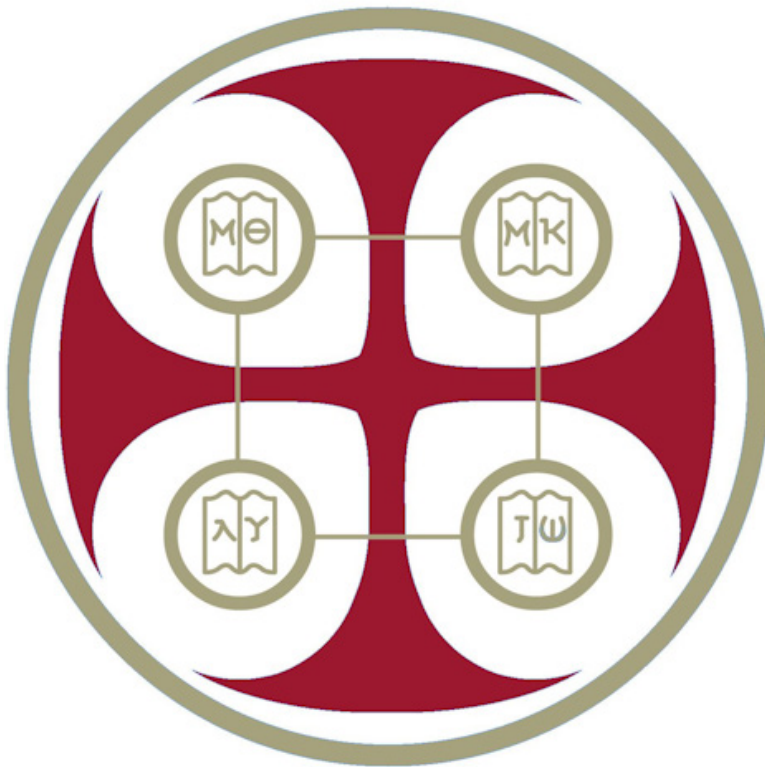


# Redeemer Officer Elections

Spring 2024



On January 20, 2024, the Session determined that the following nominees are eligible to stand for election at the March 3, 2024, congregational meeting after each service:

- Kelly Baker (deacon)
- Rick Mealer (ruling elder)
- Aaron Rhinehart (deacon)
- Andrew Waller (ruling elder)

Each of these men has been through a rigorous period of study and examination. To be qualified to stand for election, all nominees must first attend a 13-week Leadership Training course that covers these topics:

- The biblical structure of leadership and authority
- An overview of the Westminster Confession of Faith
- Group dynamics
- Sanctification
- Calvinism
- Covenant Theology
- An overview of the Old and New Testaments

Upon successful completion of the Leadership Training course, nominees then are required to complete a 13-week Officer Training course that covers these additional topics:

- The qualifications and duties of elders and deacons
- The work of shepherding the church
- Worship and Sacraments
- Church history
- Presbyterian government
- Church discipline

As part of these two 13-week courses, nominees must read and interact with more than 20 books and articles and come prepared to discuss a series of questions that are assigned for each class session.

After attending the two semesters of study, nominees are then required to take three closed-book, written examinations covering the Bible, Theology, and Sacraments (a total of 100 questions). They must also answer another 30 questions that apply the Ten Commandments to specific areas of their life and character.

If he receives a passing grade on the written exam, a nominee then sits for an extended oral examination with the full Session that covers all of the former exams plus any additional questions the elders might have. As part of this exam, the elders must also evaluate a nominee's stated differences with the Westminster Standards. The following stated differences were recorded and ruled upon by the Session for these four nominees:

- Kelly Baker (deacon): difference with Westminster Larger Catechism 109 (on images of Jesus)

- Rick Mealer (ruling elder): difference with Westminster Confession of Faith 21.8 (on observance of the Sabbath)
- Aaron Rhinehart (deacon): difference with Westminster Confession of Faith 21.8 (on observance of the Sabbath)
- Andrew Waller (ruling elder): differences with Westminster Larger Catechism 109 (on images of Jesus) and with Westminster Confession of Faith 21.8 (on observance of the Sabbath)

In all cases, the Session found these differences to be “more than semantic but neither hostile to the doctrinal system of the PCA nor striking at the vitals of religion” (*Book of Church Order* 21-4).

Members of the congregation are encouraged to reach out to each nominee with questions or time for conversation so they can make an informed decision at the March 3 congregational meeting.

- Kelly Baker at kbaker1@sbcglobal.net
- Rick Mealer at freedomfire@snakebite.com
- Aaron Rhinehart at aaron.m.rhinehart@gmail.com
- Andrew Waller at andrew@andrewhwaller.com

Those nominees who are elected by the congregation will be ordained after Easter.

On the following pages, our nominees have provided short bios to help the congregation get to know them better. We encourage you to read over these bios, and, if you don't know them already, to find opportunities over the next few weeks to get to know these men.

