



Elder and Deacon Class of 2024 Nominees

The Church Officer Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following slate of nominees for deacon and elder officers to be submitted to the congregation for their approval on Sunday, November 21, in the Sanctuary following the service at 10:30 a.m.

All Eastminster members are encouraged to attend the Congregational Meeting.

ELDER NOMINEES (THREE-YEAR TERM)



Michael Bankston

Hi! My name is Michael Bankston. My wife, Amy, and I have three adult children and ten grandchildren. We were both born and raised in Wichita, have been married for 42 years, living 10 of those years in three different states. Amy and I have attended Eastminster for 10 plus years and have been involved in various Sunday classes and Grow Groups. Currently, I serve on the East Africa Mission Team and as a greeter on Sunday mornings. I am a photographer as my vocation and ministry. I currently do not hold any volunteer positions outside Eastminster but have previously served on the boards at HopeNet and Friends University, as well as a volunteer at Choices Medical Clinic in their Perinatal Hospice Program. Romans is my favorite book of the Bible and Romans 8 my favorite chapter, and my current favorite verse is Romans 8:15. "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry out "Abba! Father!"



Andy Biggs

I was born and raised in Wichita and have attended Eastminster since birth. I am an Internal Medicine Physician who practices locally. I've been married to my wife Greta for 11 years, and we have four boys who constantly keep us on our toes. I came to Christ as a young child and was fortunate to have two parents who loved Christ and showed what it means to follow him daily. After graduating college, I spent two caffeinated years in Seattle, WA at University Presbyterian Church before starting medical school. My career in medicine was not traditional as I joined the US Navy, a decision that took my family all around the world. Upon completing my military obligation, we made the decision to return home to Wichita. I have a passion for music and ministry, and I believe we worship an amazing God who has given us all unique talents, passions and skills that we can use to build God's church and expand his kingdom. One of my favorite verses is 1 Peter 4:10 "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."



Tom Davis

My wife, Debi, and I have been members of Eastminster since 1980. We have both been involved in various areas of the church, particularly in teaching Sunday school: Debi in kindergarten and I in the middle school. I have previously served as a Deacon and an Elder, serving on different committees, including a pastor nominating committee. I was part of the Millennium Project in 1999. I was one of the fathers who started Boy Scout Troop 524 at the church and served as its second Scoutmaster. I currently serve on the board at Westminster Woods. I retired from Wichita Collegiate School in 2019 and with Debi have been able to devote more time to our 11 grandchildren who are spread out over four states. One of the highlights since retiring was a trip to Israel with several other Eastminster friends, led by former Eastminster pastor Bob Henley. A favorite verse of mine is Micah 6:8: “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” It would be a privilege to serve as an elder.



Jim DeKalb

My name is Jim DeKalb. I'm married to my sweetheart, Dana, who frequently plays the violin during worship services. We have five children between us, and we're blessed with seven grandchildren ranging in age from 3 to 10 years old. Dana and I joined Eastminster in the 2007-2008 timeframe. I previously served as an Elder during our church's transition to the EPC—an interesting time! We enjoy mission outreach projects, having been on Eastminster's mission trip to Puerto Rico in June, 2019. We frequently volunteer for local efforts as well. We're looking forward to increased mission involvement following my retirement. Professionally, I am a Financial Planner, having been in this field since moving to Wichita in 2007. I love anything outdoors, including hiking, backpacking, fishing, gardening and shooting sports. The Lord is currently pressing the following verse on my heart: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee”, Isaiah 26:3, KJV.



