

**Pacific Southwest District - Church of the Brethren  
Background Information for the 2020 - 2021 Ballot**

Candidates are listed by office, alphabetically by last name.

Descriptions of each office are condensed from the PSWD Constitution: [www.pswdcob.org](http://www.pswdcob.org)

**Moderator-Elect** (vote for 1): The two year term begins immediately. In addition to being an officer of District Conference, the Moderator-Elect serves on the District Board of Administration, the District Conference Program Committee, and chairs the Nominating Committee.



**Cheryl Crane:**

*Age: 59*

*Congregation:* Prince of Peace

*Vocation:* Elementary School Teacher

*Church Experience:*

Local Church -board chair,

worship coordinator, piano for worship, children's ministry PSW District board member.

*Vision Statement:* God has given me many blessings, including sending Jesus who died for my salvation. I strive to dedicate my life as praise and service to God. When we come together as a church, a district or a denomination, we can encourage each other and work together to do even bigger things in praise and service to God.

**Standing Committee Delegate** (vote for 1) & **Alternate** (vote for 1): are elected by the District Conference to serve a 3 year term representing the district on Annual Conference Standing Committee, and are eligible to serve on additional term. When a Standing Committee Delegate is not able to complete the term, the alternate completes the term to provide continuity, assuming the replaced delegate's term limits.



**Delegate**

**Don Shankster:** *incumbent*

*Age: 69*

*Congregation:* Papago Buttes

*Vocation:* Pastor

*Church Experience:*

While pastoring Papago Buttes Church, I also serve as the district representative to Arizona Faith Network (ecumenical), on the District Nurturing and Credentialing Com., and on the District Policy Board as the district representative to Standing Committee. I served on the nominating com. of Standing Com. for annual conference.

*Vision Statement:* By continuing to seek the mind of Christ, we are able to bridge the differences that sometimes divide, creating a diverse, colorful body that represents God's vision of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Our diversity strengthens our togetherness and increases our creativity in continuing the work of Jesus.



**Alternate**

**Sara Haldeman-Scarr:**

*incumbent Age: 64*

*Congregation:* San Diego

*Vocation:* Pastor

*Church Experience:*

I have been active in the PSWD on the District Board, Women's Retreat, Moderator, Pastor, Interim Pastor. Nationally most recently, I have served on the Women's Clergy Retreat Planning Committee

*Vision Statement:* I dream of a church that shares the unconditional love of Jesus with all people.

## Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B

**Nominating Committee** (vote for 1): The three year term begins immediately. Members may not serve successive terms. Nominating Committee presents to the District Conference a ballot for each vacancy.



**Joanne Wagoner:**

*Congregation:* La Verne

*Vocation:* Retired  
Elementary Teacher -  
Reading Specialist.

*Church Experience:*  
I am a Life time member of

the Church of the Brethren and have served in many position throughout the years. Currently serving as a

Spiritual Life and Nurture Commission member.

*Vision Statement:* The PSWD Board strives to provide strong support for established and new congregations in the district. The key to a successful board is outstanding leadership from across the district, representing many talents and visions for the church. The nominating committee will need to continue to seek and encourage talented members to serve on the district board.

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**Program Committee, District Conference** (vote for 2): The three year term begins immediately. The Committee is responsible for planning the District Conference program, obtaining leadership, and making all necessary arrangements for the conference, in cooperation with on-site representatives.



**Annali Topf:**

*Age:* 31

*Congregation:* Pasadena

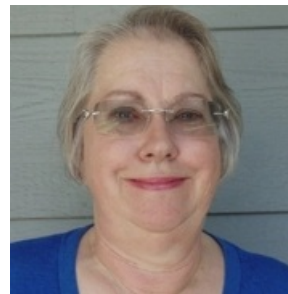
*Vocation:* Chaplain  
Resident

*Church Experience:*  
From October 2018-June

2019 I served as interim pastor for Glendale Church of the Brethren. Their previous pastor and my ordination mentor, Randy Short, had tragically passed away from cancer in the summer of 2018. Stepping in to support Glendale Church of the Brethren as they processed their loss while also trying to stabilize the church in their ministries (weekly Bible study, monthly community night, etc) became my primary goal. The position also came with the opportunity to gain preaching and church administration experience. The experience at Glendale Church of the Brethren constantly turned me toward God. I found myself seeking God in each detail of my work because it seems that any previous preparation I thought I had did not actually help me in the unpredictable day in the life of a small church, it was a joy and an adventure.

