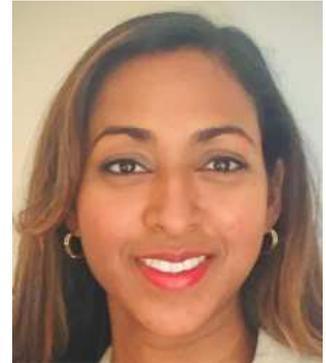


National Presbyterian Church

Pastor Nominating Committee Members

Joanna Manoranjan Chai

I was born in Vienna, Austria. As my father was a diplomat with the United Nations, we moved frequently and I spent my childhood in several countries in Asia, Africa, and South America, with travels to many other countries along the way! In 1995 we came to the USA and settled in Maryland.



Education/Career: Upon moving to America, I attended the Holton-Arms School. I graduated from The George Washington Univ. (Biology major), then completed a Master of Science (Cell Biology & Molecular Genetics) at the Univ. of Maryland. I worked as a scientist for ten years at Aeras, a non-profit biotech, developing vaccines against tuberculosis. I am currently a scientific Sr. Project Manager and Team Lead at Lentigen Technology Inc., a Miltenyi Biotec Company, developing Cell & Gene Therapies.

Spiritual Life: My parents were raised as Christians in India so I had the blessing of growing up in a Christian home. Growing up in different countries we often could not find a church to attend, so my parents played a huge role in teaching me the Bible and nurturing my faith. Faith has always been a part of my life, and I strive to live according to God's will and to share the love of Christ with those around me. Attending NPC for over 26 years has been a central part of my spiritual life. I also met my husband, Chris Chai, at church and we celebrated our marriage at NPC in 2013.

NPC Activities: I started attending NPC with my family in 1995 when I was still in high school, and NPC has continued to be an integral part of my life ever since. Early on, I helped my mother with her activities as President of the NPC Women's Association, then participated in many aspects of church life, including being a greeter, preparing the sacraments, and joining the Young Professionals group. I had the joy of serving as a Deacon for two terms from 2012-2018, during which I was interim MD coordinator for a year, and Vice Moderator from 2014-2018. I was a part of the Strategic Plan Implementation Assistance Team (SP IAT) from 2015-2016.

Rudy deLeon

Rudy deLeon and Anne, his wife of 31 years, were married by Rev. Peg Cantwell at the National Presbyterian Church in 1990. Their two daughters, Libby and Kerry, attended the National Presbyterian School for their elementary education, were confirmed as NPC members, and now reside in New York City and Boston.



Education / Career: After graduating from Loyola-Marymount University, Rudy moved to Washington, DC, and started his 26 year Federal career on Capitol Hill, which included tenure as Staff Director of the House Armed Services Committee, and later confirmations as Under Secretary of the Air Force, and Deputy Secretary of Defense. In 1998, he was invited to be part of an NPC forum of US military personnel sharing their experiences in the Bosnian peace keeping mission. He has worked in the private sector at Boeing, and is currently at the non-profit Center for American Progress.

Spiritual Life: Two persons who had a great impact on his spiritual development were his mother, Lois Tierney, and the pastor of the neighborhood Ascension Lutheran Church. The basic tenets of faith were presented in Sunday school and confirmation class, and became the lifelong foundation for a life of faith and service.

NPC Activities: Rudy started attending NPC in the mid-1980's, became a member in 1990, and has served as a Deacon, Deacon Moderator, and Elder. As a member of the Session he served as Chair of the Facilities Council and helped guide the settlement of campus claims following the 2011 earthquake.

Joy Eckert

I was born in Daytona Beach, Florida, but I was raised in Lexington, South Carolina.

Education / Career: I graduated from Presbyterian College with degrees in Applied Mathematics and French. I then moved to DC to attend George Washington University where I received a Masters of Public Health. I have worked in health policy research at universities and in local government, and now I work at Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA.



