

TESTIMONIES OF Session and Diaconate Candidates

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FALL 2020



In this booklet you'll find the testimonies of the candidates nominated to serve as Elders and Deacons, as well as those nominated to serve in Session, Diaconate, and Trustee leadership positions.

SUMMARY OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

There is a standing committee of Session called the Nominations Committee which consists of four elders, the chairman of Diaconate, and one representative each from the Sunday School, Men's Council, and Women's Council. This committee is chartered to recommend to Session a slate of candidates to fill key leadership positions in alignment with scripture, the Book of Church Order, and Church By-laws. Typical leadership positions to be filled include four positions each for the Session and Diaconate (with one nominee each serving as Trustee) to serve a three-year term and individuals to serve on the Council of Shepherding Elders and the Council of Ministering Deacons.

The congregation is asked to submit nominations to the full committee during the month of April. The committee collects the nominations and meets to select a potential slate of candidates for the above leadership positions. After much deliberation and prayerful consideration, a list of candidates is submitted to the Session for their approval. Council candidates are then examined by the Session as to their qualifications as set forth in the Church By-laws and the Book of Church Order. After Session approval, the names of the candidates are announced to the congregation.

ELDERS NOMINATED TO THE SESSION, CLASS OF 2023



SAM DUNLAP
SESSION CANDIDATE

When I was a teenager, God saved me from the penalty of my sin, gave me eternal life, and adopted me as His son. For over 50 years now since being born again, God's persevering grace has continued to keep and bless me. Peggy and I joined Grace Presbyterian in 1976 and were blessed to serve Grace's Adult Special Ed. Ministry for many years. God used fellow Christians to mentor me during lunch-time Bible Studies for most of my 40 years at Caterpillar. In retirement, I have served Grace's Missions Committee, Washington and North Peoria Community Groups, Campus Outreach, PNT's Mission to North America and Grace's Springfield Church Plant. In His grace, God continues working in my life to change me in ways that save me from the power of sin in my life.

1 Jn. 3:1-2, 2 Cor 4:6-7, Ps. 16:11



SCOTT STEVENS
SESSION & TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

I was raised in a Christian home and accepted Christ as my personal savior at an early age during a Bible School group event in Hanna City. Through my school years and college, God has provided me with Christian friends, family and acquaintances which have helped me to walk uninterrupted with Him. I know that I am a sinner and will continually face challenges. Through God's grace and His plan for me, He will guide my every step until I am with Him in Heaven one day. I frequently pray that God will work in and through my life and that He will use me to His greatest benefit.

My family has attended Grace Presbyterian since 2000 and serve in the Grace Kids Ministries (1st & 2nd Grade). My wife, Missy, and I have been married since 1994 and have been blessed with two daughters, Sarah and Laura.



JOEL FEUCHT
SESSION CANDIDATE

I was saved on September 7, 1986, after a long struggle to discern the truth about salvation through faith and not of works. Through the testimony of several and the prayers of many, I was convicted of my sins and threw myself on His mercy. A key part of my spiritual growth was a Moody class at Grace on the book of Romans where I learned that the Bible can be studied and understood.

My wife, Dawn, who played a big part in my spiritual journey, and I have a great family: Caleb and his wife Kelsey (who are the parents of our grandsons, Harvey and Aksel), Weston, Maria, and Maelyn.



ADAM SAATKAMP

SESSION CANDIDATE

I grew up on a dead-end street two houses from a cornfield. The home I grew up in was Christian. The town was rural. I learned service and love from my parents and their friends. I came to fully understand my need for God's grace when

I was eight years old. I graduated at 18 and moved to a new city for college. This new city was 50 times the size of my hometown and had as many people per square mile as my hometown had in its entirety.

Early in college, I took a few classes with professors who were less than friendly toward Christianity. I knew what the Bible taught and I knew I believed it, but I lacked skills to defend my faith in an intellectual way. Fortunately, someone introduced me to Francis Schaeffer, his writings to be more precise, as Schaeffer died when I was nine months old. At twenty years of age, I found in my hands a 350 page trilogy that changed my life. After reading his work, I realized that thinking and faith were, in fact, complimentary. I quickly consumed many of his books and found other books by men and women defending the faith. Looking back, God was extremely gracious to me during college. He helped me construct a Biblical view of His world, its current state, and its ultimate restoration.