*Vision Statement:* My personal vision statement is shaped by my calling to serve as an interfaith chaplain: I believe that all people are created in the image of God, and therefore are worthy of respect

and dignity. As I engage my patients of all or no faith tradition, I seek to meet them where they are by offering nonjudgmental listening and pastoral presence. I believe that as I walk the halls of the hospital Jesus is with me, enabling me to serve others with compassion and love.



**Cady Laycook : incumbent**

*Age:* 66

*Congregation:* South Bay

*Vocation:* Ordained minister, case manager for an agency serving individuals with developmental disabilities

*Church Experience:* Member of congregation leadership team, active with children's ministry, hospitality and meals to homeless neighbors, frequent District and Annual Conference delegate, Current member of PSWD Program Committee .

*Vision Statement:* For PSWD to continue/grow into being a model of unity and fruitfulness as expressed in our Unity Statement. That we as a district continue to embrace, connect, support and welcome our congregations in their local missions and ministries and that District Conference be a meaningful element of this effort.

## Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B

**PSWD Board of Administration:** The term begins immediately. The purpose of the Board is to manage and administer the religious and business activities of the District, as authorized by the District Conference.

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**PSWD Board of Administration:** . . . . . Vote for 1 in each section (three year term)

**Northern California Representative:** Board members elected as sectional representatives need to reside in the section they represent, and must be a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the district for at least one year prior to election and must have demonstrated leadership ability.



**Norma Sexton:** *incumbent*

*Age:* 62

*Congregation:* Prince of Peace

*Vocation:* Pharmacist, Cello performer and teacher

*Church Experience:*

Formerly, I was an active participant and Licensed Minister in the Bakersfield Community Church of the Brethren. Following my move to Auburn, California in 2011 I am attending the Prince of Peace Church in Sacramento and assisting in leadership. I am completing a three-year term and have previously served a six-year term on the District Policy Board.

*Vision Statement:* This year I have served as the chair of the Ministry Commission to support and encourage our ministers in serving their congregations. I feel it is a privilege to contribute leadership in District business matters in supporting the local congregations.

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**Southern California West Representative:** Board members elected as sectional representatives need to reside in the section they represent, and must be a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the district for at least one year prior to election and must have demonstrated leadership ability.



**Jim Lefever:**

*Age:* 72

*Congregation:* Glendale

*Vocation:* Retired Architect

*Church Experience:*

Mom and dad were both Pennsylvania Brethren, in fact Grandfather was an itinerant preacher in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. I grew up in the University Park Maryland COB and was for a time a member of the offshoot Celebration group. Following college I spent three years in BVS primarily serving in California. For the last thirty-five years I've been a member of the Glendale COB where I've served for many years on the board including a long stint as moderator. I'm

currently board chair. I've also served as moderator at the Imperial Heights COB for the last six years. Several years ago I was moderator at district conference and I've attended and served as delegate to several annual conferences.

*Vision Statement:* I believe the west coast and the Pacific Southwest District represents a fantastic laboratory for the future of the Brethren. Our appeal to simplicity, responsibility and active engagement dovetails wonderfully with the diverse, varied 'can do' people of the west coast. Like most churches the COB has seen decline for some time. Loss has occurred in the Pacific Southwest as it in most areas of the country. On the other hand, recently we've planted several churches and are reviving others. We have made a good start but there is plenty of work to be done and good reason to be optimistic.

## Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B

### PSWD Board of Administration: At-Large Representatives . . . . . Vote for 5 (three year term)

Board members must be a member of a Church of the Brethren congregation within the district for at least one year prior to election and must have demonstrated leadership ability.



**Mario Cabrera:**  
*Age: 20*  
*Congregation: Principe de Paz*  
  
*Vocation: Third Year College Student.*

*Church Experience:*

What I have done for God in my church has consisted of being in the media ministry for 7 years and serving in our district for 4 years. In our district, I have been a part of the district youth cabinet for 3 years and also part of the district board. I have just started serving in the Young Adult Steering Committee helping organize National Young Adult Conference, and have just finished serving in MSS.

*Vision Statement:* We need strong leaders, strong relationships, strong communities to keep the brethren youth strong and willing to participate in the things that matter. I would like to be a voice and advocate for the district. We should not be afraid of letting our voices be heard to change the world that we live in.