Spiritual Life: I was raised in the church and am a lifelong Presbyterian. My father modeled faith and spirituality for me and my sister by praying with us each night. In high school and college, I learned how to have a daily relationship with God through the love and accountability I found in Bible studies and small groups. I have been blessed with the opportunity to continue to grow in my faith together with my husband, Patrick.

NPC Activities: Patrick and I began attending NPC in 2017. We co-lead a weekly small group for young adults. I also volunteer with the high school youth group. Recently, I served on the Small Group Task Force. I am passionate about creating space at church for people to connect and grow in their faith together.

Peggy Lewis

I was born and raised in Washington, D.C.

Education / Career: I attended Trinity College in Washington, D.C. where I majored in English. I spent nearly 20 years as an award-winning broadcast journalist in Washington, New York, and Miami before embarking on a career in public service which included working for President and Mrs. Clinton, U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, and Children’s Defense Fund Founder and President, Marian Wright Edelman. I taught broadcast journalism at Howard University and earned a Ph.D. in history from Howard University. I recently retired as Executive Dean of the School of Business and Graduate Studies and the School of Professional Studies at my alma mater, now Trinity Washington University.



Spiritual Life: I was raised in a Christian home, and my maternal grandfather was a Baptist preacher who graduated from Howard University’s School of Divinity. I was baptized at the age of 12 at Northminster Presbyterian Church in N.W. Washington where I taught Sunday school. I have led Bible studies and attended church in every city I have lived. I have been attending National Presbyterian since returning home from Miami in 1995.

NPC Activities: Since joining the church I have participated in Sunday school classes and become a Stephen Minister and serve on the leadership team for Stephen Ministers overseeing Continuing Education. I am an Elder and chair of the Race Task Force. I also am teaching a Sunday School class on the congregation’s big read of “One Blood” by John Perkins. I am also a small group facilitator for Race Literacy 101, an online class of our Little Lights Mission partner.

Katherine Pippert, Co-Chair

I was born in New York City and grew up north of the city in Westchester and in Connecticut.

Education/Career: I received an AB in History from Princeton and an MS in Curriculum and Teaching from Fordham. I expect to finish an MA at Wesley Theological Seminary here in Washington next spring (Lord willing!). The majority of my career has been spent identifying, developing, and placing leaders in the education, not-for-profit, and philanthropic sectors. My current studies have focused, in part, on leadership in the particular context of churches and other faith-based spaces.



Spiritual Life: I grew up in a Christian family, with a strong foundation in the faith. For me, the years I spent in college and then living on my own in New York City were formative in developing a faith commitment that was truly my own. My faith has been deepened in community with other believers, and I count close Christian friendships as well as several small groups and Sunday School classes as important spaces of spiritual growth and encouragement. Recently, I've been so grateful for the space given to me by my studies at Wesley to put intellectual underpinnings under what is for me - at its root - a life-changing experience of Jesus' grace.

NPC Activities: My husband Bryce and I began attending NPC the weekend we moved to DC in 2009. We both knew quite quickly that we had found our church home and joined NPC shortly thereafter. Since then, I've been fortunate to serve as a Sunday School teacher for both adults and children, on the Stewardship Committee, and (with Bryce) as one of the co-Chairs of our recent Capital Campaign. I am currently one of NPC's representatives on the Board of the Reformed Institute, a nexus of collaboration with other local Presbyterian churches. Raising our three children at NPC has given me the great opportunity to participate in the Children's Ministry, and I think I could probably still sing along verbatim to several years' worth of VBS soundtracks!

Glenn Schmitt, Co-Chair

I was born in Indianapolis, but grew up in Terre Haute, Indiana after my parents moved there when I was four.



Education / Career: I attended Indiana State University, where I was a double major in political science and music performance, and then law school at Notre Dame. After graduation, I practiced law at a large firm in Cleveland. After six years there, I felt a call to public service and left to pursue a Master's degree in Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. From there I came to Washington and have spent the last 26 years in public service, first as a lawyer for the House Judiciary Committee, then at the Justice Department, and for the last 15 years at the U.S. Sentencing Commission, a part of the Judicial Branch. During that time I also served for 25 years in the Army Reserve, where I earned a Master's degree in Strategic Studies from the Army War College.