Stephanie and I met at Grace. This year we celebrate 10 years of marriage. We married at the end of our college careers, and I began working in public accounting. After a few years and the birth of our first son, Quinn, we moved to East Asia to work with Cru. We spent two years in Asia and came back with another son, Silas. Last summer, we added yet another son, Jeshua, into the mix. Currently, I teach accounting at Illinois Central College, we serve on the leadership team for the Heartbeat ministry, and volunteer with Bridges International, a ministry to international students.

DIACONATE, CLASS OF 2023



CRAIG HARLAN

DIACONATE & TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

I brought my family to Grace Presbyterian Church in 2005. The focus of our previous church was not spiritually fulfilling. Since coming to Grace my family has grown and our two daughters have grown significantly in their walk with Christ. My wife of 30 years, Glenda, has always inspired me to love and honor God. Our two daughters, Christina (28) and Andrea (25), have been wonderful blessings in our lives and are also active at Grace.

I am a member of the Cornerstone Sunday School class and attend Mid Week Grace. I also assist with communion setup and serving, immersion baptism, and support special events and spring cleanup. After being installed as a Deacon in 2015, I have served on the Finance Committee, served as Chairman of Sacraments Committee, was a member of a Journey Group, and led a Journey Group the last three years. For 2020 I have been serving as Chairman of the Diaconate.

I grew up in a Christian home but did not accept Christ until my senior year in college. While in school I drifted in my faith as I got caught up in some of the trappings of campus life. Fortunately, some faithful believers from Campus Crusade took me under their wings and shared their spiritual walk and stories with me. One night, I found myself in a small group; after listening to the others share their testimonies, I felt overcome with a passion to give my life to Christ. It was on that night in April 1988 that I gave my life to Christ. Since that time, He has blessed my life richly.

In looking back through my life, I can see His hand at work as I know he has always been by my side in both life's challenges and joys. He truly is an awesome God.



STEPHEN CORDES
DIACONATE CANDIDATE

My parents began attending Grace Presbyterian Church a couple years before I was born because they found it to be a place where the Bible was faithfully preached. Based on what I learned at Grace, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior at a young age. I continued to grow through the Sunday School, choir, Brigade, and youth programs. I learned (and continue to learn) how to let God be Lord of all areas of my life, developing a lifestyle that is pleasing to Him.

I continued to grow in the knowledge and truth of the Scripture through attending Covenant College, the official college of our denomination. Julie and I spent the first few years of our marriage in another state, but we always knew that we would come back to the area to be near family and so that Grace Presbyterian Church could impact our children as it did us. And it has, with all three being active believers.

We attend the Cornerstone Sunday School class. I volunteer in the Television Studio and perform with the Symphonic Winds, while Julie serves in the Children's Ministry.

It is a great and humbling honor to be nominated to serve on the Diaconate. I look forward to leading this piece of God's Kingdom through the next three years of opportunities and challenges.



JACOB FAW
DIACONATE CANDIDATE

I was raised in a home that brought me to Grace every Sunday growing up. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior at the age of 5. I went to a different church during my high school years but returned to Grace about the time that I got married to my wonderful wife, Andrea, 21 years ago. Together we have four girls, Ellie (16), Sophie (13), Maddie (9) and Ava (6). I am happy to say that all four of them have accepted Christ as their Savior and I truly enjoy watching them continue to follow Him every day. My wife and I pray daily together and one of our largest, if not the greatest, desires is for our children to continue to follow the Lord after they have begun their lives out from underneath our roof.

My wife and I have been involved in different aspects of Vacation Bible School for many years and have also assisted with the Taste of Grace. We also greatly enjoy doing some of the more “hands-on” work in the church. I am also involved in the Widows Care ministry. I hope to continue doing the Lord’s work by listening to His calling and doing what it is that He wants me and my family to do.



PAUL ZWART

DIACONATE CANDIDATE

Looking back upon my life, I can see the hand of God. And although we may not always understand what he is doing, we can trust in His promises.

I have been a member of Grace Presbyterian church for 25 years but my faith journey began much earlier. I was born into a Christian home where my parents took me to church from the time I was born. From a very young age, I had the opportunity to hear the Bible stories and learn about Jesus and as a small child put my faith in Him. In junior high and high school, my pastor, Rev. Daniels, challenged and encouraged me to grow deeper in my relationship with Christ and in service to others. In college, I actively served as a Sunday School teacher and youth group leader with continued mentoring from Rev. Daniels.

