

2026 Diocesan Convention
BIOGRAPHIES OF NOMINEES
As of 10-21-2026

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One layperson to be elected to a three-year term ending in 2029



Name: Catherine ("Cathy") Dugan (-Zuraikat)

Church: Christ Church, Indiana

Occupation: Faculty/Director

My name is Cathy Dugan. When I moved to Indiana (PA), a series of fortunate events led to me to Christ Church in Indiana and becoming involved with, and received into, the Episcopal church. I direct Disability Access and Advising at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) (having previously worked with equal opportunity and international programs, among others, and managed budgets of up to ¾ of a million). I am married to a Nursing professor at IUP, and we have two adult sons.

At Christ Church, I am our vestry secretary, and a Lay Eucharistic minister. Over the years, I have coordinated church childcare and toddler Christian education, been a member of ECW, served as a lay reader and usher, and served on the vestry for 4 terms (over two different eras). I have attended the Diocesan Convention for the past 3 years and was elected for a second term of attendance. In 2025, I was elected Vice-Chair of District 4.

Being a member of a small church, with many opportunities for involvement, is both exciting and daunting at times. For me it has provided a sense of community, membership, and responsibility. I am running for the Board of Trustees because I believe that it is imperative that our small, often aging, rural, sometimes struggling financially, and far-flung parishes, (District IV) be represented at the table. I believe that the Episcopal voice, mission, and faith is important to our small communities and I would be honored to represent that at the Diocesan level.

CATHEDRAL CHAPTER

One clergy and one layperson to be elected to three-year terms ending in 2029



Name: Shawn Brooks

Church: St. Andrew's, Highland Park

Occupation: Realtor

Biographical Information: A cradle Episcopalian, Shawn Brooks has deep roots at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Highland Park. He has served the parish as Financial Administrator and, during its time without a Rector, as Parish Administrator, helping guide St. Andrew's through that season of transition. For the past several years he has served as a member of the Cathedral Chapter of Trinity Cathedral.

Shawn served as a Vice President at several universities before beginning a second career in real estate. He is a REALTOR® with Keller Williams Exclusive, a Productivity Coach guiding new agents, and host of American Dream Television's Selling Pittsburgh.

Statement of Interest: Serving on the Chapter has been one of the most rewarding parts of my life in the Church. I value the way it gathers voices from across the diocese in shared care for our Cathedral. My experience in parish finance and administration, and in leadership in higher education, has taught me that faithful stewardship is both practical and spiritual work. I would be grateful to continue offering that experience, and to keep strengthening the bonds between Trinity Cathedral and the parishes it serves.



Name: The Rev. Dr. Julie L. Smith

Church: St. Barnabas, Brackenridge

Occupation: Redstone Senior Living Community – Greensburg/Employee Support Specialist; Priest in Charge – St. Barnabas Episcopal Church

Since being confirmed in the Episcopal church in 2003, I have served in several church ministries until being ordained a Priest in 2019. I currently serve as Priest-in-Charge at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Brackenridge, PA.

I served on vestry at Church of the Redeemer prior to my ordination and have attended vestry meetings at each church where I served since my ordination in 2019. My previous work experience as a college professor, and committee work in Higher Education, and current work as Employee Support Specialist for Redstone Highlands Senior Living employees, I have gained a robust working knowledge of regional social services and supports. Thus I do have the skills necessary to serve on various subcommittee as needed to support the work of the Cathedral and the mission of the diocese.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

One member to be elected to a three-year term ending in 2029



Name: Charles W. Atwood

Church: Calvary, East Liberty

Occupation: Physician

I am asking to be selected for a 3-year term on the diocesan Commission on Ministry (COM). This will be my 2nd term on this commission. In the last 3 years I have learned a lot about the COM and its vital role in working with men and women seeking holy orders in the Episcopal Church. I believe I have contributed positively to its mission in the diocese and have found the experience enjoyable and satisfying. I am seeking a 2nd term to this commission.

I am a life-long Episcopalian who grew up in Bradenton, FL, attending Christ Episcopal Church and St. Stephens Episcopal School. I have been a member of Calvary Church for over 35 years. My wife, Florence, and I met at Sewanee during our college years, married a few years

later, and moved to Birmingham, AL where I attended medical school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. After medical school and medical residency in Birmingham, we moved to Pittsburgh so I could finish my medical training in pulmonary medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. I am currently a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and an attending physician at UPMC and the VA hospital system.

Florence and I have been members at Calvary for over 35 years. During that time, I have been a church schoolteacher, a church grounds gardener, a lay reader, chalice bearer, and a member of the vestry. I have also served as a board-of-directors member for Calvary Camp. For the past 25 years I have served a similar role in my professional life as a medical fellowship director where I have interviewed, vetted, and selected hundreds of physicians for training programs at UPMC.

I strongly believe in a deliberate and careful process for discernment to ordained ministry and would be honored to continue to serve our diocese in this way.