Spiritual Life: My mother was raised in Presbyterian church, and so my parents and I attended our home Presbyterian church every Sunday, where my mother was an elder and my father a trustee. After less regular church attendance in my late 20s, I began attending NPC when I moved to Washington, becoming a member in 1998. My wife began attending with me after we married, and our daughter was baptized at NPC.

NPC Activities: I've been active in the Stephen Ministry program for over 15 years, and so am drawn to a one-on-one style of ministry, but I have also served a term on Session, chaired the recent APNC, and I co-chair the Military Ministry program.

Joel Velasco

I was born in Jackson, Mississippi where my father attended seminary, and grew up in Brazil before moving to Virginia for school and later to D.C. for work.



Education / Career: I graduated from a small Liberal Arts, and Presbyterian Church (USA)-affiliated college, Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. College internships ignited an interest in politics and public service, bringing me to Washington. I received my M.A. from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. I am currently Senior Vice President at UnitedHealth Group, where I head external affairs in various Latin American markets. Previously, I was a Principal of Albright Stonebridge Group.

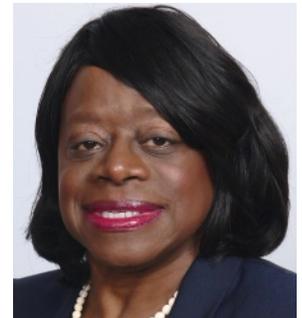
Before consulting, I worked at a biotech startup, Amyris, leading public affairs and investor relations, and was engaged in biofuels policy. Earlier I served as a Senior Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil and as a personal aide to Vice President Al Gore at the White House.

Spiritual Life: I am a lifelong Presbyterian and the grandson of Presbyterian missionaries to Brazil. While I cannot think of an extended period in my life when I was not “attending church” on Sundays, what brings me peace is knowing God has been with me every day of the week.

NPC Activities: My wife, Bethany, and I have been members of NPC since 2017. Our two boys, Lucas (16) and James (13), attended National Presbyterian School and have participated in Youth activities as our schedules allow. Bethany loves to “teach” (her quotes) the two- and three-year-olds on Sunday morning and, with me, has been active in our evolving parent gatherings. I currently serve on the Youth Committee and enjoy listening to sermons via podcast when traveling.

Herma Williams

I was born on the Canal Zone in the Republic of Panama, Panama City. My parents, siblings, and I immigrated to the USA when I was a preschooler. I received both my BA and MS degrees from Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale, Illinois. In 1976, my husband, Eric Williams (deceased) and I received our Ph.D.’s together from Iowa State University, in Ames, Iowa.



Education / Career: The majority of my 46 year career has been spent working as a senior academic administrator at both public and Christian colleges and universities. My most recent professional role was Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Fresno Pacific University. Prior to this, I served as Associate Provost at Gordon College near Boston.

Spiritual Life: For as far back as I can remember, I have always known and loved the Lord. This was due to my parents’ strong conviction as Christians and their devotion to serving God. Together my parents established, ran, and served in inner-city ministry for over fifty years on the south side of Chicago.

When I was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to South Africa to teach at the University of the Western Cape, I connected with a Presbyterian Church and served as the first female Elder. Currently, I serve as board Chair for PEER Servants, a Christian Microfinance Partner Leadership Program in ten countries.

NPC Activities: In 1989, a former student of mine at Bryn Mawr College started Law School at American University and invited us to hear Associate Pastor Peggy Cantwell preach at NPC. My family was blessed; we immediately made NPC our church home. Since then, I have served NPC in many capacities as a Wrestlers' adult class speaker, Elder on the NPC Session, Associate Pastor Nominating Committee member (Rev. Lynne Faris), Mission Committee and International Mission Committee member, NPC Sr. Pastor Accountability Committee member, and NPC Center for Leadership board member and mentor.