

Biographies for Council Candidates 2026-2027

Name: Ruth Clark

Years at GSLC: 16

Personal History:

- I was originally a Catholic converting to Lutheran in 1975
- Active in NY, taught VBS, usher and on Executive Branch
- Retired teacher of 34 years

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Usher
- Greeter
- Member of the Council for the past 2 years
- Member of the Outreach Committee,

Fellowship Committee, Empty Nesters, VBS, Endowment Committee and Counter



Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

I have always taken my roles at church very seriously and tried to be a good leader in whatever job I was doing.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

- I tried to learn what the council was all about in 2024.
- Due to my Cancer diagnosis in January 2025, I have not been very active in Council.
- I hope to be a more active member the next 2 years.

Name: Karen Epstein

Years at GSLC: 20

Personal History:

- Relocated to Georgia from New York in 2004
- Formerly the Director of International Sales at a NYC Hotel
- Currently I am a substitute teacher in Cherokee County
- Michael & I have been married 30 years and have two children – Taylor and Carlie who grew up in GSLC

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Served previously on Council for 3 terms, including serving as Secretary
- Taught Sunday School & Led FX3 for 10+ years
- Served as a member, chair, and Council Liaison for the Faith Formation committee
- Served as a member and Council Liaison for the Fellowship committee
- Currently co-leader of Theology on Tap
- Attend Adult Sunday School, as well as assist with youth Sunday School
- Participate in the Taste of Habitat, volunteer for VBS and along with my family have been very active with youth programming, special events, and meals at GSLC



Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

In addition to my service within the congregation, I bring significant leadership experience from my professional career and volunteer roles. I have managed staff and coordinated projects, which assist me in developing strong organizational and communication skills. My ability to motivate others and foster collaboration has helped create positive environments both in the workplace and within the church community.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

- I am honored to again be considered for a position on Council and look forward to continuing to faithfully serve the members of the congregation if elected.
- I believe my background, my passion for service, and my years of service to GSLC will assist me in helping to lead the congregation forward.
- Good Shepherd has been an integral part of my family and I am dedicated to seeing it and its members thrive.

Biographies for Council Candidates 2026-2027

Name: Donna Johnson

Years at GSLC: 2

Personal History:

- I was raised in the Catholic Church and converted to a Protestant when I married in 1966. My children were baptized and raised in the Lutheran Church. My daughter was married at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Illinois and my granddaughters are baptized Lutheran.
- When I lived in Chicago I volunteered as a tutor for Quaker Oat's after school program for inner-city children.
- I currently volunteer as a cashier at Mostly Mutts Animal Rescue and have done so since we relocated to Georgia three years ago.
- I currently serve as Vice President of the HOA at Heritage at Towne Lake and served as secretary for the prior two years.
- I am a retired marketing executive and former high school teacher.



Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Art assistant for VBS in 2023
- Attend Wednesday Bible Study
- Serve on the Pre-School Chapel team for Child's Play.

- Member of Empty Nesters and Yarn Angels.

Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

Since 1990 I have been employed in marketing leadership roles at Quaker Oats, Kohler and First Alert. I managed cross-functional teams as well as managing and developing my own staff.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

Currently, I have not had any impact on the council, but if given the opportunity, I would do my best to be committed and involved in supporting the mission of the Church and the exceptional spirit of Good Shepherd.

Name: Jason Launders

Years at GSLC: .5

Personal History:

- Brought up Anglican and moved to USA from UK in 1998
- Member of St. Paul's Red Hill PA, (ELCA) for ~15 years
- Work with advanced medical device technology safety and performance (radiotherapy and radiology)

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Praise team
- Men in Mission (serving meals)
- Theology on Tap
- Empty Nesters
- Sunday School



Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

In my previous congregation I served as council president for 6 years (including through Covid), the search committee (for a new pastor), and on Upper Perkiomen Child Care Committee (a full part of the church ministry serving over 100 children every day). I also led services and preached on numerous occasions while we were looking for a new pastor.

In the secular world I have served as a Scout Master, Scout District Commissioner, and Directed a non-profit international medical device testing laboratory.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

The council's role is to enable the pastor to lead the congregation while ensuring that the church's priorities align with the great commission. My guiding principle when making decisions is that living by faith means taking risks for the gospel – the apostles did.

Biographies for Council Candidates 2026-2027

Name: Jeff Nugent

Years at GSLC: 2

Personal History:

- Married to Heidi. Have three children: a son and two daughters & reside in Woodstock
- Holds a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear Engineering from Pennsylvania State University (1991).
- Thirty year career in the nuclear power industry, serving in roles ranging from a Reactor Engineer to Senior Operations Evaluator here in Atlanta at the Institute of Nuclear Power Operators.
- Analytical person and has been in leadership most of his career.
- Looking to find a place to put his heart in his community to serve and lead others.



Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

- Mutual Ministry Member
- Assisting Minister

Epworth United Methodist Church

- Lay Speaker (Feb 2004 – Dec 2018): Led worship, delivered sermons, and supported church leadership within the congregation.
- Youth Ministry & Ministry Assistant to the Community (Jan 2005 – Sept 2008): Developed and led youth programs, mentored young people, and coordinated community service initiatives.

Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

Led the Illinois Valley Anti-Drug Coalition, advancing youth and community well-being across the central Illinois region. Service with the Boy Scouts of America including mentoring youth and supporting programs in multiple leadership roles. Additionally, held positions in multiple volunteer fire departments, combining administrative and firefighting responsibilities. These experiences reflect my commitment to service, leadership, and community safety.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

I believe, my impact on GSLC council would center on mentoring and developing leaders, fostering community engagement, and promoting safety and well-being. Through roles in church, youth programs, and public service, I have consistently invested in others' growth and helped build strong, supportive communities. My dedication to faith-driven service and leadership ensures a positive influence on both individuals and the broader council.

Biographies for Council Candidates 2026-2027

Name: Chuck Storla

Years at GSLC: 2

Personal History:

- I'm a life-long-Lutheran, still working on it, and glad there is Grace.
- Taught Sunday School for adults, led VBS three times, Treasurer once and member of praise band at two previous churches.
- Retired and now pretending to be a novelist.

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Praise band member
- Helper during VBS
- Member of team working on the church website



Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

In my work life, I was a manager at Hewlett-Packard for two+ decades. In addition to different roles within churches, I was the chair of the Atlanta Lutheran Via de Cristo for seven years.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

As a relatively new member of Good Shepherd, I have not made any impact on the council. I believe the church is not a gathering of individuals, but a community of faith. If selected, I would do my best to discern and follow His will.

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Name: Janice Swinford

Years at GSLC: 26



Personal History:

- Married to Patrick for 28 years with two girls, Alexis, 23 and Courtney, 21
- Graduated from Berry college with a double major in International studies and Spanish
- Grew up in Florida
- Serve as Precinct manager in Cobb county elections and background actor in tv and film
- Lifelong Lutheran

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Sunday school superintendent, and currently assist and teach
- Stewardship committee
- Served a previous term approximately 15 years ago on council and am currently Council secretary
- Faith and family committee and assist in many youth events
- Verger for the 8:30 service

Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

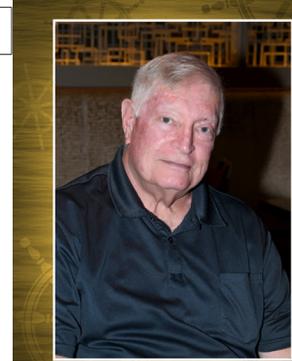
I have both worked and volunteered in many different capacities for GSLC. I strive to bring whatever gifts God had given me to serve our church and community with God's guidance.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

Since I am present almost every Sunday, and volunteer in many different areas, I believe I have a well-rounded knowledge of the people of GSLC. I will continue to bring prayerful discernment and a forward looking approach to all issues brought before Council.

Name: Don Vogt

Years at GSLC: 33



Personal History:

- Retired military and airline pilot.
- Raised Presbyterian, became Lutheran when I married Wendy 36 years ago.
- We have one daughter, Irina, whom we adopted from Russia.

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Previously co-chair of Stewardship Committee.
- Currently on Worship & Music Committee as usher representative.
- Active as an usher and in development of usher procedures.

Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

Led combat missions in jet fighters. Second in command of a fighter squadron. Responsible for safety of passengers and crew as an airline captain. Several years as chairman of Amenities & Security Committee in our subdivision.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

Council has done a great job leading GSLC through Covid and developing plans for our future. I would like to be a part of continuing that process.

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Name: Eva Schwartz - Youth Representative

Years at GSLC: 7

Personal History:

- Junior at Etowah HS
- Active in band, National Honor Society, National English Honor Society; Mentor; Tutor; Works at Chicken Salad Chick; Straight A Honor Roll Student; President of Etowah Progressive Club
- Enjoys crafting, volunteering and helping with community events
- Loves spending time with family and friends
- Passionate about making church a welcoming and inclusive space for all youth

Church Involvement (list 3 – 5):

- Regular attendee at GSLC worship services
- Volunteer for Vacation Bible School and youth events
- Participates in youth group and service projects
- Helps with Sunday School and children's ministry activities
- Attended retreats and GSLC community service days



Brief statements on your leadership experience (1-2 sentences)

I've served as a peer mentor at school and enjoy helping organize youth group events. I value teamwork, inclusion, and making sure everyone feels seen and heard.

Brief statements on your impact on council:

I hope to bring creative ideas, positive energy, and a strong sense of community to the Council, helping our church grow closer and continue serving others with joy.