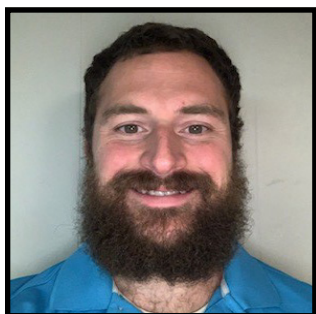
When I graduated from college, I received a job offer with Caterpillar and moved to Peoria where I became a member of Grace and a leader in their Young Adult Ministries group, Shiloh, which is where I met my wife, Sheryl.

After getting married, Sheryl and I began serving in Grace Student Ministries where we served for fourteen years. During that time, we joined a small group Bible study and the Cornerstone Sunday School class, and I served a term on the Diaconate. The Lord also blessed us with two children, Zachary and Bethany. Our time of service at Grace came to a pause when Caterpillar moved our family to Japan for several years where we attended a multi-national Protestant church and I served as the adult Sunday School teacher for the English-speaking members of the congregation.

Our return to Peoria with Caterpillar has not been without its challenges; however, our family has been blessed by our friendships at Grace and the Student Ministries program where our children have grown in Christ. I am currently serving at Grace by assisting with the Sunday morning offering and the snow removal team. I am also involved in a men's small group.

It is with humble reliance on Him, that I have accepted the nomination to serve Grace Presbyterian Church as a member of the Diaconate.

ELDER CANDIDATES



VINCE CALIENDO
ELDER CANDIDATE

My wife Casey and I have been married almost 8 years and have three children (Eli, 5; Silas, 3; Renna, 1). I work for Caterpillar as an air filtration design engineer. Currently, I lead and teach an adult Sunday School class (Missional Communities Hub). My family is part of a long-time neighborhood small group made up of other Grace families. Our small group enjoys life together and all families in it are involved in adoption and/or foster care, among other ministry efforts. My wife Casey is an amazing wife and mother, blessing our family with levels of diligence, patience, and organization beyond what I can fathom. She is currently the director of the Classical Conversations homeschool group at Grace, and I do what I can to support her in that. I was saved in 2009 through Campus Outreach's ministry at Bradley University, especially by the loving evangelistic efforts of Jon Mahan and Mike Jackson. My life, heart, and mind through my early college years were spiritually dead and set on fear, foolishness, misplaced identity, and meaningless living. I was called by Christ into confidence in the truth of scripture, peace in being united to Christ, and joy in following Him alongside my Christian family at Grace.



BRYANT MORRIS
ELDER CANDIDATE

God made himself known to me throughout my childhood and teenage years as my family was in and out of churches that preached and taught the Bible. I always believed there was a God but my self-focus and pride kept my self on the throne of my life. God's word made my sin known to me, but I spent most of my life trying to rescue myself through behavior modification and image management while internally I rotted and indulged in self-gratification.

Jesus interceded in my life through human means through Jon Mahan and Mike Jackson. Jon poured his life into sharing the life and death of Jesus Christ with young men on Bradley's campus. I tried to "fake it, til you make it" and do the things Christians do. However, at the end of my sophomore year at Bradley, the weight of living up to God's holiness eventually brought me low to the point of humility and repentance. God transformed my heart and adopted me into his family. Jon and Mike disciplined me, teaching me to read/study God's word, pray, evangelize, make disciples, and glorify God in all aspects of my life. God began the great work of sanctification in my life in a beautiful community of new believers who were hungry and eager to know God and make Him known.

My wife Bethany was one of those new believers. Bethany and I began attending Grace Presbyterian Church during college through Campus Outreach. We were married at Grace right after graduating and became members in 2012. We have been married for over 8 years and have 4 biological children and 1 foster child: Maven, 5; Luther, 4; Mack, 2; River, 1.5; and Penny, 6mon. We have participated in several Sunday schools, committees, and are a part of an encouraging and supportive community group. We are excited as a family for all the ways that God will use our lives to glorify Him.



DUSTIN SCHUMACHER
ELDER CANDIDATE

I grew up in a divided home, with my parents divorcing when I was 3 years old. My mother is a faithful believer, and did all she could to raise me and my younger brother in the Christian faith. Over time though, I was drawn to the worldly lifestyle of my father. Although I would say I believed in God, it was the same belief that James rebuked in his epistle. In my sophomore year of college, through conversations with a pastor at my mom's church, and then the death of a friend, the Lord humbled me by His grace, and warmed my heart to beat for Christ. Shortly thereafter I met my wife of nearly ten years, Cassie, with whom I have three children: Grace (7), Isaac (4), and Aaron (2). Cassie and I started attending Grace in the fall of 2013, and became members the following year. In our time at Grace I've been involved in a Community Group, served on the Prayer Team ministry, and our family has been greeters at the main entrance. I am both humbled and excited at the opportunity to serve our wonderful church in a deeper role.



