me heal when our marriage ended. Plymouth nurtured our son Jacob Wood's spiritual and community growth.



### **Returning Council Member**

**Mary Welfling, Archivist, new 1-year term**



**The Board of Community Life** oversees numerous groups and programs, including new member classes and receptions, support ministries, fellowship groups, all-church events, and recruitment and management of volunteer opportunities.

**The Board of Finance & Administration** oversees the Church's finances (annual budget, investments, endowments and stewardship campaign), building and grounds and general administration.

**The Fine Arts Board's** mission is: *To awaken the Plymouth Congregation to art around us, and within us.* The FAB oversees programs in the visual, performing and literary arts for the benefit of the congregation and the community at large (excluding activities relating to church worship services).

**The Board of Outreach** connects the Congregation with Plymouth's wider community through acts of compassion that address the immediate needs of those vulnerable in our society, and through advocacy for social change that furthers justice as a realization of the Realm of God.

**The Board of Spiritual Formation** is responsible for spiritual exploration, education and enrichment programs offered to members, from babies through adults.

**The Board of Worship** collaborates with the clergy and church musicians in creating worship services that are welcoming, nurturing, innovative and inspirational, and that respect both our love for tradition and our desire to embrace new worship experiences.

**The Leadership Council** is made up of the chairs of the six boards, clergy, three officers and the Church Archivist. They join in the oversight of boards; with board chairs, consider new initiatives; put into operation the strategic direction set by the Deacons; and more.

**The Deacons** have legal and fiduciary responsibility for Plymouth, set strategic direction for the church, recommend an annual budget to the congregation and develop governing policies and a system of accountability to monitor that goals are being met.

**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

1900 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis

[www.plymouth.org](http://www.plymouth.org)

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