Traci Pickert

Bill and I have been married 37 years and have four children, Becky, Emily, Sarah and Jack. We joined the church when we moved to Wichita over 20 years ago, and our children grew up at Eastminster attending preschool, Sunday School, youth groups and many nights at Westminster Woods. Raised by Christian parents, I was baptized at a young age and Jesus has always been in my heart and life. I went to KU for Business and Accounting. I was a bank Controller in Kansas City for several years, but when we moved to Tulsa in the mid-nineties, I became a stay-at-home mom. At Eastminster, I have been in Sunday school, Hannah Circle, a Deacon and hosted youth group activities and Bible studies. With the girls married, and Covid restraints, I recently reached out to God for direction and purpose for my next phase of life. Receiving a call to be an elder was a clear answer. Currently, I am in love with any scriptures connected to trusting, obeying and acting, but Proverbs 3:5-6 is a favorite.



Charity Schaulis

My husband Rick and I joined Eastminster in 1989 as newlyweds, raising our children Tori, Greg and Gwen into adulthood through kids and student ministries. Women's Ministry roles and connections provided me the opportunity to serve with various local nonprofit ministries. In 2011, I became the Executive Director of HopeNet, offering coaching and counseling services at a time when mental health was a taboo topic. Networking with churches and nonprofits, I became passionate about leadership collaboration and wellness. Indeed, crisis befalls most of us and it is in suffering we discover, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" Psalm 73:26. I transitioned to private practice as a professional certified coach and leadership trainer in 2020. In this season, I enjoy fitness and sewing, travel, entertaining and family togetherness. I look forward to forging new relationships, discerning and facilitating God's movement among us.



Nick Walker

It has been a blessing to be a part of the Eastminster family for over 30 years. I was invited to TLC middle school youth group and accepted Christ on a summer retreat at Westminster Woods. I learned to play guitar at youth group and I continue to assist in leading worship today with my wife, Theresa, who I met at an Eastminster young adults Bible study. We have two children, Gabrielle and Benjamin, who attend Andover schools. I work at a Koch Industries company as an IT analyst, and in my spare time I enjoy modifying guitars and learning how to be an adult leader in Boy Scouts. I have previously served two terms as a deacon and have also enjoyed serving with other youth events. One of my favorite passages from the Word is John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. The one whose believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"



Roger Wilson

I have four daughters, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, all of whom are tremendous blessings and sources of joy in my life. I have attended Eastminster since approximately 1987. I was privileged to have participated in the move to Eastminster's current location. I have been involved in angel tree and other service projects at the church over the years and have previously served as a deacon and as an elder. Recently, I have enjoyed resuming multiple weekly visits to the YMCA and am looking forward to serving the church for the next three years as I also continue working in my law practice. The Bible verse God is currently using in my life is Hebrew 12:1-3, particularly that part which states "let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith". My prayer for all of us at Eastminster is that we continue to grow in the enjoyment of the fullness of knowing, loving and becoming like Jesus and that we encourage others to do so as well.

DEACON NOMINEES (THREE-YEAR TERM)



Leah Borst

Hello Eastminster family! My name is Leah Borst, and I have been a member of Eastminster for about 12 years. My husband, Sean, and I have been married since 2013, and we have two kids. Theodore (6) and Evelyn (4). We currently host a small group at our home on Tuesday nights and serve on the Regional and National Outreach missions team. I have been attending the Monday Morning Moms group since Theo was born and love the fellowship of other moms. I am a former food service director but have been a full time stay at home mom for the last four years.



Brooke Howell

My name is Brooke Howell, and I'm married to Chris. We have three children, Parker who is a sophomore at Trinity Academy, Brecken an 8th grader at Central Christian Academy and Walker who is in the 3rd grade at CCA. Chris and I have attended Eastminster for 20 years and were married here 18 years ago this past September. I have participated as a small group leader with Hannah Circle for the last three years and previously helped with the 4th and 3rd grade Sunday school classroom. Our girls keep us busy with their school cross country and track teams and Walker recently took up soccer making our weeks very full with activity. My very favorite Bible verse is Numbers 6:24-26, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace."



