

## ELECTION OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS

Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. See the following definitions as listed in the PC(USA) Book of Order:

**Ruling Elders: The Ministry of Discernment and Governance of Session (G-2.0301)** Congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament (or Pastors), exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.

**Deacons: The Ministry of Compassion and Service of the Board of Deacons (G-2.0201)** The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

**Hispanic Fellowship Deacons: Individually commissioned to serve the Hispanic Fellowship (G-2.0202)** Deacons may be individually commissioned...under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation. Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord’s Supper.

### RULING ELDERS



#### **Josh Biondi — Elder, 2024–2026**

Josh grew up in Wildwood, New Jersey, and moved to Southern California in 2008. He was raised in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and baptized as a baby. Josh became a member of his home church at age 13 and has served on mission trips to Egypt, Trinidad, Mexico, and the United States. He has a heart for service, especially when working with his hands, as he is a man of few words. Josh met his wife, Ahlia, in 2015 and became a certified scuba diver, thanks to Ahlia’s influence, in 2016. For his day job, Josh is a quality manager at General Atomics ASI in Poway. He is an avid fisherman and enjoys playing golf and watching sports on TV, especially Philadelphia teams. He also enjoys running on the beach and other forms of exercise, including lifting weights, hot yoga, and traveling. Josh is honored to be an Elder at SBPC and will continue to serve on the leadership team for Community Serve Day with Ahlia.



#### **Karen Brailean — Elder, 2024–2026**

Karen’s faith journey started in a loving Christian home in Illinois; however, during her college years, she questioned her faith and identified as an atheist. Decades later, in 2011, during a visit to a monastery in Barcelona, Karen experienced a transformative moment while listening to the Boys’ Choir. She distinctly heard and felt God affirming His existence, leading to a profound spiritual awakening. This renewal also touched Karen’s spouse, and they embraced Christianity. They joined SBPC and answered Doug’s call for audio/video booth volunteers. Karen then joined various roles with the Veteran Homelessness Ministry, KidsGames Prayer Team, and Community Serve Day leadership. She also enjoyed Pastor John’s book club on *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. With the adoption of two children, Karen focused on Children’s Ministries and joined MOPS. Now, she feels honored to become an elder, discerning where God is leading our church.



#### **Mark Halling — Elder, 2024–2026 (*second term*)**

Originally from the Bay Area, Mark has lived in Encinitas since 2012 and started attending SBPC in 2017. He has served as an Elder since 2021 and currently chairs Session’s Governance Committee. He previously served on the Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee and has been active in Children’s Ministry, Small Groups, and Solana Beach Presbyterian Preschool, where all three of his children attended (James, 9 years old, and twins Josh and Josie, 7 years old). Mark and his wife Cristy have been married for 15 years after meeting at Vanderbilt University, where they both graduated. He loves baseball and horseracing and is excited to continue serving his church as an Elder.



#### **Patty O’Connor — Elder, 2024–2026**

Patty grew up in San Diego as the second of six kids in a Catholic family, with the church community being an integral part of her childhood. After moving to the Bay Area for college and young adult life, she returned to San Diego to raise her children, Shannon and Connor Perrone. She believes the best decision she ever made as a parent was joining SBPC 20 years ago and felt God specifically led her to SBPC. Patty has been involved in Foster Hope Ministry, Come Build Hope, MOPS, Border Ministries, Small Groups, ACM, and International Student Ministry. She heads up the supply chain team at Feeding San Diego, whose mission is to end hunger through food rescue. She enjoys pickleball and yoga in her spare time. Patty is excited and grateful to serve as an Elder and give back to the SBPC community, which has been such an important part of her faith journey and family’s life.

**Michele Sabourin — Elder, 2024–2026**

Michele's parents laid the foundation for a life in ministry in the Presbyterian Church, growing up in Michigan. Her faith in Jesus Christ was ingrained as a teenager when the Holy Spirit touched her during a sermon at church. Michele has been an active member of SBPC since 1988, serving as a mentor mom in MOPS, an ordained Stephen's Minister, and a teacher in Sunday school, volunteering in the nursery, baking cookies and ushering for Deacon's ministries, and enjoying Community Serve Day. She also has involvement in Women's Bible Study, Small Groups, and CBS. Michele feels blessed to have been married to David since 1978, and they have two awesome adult sons, Jerrud and Josh. She is humbled to be called at this time in her life as a nominee for Elder and looks forward to continued service at SBPC. She will continue in the path of the Lord however he apprehends her.