Name: Don Block

Church: St. Stephen's Wilkinsburg

Occupation: Consultant

Don Block has been an active member of St. Stephen's, Wilkinsburg, since the 1980's. In the parish he has been a vestry member and senior warden. He has served on two discernment committees, chairing one, and has served on two rector search committees, chairing one. He enjoys singing in the choir and serving as a lay eucharistic minister. He previously led an adult education class at St. Stephen's for over twenty years. In the diocese, he has served as chair of District 2 and played a leading role in restarting the Lenten Preaching Series after the pandemic. He was active in the CREED project and its subgroup on communications during the episcopate of Bishop McConnell.

Statement of nominee: As a retired educator, I am interested in training up the next generation of leaders in the church. My background in building a nonprofit organization from its founding to a staff of 45 full-time employees may be helpful. Through years of hiring and supervising staff, I learned about the qualities that are needed to be good shepherds and role models for others. I would like to bring this background to the Commission on Ministry of our diocese.



Name: Jan Keith Wachter

Church: Christ Church, North Hills

Occupation: Adjunct Professor

My educational background combines environmental health, business, theology, and ethics. I hold a Doctor of Science degree in Environmental Health from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health, an Executive MBA from the University of Pittsburgh's Katz School of Business, a Master of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and a Master of Applied Theology from Wheeling Jesuit University.

Professionally, I have served in a variety of leadership, consulting, and academic roles. My experience includes serving as a senior administrator and Environmental, Safety, and Health (ESH) Director at a U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory, consulting with IBM and AECOM, serving as a tenured full professor in the Safety, Health, and Environmental Applied Sciences Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and currently teaching as an adjunct professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. My recent scholarship has focused on professional ethics, culminating in the publication of a textbook on ethics for safety and health professionals.

I have been a member of Christ Church – North Hills for more than twenty years. Prior to joining the Episcopal Church, I worshipped in Antiochian Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, and Roman Catholic congregations. These experiences have given me a broad appreciation for the richness of the Christian tradition and the diverse ways in which God calls people into ministry. At Christ Church, I have co-directed the youth choir for many years, oversaw Confirmation classes or acted as a confirmation mentor, participated in the Men's Bible Study, and most recently served on the parish discernment committee that recommended our new rector.

I am seeking to serve on the Commission on Ministry because I believe God is calling me to use my theological education, professional experience, and ecumenical background to assist others as they discern their own calls to ministry. Throughout my career, I have sought to help individuals thoughtfully examine their motivations, values, and aspirations through the lens of ethics and faithful decision-making. I believe these skills, together with a commitment to careful listening, discernment, and prayer, would enable me to make a meaningful contribution to the Commission's work.

The Rev. Brandon Cooper encouraged me to apply for this ministry. I am grateful for his confidence and would consider it a privilege to serve the Diocese of Pittsburgh by supporting those who are discerning God's call in their lives.

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

One clergy and one layperson to be elected to three-year terms ending in 2029



Name: Timothy R. (Tim) Austin

Church: St. Brendan's, Franklin Park

Occupation: Retired Provost, Duquesne University

Biographical Sketch: Born in England, I was christened and confirmed in the Church of England. I came to the USA in 1973 and since then have belonged to parishes in Highland Park, IL; Omaha, NE; Albany, NY; and Worcester, MA. My wife and I joined St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, in 2014 and are both active in various roles. I have been a vestry member, senior warden during COVID, Safety and Security Coordinator, and most recently chair of the Discernment Committee that successfully called our new priest, Rev. Di Panfilo. For the Diocese, I collaborated with Rev. Kimberly Karashin from 2022-2024 to bring our safeguarding policies into compliance with the requirements of General Convention.

Statement of Interest: My two decades as a university administrator (five of them as Provost at Duquesne) involved working with constitutional documents governing faculty members' rights and responsibilities. I led comprehensive reviews of three Faculty Handbooks and a dozen compliance reviews by regional accrediting bodies. Though not formally trained in legal matters, I believe I am a good listener, a careful reader, and a clear, concise draftsman. Most importantly, I understand that well written governance documents are as critical to the effective work of God's Church as they are to the functioning of other organizations.



Name: Stephen S. Bloomberg

Church: St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

Occupation: Attorney

I am a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon. Since January 2024, I have served as Vice-Chancellor for the Diocese. In my day job, I am a workers' compensation defense attorney with the law firm Post & Schell, where I serve as Managing Partner of the Firm's Pittsburgh Office and Co-Chair of the statewide workers' compensation department.

My experience interpreting and applying the Canons of the Episcopal Church and our Diocesan Canons would be a valuable resource to the Committee on Constitution and Canons.



Name: The Rev. Deanna Briody

Church: Church of the Incarnation, Beaver County

Occupation: Priest

Biographical Information: Deanna grew up Roman Catholic and was received into the Episcopal church after encountering the Anglican tradition at Trinity School for Ministry. She graduated seminary in 2017 and was ordained to the priesthood in January 2025. Deanna currently serves as the vicar at Church of the Incarnation, a new Episcopal congregation in Beaver County. She has been delighted to see this new mission flourish in its first year of weekly worship.