Brenda Lawton

My husband, Tim, and I joined Eastminster in November of 2017. We have four children and just celebrated 30 years of marriage. My family enjoys camping, hiking and traveling. A family highlight was serving together at Tenwek Mission hospital in Bomet, Kenya during the summer of 2014. I hold degrees in voice and theatre from Northwestern University and the University of Iowa, and enjoy teaching classes for pre-school through middle-school at the Wichita Children's Theatre and Dance Center. I dramatized my way from Genesis through Acts with a high school drama team at Eastminster as I taught Children's Church for the Oaks Fellowship, and have fun bringing Bible stories to life in 3rd and 4th grade Sunday School. I helped organize the Oak's Week of Blessings as a member of Eastminster's Local Outreach Team. I've sung eight seasons as a soprano in the chorus of the Wichita Grand Opera, and serve on the board for the Wichita Symphony and Parent Advisory Committee for the Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras. My favorite verse is Proverbs 3:5-6.



Jim Lenk

I grew up in a Christian home slowly learning about God. As a young teen, I decided I needed to understand my Bible better and fell in love with Jesus while reading through the New Testament. The son of a Presbyterian pastor and grandson of two Presbyterian pastors, I rejected the idea of ministry as a vocation. However, I have always insisted God needs those of us who are not ministers by vocation to serve as his hands and feet to the world. I have loved working as a hospital physical therapist for the past 25 years and seek to share my knowledge teaching one course each Fall for the WSU PT program. I have three sons with the youngest being 19. I have experienced the pain of divorce, the blessings of friends and family as a single father and the amazing blessing of my wife of 6 years, Nyleen. I have been a member of Eastminster a total of 18 years and served as a deacon, helped with the 2-year-old Sunday School class, helped in worship with vocal music and drama and most enjoy teaching people inductive Bible study.



Chris Lette

I have been married to Jennifer for 34 years, and we have three children, Aaron, Emily, Ben and his wife Summer. Our granddaughter, Riley is our precious gift and spending time with her is my joy. We are blessed to have all three of our children and grandchild living here in Wichita. I also enjoy traveling and playing tennis with Jennifer. My vocation was in aircraft business, and I enjoy a variety of building projects for business and as my way to worship the Lord who has given me opportunities to use some of my skills. I worked at Boeing for eight years, left to start my own business building parts and assemblies for the OEM's. We sold the companies in 2008. Since leaving the aircraft industry I have enjoyed serving the public and Trinity Academy, helping with various building projects. We joined Eastminster three years ago and have been blessed with an encouraging and authentic Grow Group and am grateful for a church home where Jennifer and I can grow in our relationship to our heavenly Father. I enjoy greeting before the services and look forward to becoming a deacon and serving my fellow members when they are in need. A Bible verse that has significant meaning for me is 1 Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use whatever gift you received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."



Melanie Moore

I was born and raised in Colorado. I came to Wichita to attend Friends University. There, I receive degrees in Health Management: Cardiac Rehabilitation, and Health and Physical Education. I worked for Larksfield Place and Health Strategies before moving into education. I began attending Eastminster in the early 2000's, although Eastminster's reputation was known to me long before. The person who discipled me in Reformed Theology took me to hear John Gerstner in the Fall of 1991 and his tapes and writings were often resources we used. Over the years, I have served in many areas and ways: greeter/usher, special events, retreats, mission projects and various committees/councils. God has generously blessed me with a number of special relationships throughout my life. Often my time is spent enjoying these friendships through physical activity or adventure, travelling, Bible studies and sharing meals. Cooking and baking is relaxing when time allows. Sitting in the quiet hours of a fresh morning with a cup of coffee and the slow hours of dusk around a fire are two of my favorite ways to be still. Recently, I have been meditating on Philippians 4:8-9 in conjunction with 2 Corinthians 3:18.



