

PRESBYTERY OF SANTA BARBARA  
224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2020) – Questions to be answered by Nominees

Ruling Elder Commissioner Nominee – Susan Freer

The Session at the Community Presbyterian Church in Pismo Beach nominated Susan Freer to serve as the Ruling Elder Commissioner at the 2020 General Assembly.

*1. Describe your relationship with Jesus Christ and its effect on your life.*

I believe in the triune God; the loving Creator God, His divinely conceived Son Jesus Christ who is Lord of all, Head of the Church and my Savior and Lord, and the Holy Spirit.

I first met Jesus as a child in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. As I matured in age and Faith I learned more about Jesus from my parents, through Bible study and my association with my faith community at the Community Presbyterian Church in Pismo Beach. I have continued my acquaintance with Jesus in continued Bible study assisted by the annual Horizons Bible Study prepared each year by the organization of Presbyterian Women. I have also found education and joy in reading books by various theological authors.

My continuing relationship with Jesus consists of Bible study to find guidance to follow in Jesus' steps so that I may grow into the person our loving God created me to be. I engage in daily meditation and prayer with both our loving Creator God and His Son Jesus. When I encounter the sometimes daily stresses of life I turn to prayer and feel the loving comfort of both the Creator and Jesus. I also find that the daily prayer time I enjoy with Them has helped make me a better person, more patient, helpful and loving.

*2. How do the Bible and the Confessions guide and influence your views?*

The Bible is a marvelous history book telling the stories of the peoples and cultures who came before us in our relationship with our Creator God. I accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to me. I find that reading the Confessions reaffirms Scripture. The Brief Statement of Faith written at the time of the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States is so affirmative. I love the final paragraph that states "With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

*3. What do you believe the role of the church is in today's world, and how have you been involved?*

I believe that the role of the Church in today's world is being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ to those needing the salvation, love, justice and compassion that the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord can bring.

I have assisted members of our church make sack lunches that contain nourishing food to give to the food insufficient that gather at our door the second Sunday of each month. These folks are also provided with Vons supermarket cards to purchase some of their needs. We also invite these folks to join us in Worship and our monthly pot luck luncheon. This month an invitation will be stapled to their sack lunches to join us in a December holiday pot luck luncheon that will be hosted by the Deacons in our church. The congregation has been invited to provide dishes for this pot luck.

I am also a member of a local group of pastors and lay leaders of local churches called People of Faith for Justice. This organization works locally to call attention to justice needed in our county including environmental justice, assisting those in need of help in cultural justice such as joining in marches in the

community for women's justice issues, justice for LGBTQ+ individuals in our community. One such activity supported a program entitled "Get on the Bus" to assist juveniles in the area with parents in the local prison to get rides to the prison and be able to have visitation with their parents. Another committee of People of Faith for Justice of which I am a member is "Allies for Immigration Justice" in San Luis Obispo County. Members of this committee have appeared and spoken before the County Board of Supervisors and the County Sheriff regarding questions of Immigration justice as it interfaces with National organizations in this county. This committee has also met with a group of members of the Nipomo Community Presbyterian Church which is working with organizations in Nipomo, Santa Maria, and Oceano and other local communities helping with training translators to help immigrants who do not speak either English or Spanish but dialects commonly spoken in Mexico.

I also answer requests to visit members of our church who are in hospital, assisted living facilities and private homes to read Scripture to those who have difficulty reading due to aging eyes.

#### 4. *Biography:*

After working for twenty eight years for TRW and Northrop Grumman Corp. at Vandenberg AFB I retired. My position there was the Security Officer for the company and acted essentially as an educator and a data base maintenance provider.

After retirement from my job, I began searching for a church home as I had been separated from weekly worship for too long a period of time. I was invited by my friend the Rev. Jill Martinez to attend the Community Presbyterian Church in Pismo Beach one Sunday when she was filling the pulpit when Pastor Bob was on vacation. This was wonderful timing as after retiring I had time to devote to my new church home which I felt I had found the moment I walked through the doors. When Pastor Bob returned from vacation and I heard his sermon I knew I had made the right decision about my new church home. It was soon thereafter I joined the lovely little yellow church in Pismo Beach which was approximately fifteen years ago. I still do not feel as if Sunday has arrived unless I am seated in my usual place. I was overjoyed to be invited to be the greeter at my new church home upon the retirement of the previous greeter. It is a weekly joy as I continue to fulfill those duties.

Some short time after I joined the Community Presbyterian Church in Pismo Beach I was invited to join the Session to replace an Elder who had served her allotted six years. After conversation with the retiring Elder and time in prayer I felt called to accept the invitation to join the Session and was elected by the congregation and ordained a Ruling Elder as chair of Mission and Outreach. I found that I was intrigued by the polity of the Presbyterian Church and desired to learn more. In pursuit of that goal I joined the new members groups each time I had the opportunity. If I am elected as the Ruling Elder Commissioner position to the 2020 General Assembly it will be the answer to a dream to be able to observe and participate in the very function of the Church in action.

I have served on the Presbytery Discernment Committee for the Lompoc Presbyterian Church. This was another opportunity to observe and be a part of the Church in action.

Furthermore, I affirm that I will be available to report to the Presbytery meeting following the General Assembly, and will stay in contact with churches and Presbytery committees in the future to answer questions.