CHRIS ZOBAC

ELDER CANDIDATE

Growing up in a Christian home, I came to know the Lord at a young age. I participated in various church activities throughout my childhood and had a youthful exuberance for sharing my faith with others. As the son of a pastor, I was able to see the inner workings of the church and I developed an understanding of the weight and responsibility that individuals in church leadership face. As an adult, I have also found myself in positions of leadership within the church and in Christian organizations. Over the years, my childlike faith has matured into a spiritual foundation that keeps me rooted amidst various joys and trials throughout life.

I started attending Grace Presbyterian Church while enrolled at Bradley University and found that I felt more at home at Grace than at any other church I had previously attended. It was during this time that I met my wife, Jessica. Our passion for serving the church body and discipling fellow believers has compelled us to join or lead small groups, serve in various church ministries, and even lead us to help form the Heartbeat Ministry. We seek to be a witness and godly example to our two boys, Christian and Hudson, as we serve in the church and community.

As the owner of the media production company, Three21 Studios, it is my desire to use my giftings to serve God, the church, and the surrounding community. In addition to playing guitar and leading worship on Sunday mornings, I have had the opportunity to record and produce music for Grace Worship, and my experience in film and television has aided me in producing videos for the church and other organizations in the area. It is this work that has also led me to serve alongside Bryan Chapell as the Executive Director of Unlimited Grace Media.

I am humbled when I think of how God's gracious leading has shaped my life and I seek to reflect His love to others.

DEACON CANDIDATES



MATT CROW
DEACON CANDIDATE

I grew up attending a Methodist church here in town. I went through the motions of being a Christian, but didn't truly give my life to Christ until I was 13 during an altar call at a youth conference. At this time I gained a better understanding of the sin in my life, and the Lord truly began transforming my attitude and heart. I began to spend less effort on works/good deeds and more time in developing a personal relationship with Him. God blessed me with a wonderful wife whom I've been married to for 19 years (Jami). Adoption is near and dear to my heart, as Jami and I struggled to have kids. Little did we know that God had an amazing plan for us, including us finding a home in the Wieland's newly married Sunday School class to adopting our son Benny at 2 days old (he is 13 today). Thinking we couldn't have kids, we were working on a second adoption when Jami became pregnant. Ella came to us after a very stressful pregnancy (she is 11).

We've attended Grace our entire marriage, minus 4 years we spent in Nashville, Tennessee. We were relocated back to Peoria a year and a half ago from Nashville. After struggling to find a good church home in Nashville, I have a passion for welcoming newcomers to our church and helping them feel at home. I've enjoyed serving over the years in the Children's Ministry of our church (VBS and the infant nursery). The golf cart ministry was also very fun, while it was around. I was blessed to have participated in the first Radical Mentoring group Mike Flinn led a few years back. It truly changed my life, and gave me 6 brothers I could go to with anything, anytime. I am currently co-leading a Radical Mentoring group with Matt Kuntz, where we are ministering to 3 men a stage in life behind ourselves. I am also participating in a Life on Life group being discipled by Terry Spuler. I have a passion for serving, the men of our church and community, as well as children of our church and community. I am humbled and honored to be considered for a leadership position in our church and look forward to the opportunity to serve if elected.



SEAN MURRAY
DEACON CANDIDATE

I grew up not attending church until my mother starting taking my sister and me to a Methodist church when I was in my teenage years. I went to Sunday school classes and youth groups but never accepted Christ as my savior. I stopped attending church before I graduated high school. I went to college for two years, but lacked motivation for school. I then enlisted in the United States Navy hoping to get the much needed direction that I needed in my life. I left the service after serving four years.

I returned home to Peoria and went back to college with more focus and determination. In 1992, I met my wife, Jennifer. Eventually, we started attending Grace in 1998. I accepted Christ as my savior in 2000. Soon after Jennifer and I became members of Grace and were married in July. My growth in my walk with Christ has increased throughout the years by the teaching I have received here at Grace through Sunday school classes, church worship, and our small group. Jennifer and I have been blessed with our three children: Kylynn, 15; Ryan, 13; and Kei-ra, 11.

Since attending Grace, I have served in toddler nursery, as a table teacher for the kindergarten Sunday school, in VBS, and as a door greeter on Sunday mornings. I am humbled to have been nominated and look forward to continue to serve the church in any way the Lord calls me.