Kelsey Nichols

I've been married to Kevin for 22 years. We have three children, Dylan (19), Kinsey (16), and Natalie (11). I have a Biology degree from Friends University and a Masters in Physical Therapy from KU. I practiced PT until I became a mom. We've attended Eastminster for six years. Kevin and I enjoy attending Chad and Billy's Grow Group and the contemporary worship service. I am a Junior League Sustainer and I have been a volunteer and fundraiser for Collegiate and The Treehouse. I enjoy attending my children's many activities and performances. I love music, long walks, and hanging out by the pool. I was the Children's Choir Director at Plymouth Congregational Church for several years, I love concerts, and I sometimes sing in Singing Quaker Alumni Choir at Friends. My favorite verse right now is Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."



Heather Schwanz

I have been married to Warren for 24 years. We have three children and have been attending Eastminster for about 13 years. My husband and I are currently helping teach 2nd grade Sunday school, and I play in the handbell choir. We have participated in some great adult Sunday school classes and my whole family helped with the Oaks congregation when they were meeting on our campus. I am currently a manager at Cargill. I enjoy helping in various community service opportunities from the hygiene pantry to helping pack food backpacks at the Food Bank to recently helping out with my son's Cub Scout Pack. I love to walk, bike, read a good book and try out new recipes. My favorite verse is Matthew 6:34, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."



Julia Shetlar

Hi! My name is Julia Shetlar. My husband is Martin and we have three kids: Eli (17), Alana (15), and Harper (8). We have been attending Eastminster for about 18 years. I have been involved with helping with the middle school Sunday School, the PreK Sunday School, Hannah Circle, a young moms Bible study, and I served on a women's ministry team for women's retreats and fellowship events. Currently, I am a realtor with Berkshire Hathaway PenFed Realty. I have been selling real estate the last 10 years. I love playing the piano, music, exercising, reading and attending the many sporting events of my kids. One of my favorite Bible verses is Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." God can do far more than we could ever imagine when we believe and trust in him and his beautiful plan for our lives.



Deborah Smith

I came to Christ as a child through the teaching and example of my parents and grandparents. I met my husband, Steve, through the Eastminster Single Direction group and joined Eastminster after our marriage in 1994. We have two daughters; Emily is a high school Spanish teacher in suburban Chicago while Laura is a freshman music major at Baylor University. I taught English in the Wichita Public Schools prior to the birth of my children and was then privileged to focus my attention on raising my daughters. I homeschooled one or both girls for ten years; I now teach high school English at a local home school co-op. I have been involved in many different ministries at Eastminster, as well as variety of Bible studies. I especially enjoy singing in the Chancel Choir and going on mission trips. I have volunteered at my daughters' schools; I also serve as a CASA for children in foster care. My hobbies include reading, sewing, travel and music. This will be my second term as a deacon.



Kimberly Sondergard

My husband, Rod, and I have been members of Eastminster almost as long as we've been married—almost 32 years. We retired in 2019 from a local architectural firm. We have two children; four including spouses. Matthew and Jessica live here in Wichita and attend Eastminster. Sarah and Christian are stationed at Tinker AFB. Paul, our grandson and Bailey, our dog, round out the family. Teaching 5th grade Sunday school, is our primary ministry. We started teaching when our kids started Sunday School. We would alternate each year, which child's class we taught, and we followed them up to 5th grade and stayed. I'm blessed to be part of a Bible study made up of my kid's friends' moms. We prayed our kids through school and continue to pray them through life! Similarly, Rod and I are blessed to be part of an Eastminster Grow Group that formed the year we got married. They are our prayer warriors! My favorite verse is Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you. He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with His love. He will rejoice over you with singing."



James Van Den Berg

I am the son of Pastor Stan and Nancy Van Den Berg and have been a member of Eastminster since 2014. I currently work at Koch Industries' political non-profit, Americans for Prosperity as Director of the Wichita office. At Eastminster, I have served with the children, student, and young adult ministries, as well as singing in the choir, and working security on facilities staff. A Bible verse God is currently using in my life is Isaiah 6:8, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"



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