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**David Flores: incumbent**  
*Congregation: Cristo Sion*

*Vocation: Pressman, in the printing Industry*

*Church Experience:*  
I am, a licensed Pastor and Teacher, currently serving

on the Policy Board

*Vision Statement:* Today more than ever we need to see the world in a different way, the church has to use all the resources of technology to send positive messages of peace and love, in a desperate world that needs the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so that our community reaches to be transformed by his word "It is written."

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**Bob Morris:**  
*Age: 68*  
*Congregation: Glendora*

*Vocation: Pastor*  
*- Semi-Retired*

*Church Experience:*

Former Pastor of Pleasant View, Welty, Rockhill Furnace, Bakersfield, Glendora and Tucson Churches of the Brethren. Current Pastor of Glendora. Bachelor of Music, Shenandoah Conservatory, VA. Master of Divinity, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, VA. 2019 District Moderator, former member of Nurturing & Credentialing Committee, former Chair of PSWD Education & Evangelism Commission.

*Vision Statement:* I would like to see our district facilitate the 2021 Compelling Vision Statement of the Church of the Brethren which is (tentatively): Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.

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**Julia Wheeler:**  
*Age: 55*  
*Congregation: La Verne*

*Vocation: University of La Verne, Church Relations*

*Church Experience:*

I work with staff at La Verne CoB and other churches in the district and am also training as a Chaplain Intern for Hillcrest Homes.

*Vision Statement:* The church must persist! Let's bring new ideas and energy to share the good news with many!

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## Ballot Background Information, Exhibit B

### PSWD Board of Administration: Youth & Young Adult Representative. Vote for 2 (one year term)

Youth members must be at least 15 years old and less than 24 years old as of December 31 of the year elected.



**Trinity Hong:**

*Age:* 16

*Congregation:* Glendale

*Vocation:* High school student

*Church Experience:*

I have been going to the CoB in Glendale for about 6 years now and have been attending to most of the youth conference and events. I've also volunteered to help prepare food for the homeless shelter "Ascencia" with some of my other church members.

*Vision Statement:* Although this will be very new to me, I would like to take a leap of faith and help grow within the church and expand the knowledge of Christ to others especially people my age. I hope to seek the love of God within us and share his teachings.

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**Deborah Oseguera:**

*Age:* 16

*Congregation:* Centro Agape en Acción, Los Banos CA

*Vocation:* Full time student

*Church Experience:* My

church is a small church so I helped with the set up when we had the in site service. I went to Arizona District Conference and helped with child care and was also apart of the youth event that they had.

*Vision Statement:* I want to learn and be more passionate about God and want to be able to serve others. I want to love God, love people, and be His hands and feet here on earth.

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**Elena Yoder:**

*Age:* 17

*Congregation:* Circle of Peace

*Vocation:* Some of my fun opportunities have branched off of student council and life-guarding.

As a teenager in today's society, I have valued working with others, the importance of communication, and have learned that passion truly does fuel persistence.

*Church Experience:* Born into the Church of the Brethren, I have been apart of the Circle of Peace COB for over 16 years. One thing we value is making all feel welcome, no matter their walk of life. I am on the greeting team which means that the second someone walks into the doors on Sunday morning, we demonstrate peace and kindness, knowing that we are Jesus's hands and feet. I have been blessed enough to attend Camp Blue Diamond in Pennsylvania for numerous years, going as both a camper and counselor-in-training. For as long as I can remember I have worked with New Community Project and absolutely loved going on learning tours to both New Mexico and Nepal. I hope to continue to support NCP and learn more about the people around the world that God has created, as well.

*Vision Statement:* A vision filled with faith, love, and unity is what I work towards everyday. We live in a world where it is unheard of to walk by faith and not sight. I strive each day to live and love with these three things at the front of all I do. Every mile I run, mountain I climb, step I take, person I encounter, and situation I find myself in, I work towards bettering myself and responding through the Word and my knowledge of who Jesus is. I believe that in our world there may be hundreds of languages spoken, but that love and unity are commonalities. God's grace floods every place and I strongly support not creating my own path, but letting go and letting God, which has led me to the exact spot I am at today. I pray for eyes open to new experiences, hands willing to do the hard work, and a mind set with faith, love, and unity at the front of it.