**DEACONS****Ahlia Biondi — Communion, 2024–2026**

Ahlia is, first and foremost, a fully devoted follower of Jesus and considers herself a disciple. She is a child of God. Her husband, Josh, brought her into a relationship with the Lord, she was baptized at SBPC, and Pastor Juan-Daniel married them in 2018. Ahlia was ranked fifth globally as a professional tandem surfer and has guided group and private yoga and meditation classes, workshops, trainings, and retreats since 2011. She wrote a 200-hour yoga alliance accredited teacher training program that she has led dozens of times domestically, abroad, and online. She continues to teach yoga privately and in groups, and her instruction style has evolved to be more Christ-centered and emphasizes filling oneself up with the Holy Spirit rather than emptying oneself. Ahlia loves to scuba dive, fish with Josh, exercise, be in the sunshine, spend time with friends and family, or hang out at home with Bailey, their dog-child. She has a heart for service and loves to donate time and resources to show the love of her Father to our neighbors near and far. Ahlia is excited to be a Deacon at SBPC and will continue to serve on the leadership team for Community Serve Day with a joyful heart.

**Cindy Johnson — Hospitality, 2024–2026**

Cindy was raised in a Christian home in Nebraska, learning early about serving with her mother at their church. She credits her mother with bringing her to Christ. She met her husband, Tracy, during a local church youth group meeting in high school, and they have been married for 42 years, with two sons and two grandchildren. After several moves, they came to San Diego in 1992 and were grateful to find SBPC as their church home. Having served in several areas in the church, Cindy has particularly been blessed by tutoring at Casa de Amistad for 15 years and co-leading in a small group. She is looking forward to serving as Deacon of Hospitality.

**Jean Morgan — Prayer Support, 2024–2026**

Jean was born and raised in England, along with one sister, and baptized into the Church of England. She attended an all-girls Church of England High School. Upon graduation, Jean earned a secretarial diploma from the local technical college. She worked in London for several years. The highlight of her career was as personal assistant to Sir Sidney Cam, the Director of Hawker Aircraft. Jean and her childhood friend decided to take an adventure and ostensibly came to the United States for a six-month working experience. She also worked in Hong Kong for a year as an assistant to a missionary who was also CFO for the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Jean met her husband, Jack, in San Diego. Their marriage confirmed her decision to become an American citizen. Jack was the father of two children with whom Jean has a close relationship. Together, they had one son, Glenn, who was baptized in England at the same church as Jean. Glenn led her to SBPC when he started preschool and continued with the church through the high school programs. He confessed his decision to accept Jesus Christ, and Jean followed his lead. She has been attending SBPC for 40 years and joined the choir, giving her joy and a deep commitment to the church. She also continues volunteering as a mentor in the Casa de Amistad program.

**Anita Power — Secretary/Communication, 2024–2026**

Anita has been a devoted follower of Jesus and a member of SBPC since 2007. She has served in the following ministry areas: Generations Campaign, Stephen Ministry, Tijuana Refugio Hospice, Small Group leader and participant, Come Build Hope builder, mission trip leader, ESL Tutor, founding member and board director with Pathways to Citizenship, and Ruling Elder. Each opportunity to serve has played a significant part in her growth as a Christian and taught her humility and love for all humanity. For God so loved the world, and so should we. As a future Deacon, Anita looks forward to continuing to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

## HISPANIC FELLOWSHIP DEACONS



### **Noemí García — Deacon, 2024—2026**

Noemí nació en Comitán, Chiapas, México. Sus padres eran cristianos, por lo que aprendió mucho de ellos acerca de Jesucristo y la iglesia. Hizo un compromiso personal con Cristo cuando tenía 13 años. Noemí ha estado casada con Hugo Sánchez durante los últimos 24 años. Tienen dos hijos, Daniel (23) y Samantha (17), y viven en San Marcos. Desde hace 18 años, Noemí participa activamente como miembro de la SBPC. Su servicio ha incluido trabajar con mujeres y niños, cantar con la banda de adoración, coordinar eventos/comida y ser parte del Liderazgo Hispano. Su pasión es servir a nuestro Dios y a su pueblo, testificando el evangelio de Jesucristo a todos nuestros vecinos y al mundo. Noemí disfruta adorar con su familia y nuestra congregación. Lee y estudia constantemente la Biblia y toma notas de todos los mensajes, lo que le ayuda a recordar las cosas nuevas que Dios le está enseñando. Le gusta el compañerismo, conocer a miembros e invitados, visitarlos en casa o invitarlos a su casa. Sus dones espirituales son el servicio, la exhortación y la enseñanza/predicación.

Noemí was born in Comitán, Chiapas, México. Her parents were Christians, so she learned much from them about Jesus Christ and the church. She made a personal commitment to Christ when she was 13. Noemí has been married to Hugo Sanchez for the last 24 years. They have two children, Daniel (23) and Samantha (17), and live in San Marcos. For the last 18 years, Noemí has been actively participating as a member of SBPC. Her service has included working with women and children, singing with the worship band, coordinating events/food, and being part of the Hispanic Leadership. Her passion is to serve our God and His people, witnessing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all our neighbors and the world. Noemí enjoys worshiping with her family and our congregation. She constantly reads and studies the Bible and takes notes from all the messages, which helps her remember the new things God is teaching her. She enjoys fellowship, getting to know members and guests, and visiting them at home or inviting them to her house. Her spiritual gifts are service, exhortation, and teaching/preaching.