Deanna has also worked the past six years in software, serving as a product lead at Grant Street Group in Pittsburgh. She loves the outdoors, British literature, and anything written by Frederick Buechner.

Why I wish to serve in this office: The Church can only function well if its constitution and canons are carefully crafted and reflect the real needs of its people. I wish to serve in this office to further the mission of the Church—to make myself a student of the canons which structure our diocesan life and give thoughtful care to their ongoing revision.



Name: The Rev. Dr. Julie Smith

Church: St. Barnabas, Brackenridge

Occupation: Redstone Senior Living Community – Greensburg Employee Support Specialist; Priest in Charge – St. Barnabas Episcopal Church

Since being confirmed in the Episcopal church in 2003, I have served in several church ministries until being ordained a Priest in 2019. I currently serve as Priest-in-Charge at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Brackenridge, PA.

My previous work as a college professor, my training as a historian, and my service as a priest each require deep reading of documents and an understanding of how application and text may differ. Having served one term on this committee, I have learned a great deal about the local committee for one term, I have gained a greater understanding of how the committee works with the local constitution and canons and the role of this committee in the working of the church.

I have served at the diocesan level for various committees since returning to Pittsburgh in 2006. I am interested in serving on the Constitution and Canons Committee to continue to help shape the documents providing an ongoing framework for our structure allowing the Diocese to flourish and growing ministries to love God and love our neighbors.

REGIONAL DISCIPLINARY BOARD

One Member of the Clergy to be elected



Name: The Rev. Brandon Cooper

Church: St. Paul's, Kittanning

Occupation: Priest

I am a lifelong Episcopalian, raised at St. Clement's in Greenville, PA, and currently serve as Assistant Rector at Christ Church, North Hills, Priest-in-Charge at St. Paul's, Kittanning, and long-term supply priest at St. Michael's, Rural Valley. These ministries span a large suburban parish, a small urban parish, and a rural mission, giving me practical insight into the varied experiences and needs of Episcopalians across our diocese and our region.

I have also served on several diocesan committees and offices, and I remain committed to representing both the diocese as a whole and the rich diversity within it. As someone ministering across generational, geographic, and demographic divides, I bring a perspective shaped by listening, pastoral care, and respect for process.

For service on the Regional Disciplinary Board, I would bring not only my pastoral and theological formation, but also my legal education and prior experience as the primary judicial officer for a small college. In that role, I conducted both behavioral remediation processes and code violation hearings, balancing accountability, fairness, confidentiality, and the hope of restoration.

STANDING COMMITTEE

One clergy and one layperson to be elected to four-year terms ending 2030



Name: The Rev. Miguel Carmona-Romero

Church: Nativity, Crafton

Occupation: Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Miguel Carmona-Romero currently serves as Priest-in-Charge of Church of the Nativity, Crafton. Originally from Phoenix, AZ, he has served in parishes in Arizona, Maryland, Dallas, and Pittsburgh both in parish and diocesan positions. Most recently, in Dallas, he served in a diocesan-wide education initiative group for Hispanic/Latino lay leaders, collaborating with other clergy from predominantly Hispanic/Latino churches to train over 30 new lay leaders in both theology and practice to serve their communities.

Miguel believes that service is an outwork of faith. Therefore, through humble and prayerful service in the Standing Committee, he hopes to help carry and implement the faithful vision of Bishop Ketlen for the Diocese of Pittsburgh by contributing to the work of fostering fellowship, helping to strengthen diocesan-wide communications, encouraging growth in our

parishes. Furthermore, he hopes to foster a sense collaboration, careful listening, and steady leadership throughout the diocese in his work in the Standing Committee.



Name: James W. Neral

Church: Christ Church, North Hills

Occupation: Sr. HR Compensation Analyst

Having been raised a strong Catholic and a life-long Pennsylvanian, I received my calling to God's ministry at the age of ten when I began reading God's Word in our Friday noon mass for us students. That ministry continued into college. Upon graduation from IUP (Business Administration and Economics), I moved to Pittsburgh to begin my career in Human Resources, primarily in the technical aspects of HR being compensation, benefits and HR computer systems. After marrying my current wife Karen in 1990, we were received into the Episcopal Church. I have always felt a strong calling to share my acquired skills in technical Human Resources activities in service to my church and diocesan families, as demonstrated by engagements on Christ Church North Hills Vestry (several terms) and as its Finance Committee Chair (20 years), Diocesan Council, BAWG, Board of Trustees, and currently on Standing Committee to complete the term of a departed member. I have also been a deputy to the Special Diocesan Conventions that elected both Bishops McConnell and Solak.

I would be honored to continue my calling on Standing Committee for a new term given my acquired skills, knowledge, dedication and service for the betterment of church affairs at the Diocesan level.