

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS FROM PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE (2020)

### TEACHING ELDER

#### **Kimberly Secrist-Ashby: Fallston (Susquehanna Parish)**

While in college working with youth, I received my call into ministry. I followed God's lead to Union Presbyterian Seminary and then into churches first as an Associate Pastor for Christian Education, and then as a Solo Pastor. Fallston is my fourth church to serve, and my longest tenure, at eight years and counting.

In my last Presbytery I found a love for helping our area churches work together. So Ministry Groups here are a natural fit for me, and I have been the Convener of Susquehanna Parish since Ministry Groups began. It is a wonderful gift to be there for our pastors and churches as they seek to follow Christ's call in their lives.

**Why do I want to serve?** For years I have watched the inner workings of our denomination with awe and respect. I cherish who we are as a connectional body, and that any one of us can have a role in lifting up things to be considered through our Sessions and Presbyteries. I have attended 4 or 5 different General Assemblies as a volunteer or as a guest, and see the value in what we do together. I've always wanted to be a delegate and be able to attend as a voting member, to have the full experience and take part in a vital part of our community.

#### **Doris Cowan, Honorably Retired. (North Baltimore Presbyterians)**

Ordained in 1989, Doris is a graduate of St. Mary's Seminary. She has served as Interim Minister in six churches in three states. Returning to Baltimore, she again became active at Faith Church, where she serves as Parish Associate, serves on the Worship & Arts committee, sings in the church choir, and recruits liturgists for Sunday worship. Doris also became active in Baltimore Presbytery, serving on the Nominating and Preparation for Ministry committees. She had also been a longtime member of the Committee on Ministry prior to ordination. In 2014, she was sent by Baltimore Presbytery to the General Assembly as an Overture Advocate, advocating for the right of ministers to perform same gender weddings in states where it was legal, and to broaden the definition of who could be married.

**Why do I want to serve?** I was introduced to General Assemblies in 1975, when I was an elder commissioner. By the following year, when GA met in Baltimore, I realized the beauty of this gathering, and I began to refer to it as 'the family reunion!' I have been drawn to attend many other Assemblies, sometimes for just a day, sometimes longer. General Assemblies are where decisions are made, change is possible and reunions occur! I know it's hard work being a General Assembly commissioner. I am honored to be asked and welcome the opportunity and possibility of being there to do that work!

## **RULING ELDER**

### **Darcel Glenn Cooper: Cherry Hill (In the Loop)**

I have been a member of Cherry Hill Community Presbyterian Church for almost 63 years. I always say that I came to this church in my mother's womb. I have served as a deacon, trustee, treasurer and an elder, including serving as clerk of session since 2013. I have served on various committees: evangelism, stewardship, budget and finance, church anniversary, and have spearheaded local mission efforts. At the Presbytery level I served on the Committee on Ministry until I could not continue due to my work schedule.

**Why do I want to serve?** I feel I would be instrumental as a Commissioner due to my interest in the plight of the Black Churches in our community and the Presbyterian Church as a whole. I am very concerned about our Baltimore neighborhood in our surrounding areas. It appears as if our counties are reluctant to offering our inner-city residents an opportunity to establishing their families into a safer environment with better schools they give many lower income residents no way out. If we and they don't deal with the problems that fester and grow they can show up right on their doorsteps.

### **Bob Stepling: Springfield (West Side Story)**

I started out my journey as a Christian by being raised in a strong Roman Catholic family, becoming Presbyterian after our children were born. With my wife as my role model, we have both become ordained elders and have served on Session 9 times since we have been married. I currently serve as the Vice Chair of the Baltimore Dakota Steering Committee and a member of the Commission on Reconciliation.

**Why do I want to serve?** I am honored to be considered to be a Ruling Elder Commissioner to the 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. I would love to be in the internal workings of our church as we move forward in doing God's will in this world. To be inside and be a part of the discussions that will shape PCUSA for the future is exciting and humbling. As our denomination deals with multiple major decisions, we need to be aware and sensitive to diverse opinions. General Assembly is a place where we will need God's voice to guide us.

## **YAD**

### **Emma Kate Lander: First, Annapolis (Bay Area Disciples)**

I'm a Senior Religious Studies Major at Susquehanna University pursuing a career in ministry.

**Why I want to serve:** I'd like to be a YAD because I feel that it would be beneficial to my career to understand more about the instrumental and behind-the-scenes of the church, as well as provide a unique perspective for me. I am also passionate about the church and feel that I could represent the Baltimore Presbytery well.

## **ALTERNATE TEACHING ELDER**

### **Amy Carlson: Second (North Baltimore Presbyterians)**

Rev. Amy Carlson serves as the Associate Pastor of Christian Nurture and Congregational Life at Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore. She also serves on the Commission of Spiritual Leader Development and the Sexual Misconduct Response team for the Baltimore Presbytery.

She graduated in May 2015 from Lancaster Theological Seminary with her Master of Divinity. While in seminary, Amy served for two years as the seminary intern at Maryland Presbyterian Church in Towson, MD. Amy was active in her seminary community by serving as the Moderator of the Seminary Community Council, as a member the Standards Committee, and a member of the LGBTQ Committee. Prior to seminary, she worked for T. Rowe Price as a Retirement Plan Coordinator and served as the Christian Education Director at Oaklands Presbyterian Church in Laurel, MD.

**Why do I want to serve?** I am grateful for the invitation to serve as an alternate commissioner for the General Assembly. I view this as an opportunity to serve the connectional church, grow in my pastoral leadership, and build networks with other commissioners. I strongly believe that we are at a uniquely critical time in the life of our church and as a young pastor deeply invested in the hope and future of our denomination, I am excited to be part of the visioning and planning of what we might be able to create and build together through call, community and holy imagination.

## **ALTERNATE RULING ELDER**

### **Keith Reagan: Christ our King (Susquehanna Parish)**

Our family moved to Bel Air from Germany in 2014 and we are making this community our permanent home. I was asked in late 2017 to consider serving on the Session and started my term in January of 2018. I was elected to that position in April of that year. As Christ Our King had no procedure for projecting income, I established in the Fall of 2017, an annual pledge-based stewardship campaign and I remain campaign chair for now our third campaign period. As such, my ministry assignment as an elder on Session is with the Finance Ministry. Additionally, I sit on the committees of Facilities and Missions.

**Why do I want to serve?** It was quite unexpected to have been asked to allow my name to be placed into nomination and I consider it an honor. After a great deal of discernment and prayer I have realized that such an opportunity as this to serve at the highest levels of the denomination is rare indeed and I believe that I am in a good position at this time to take advantage of this opportunity. It is crucial that we understand the importance of our being part of a connectional denomination in which we undergo ministry and decision making together as a unified Presbyterian body. I consider this service an important and necessary duty to serve my church, my presbytery, and my denomination.