### **Looking Ahead**

In the future, the Session will generally follow a biennial schedule for consideration of new officers:

- April of even-numbered years (2024, 2026, 2028, 2030, etc.): one-month nomination period, which allows members to pray about, talk to, and nominate men to the offices of deacon and ruling elder
- September through December: 13-week Leadership Training class
- January through May: 13-week Officer Training class
- May through June: time to complete closed-book written examinations
- July: oral examinations before the Session
- August: announce eligible nominees to the congregation
- September: vote, ordain, and install

This means that the next opportunity for you to nominate potential officers is coming up later this spring. Please begin praying now that God would raise up qualified nominees to serve Redeemer. If you are interested in attending the 13-week Leadership Training class this fall, feel free to contact Pastor Eric for a schedule and reading list prior to the start of the class.



## **Kelly Baker—Deacon Candidate**

I was baptized and raised in the Presbyterian church (PCUS) in Fort Stockton, Texas, and I remember trusting in Jesus as my Savior from my earliest days. As I was growing up, God used Sunday school teachers, the liturgy, hymns, and scripture reading to reveal himself to me and build a deep trust in him. At age twelve I went through a communicants class, and through the pastor's clear description of the gospel, I came to a fuller understanding of my faith.

However, through my teen and early college years, I held back on trusting Jesus as the Lord of my life. As a student at UT, I met new born-again Christians whose commitment and zeal for the Lord challenged me to decide whether to follow him or not, and this led me to submit to Jesus as the Lord of my life.

In my new and closer walk with God, I got involved with Campus Crusade for Christ and a Bible Church, and began to receive clear bible teaching and grow in my knowledge of God's sanctifying work in my life. This led me to join a summer missions project in Kenya, which was life-changing as I saw how people in a very different culture followed the Lord, and also saw extreme poverty for the first time.

I met the love of my life, Jane, and we were married at Westlake Bible Church (now Austin Ridge) in 1990. The Lord has blessed me richly through spending life with her these 33+ years. We have three adult children and two grandchildren: Will lives in Princeton, NJ, with his wife, Zoe, and our grandchildren James and Mary Katherine; Ben lives in Brooklyn, NY; and Natalie lives in San Antonio. Natalie sang in the Redeemer choir a few years ago. My formal education is in electrical engineering, and I've worked in the semiconductor industry here in Austin for over 38 years.

Jane and I first came to Redeemer in 1998, where our kids were baptized. In 2003, we moved to Grace Covenant Church, worshiping and serving there before returning to Redeemer in 2021. Since returning, I have enjoyed helping lead a small group, and we've hosted musicians for Arts on Alexander and served in areas such as communion cleanup after worship.

Being back at Redeemer, the Reformed theology has also been a big blessing for me. I have really appreciated the deep ministry of the word and sacraments, commitment to the majesty of God in the way we worship, and a deeper grasp of God's work in history through his covenants.

I would be humbled and honored to serve as a deacon at Redeemer. God has given me a desire to help the church in practical ways, and to reach out in mercy ministry to people within the church and to those around us. Galatians 6:10 tells us "as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially those who are of the household of faith." I would seek to deepen my involvement in this type of ministry and encourage all of us, as a church body, to serve and do good for one another.



## **Rick Mealer—Elder Candidate**

Having been raised in the quaint college town of Austin, I am pleased to be back in central Texas in my adult years. In 1976, I was baptized in a Lutheran church just off South Congress Ave., raised in a Christian home, and saw great blessing from the fellowship of believers. Part of the formative years of my youth were spent in public schools, at a lake fishing with my dad, or at one of the many jobs I worked and usually wearing a hat. College years came quickly and I enrolled at ACC, then transferred to Southwest Texas State University (now known as Texas State). I graduated with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning in August 2001. One month later, the Twin Towers were hit, the economy fell, and I worked in restaurants for six years, becoming a classically trained cook. During those years, I also began working on home construction with some friends in my spare time.

During college, my mother died from complications of the autoimmune disease Lupus. That event changed my life. I began to remember all the gospel teaching of my youth. After two gap years from school and some bad behavior, I saw the need for redemption and forgiveness but knew I could do nothing on my own to earn either. I earnestly prayed that the Lord would have mercy, forgive me, and bring me into his kingdom. The change was immediate.

I bounced around multiple churches where I would get involved in Bible studies, college ministry, and community service groups. Eventually, I moved to Colorado with my brother for a few years where I learned how to dig out of blizzards, climb mountains, and continue leading church groups.

While in Colorado, I found a local Reformed seminary and audited a couple of classes. Those classes opened my eyes to a new theological language, and I wanted to learn more. That desire led me to Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss. There I met the woman I could not live without. Sarah Ryburn was a student in the counseling program. We married and bought a home that had too many problems. I had to return to work, which eventually led me to a general contracting business.

While living in Jackson, we would visit my family in Austin and would attend Redeemer when in town for a Sunday. We knew that if the Lord ever brought us back to Austin for good, we would have a church home. In 2019, the Lord led us to Texas and back to our new quaint college town of San Marcos. We started at Redeemer the week we unloaded the moving van and have attended ever since.

The years out of seminary have not been without the desire for ministry. I still feel called to serve the Lord in every manner he leads, because he took on the role of a servant that I might be called to follow him. I lead a small group, pray with the shepherding teams, help lead men's outings, and enjoy hospitality at our home.

Austin is no longer a quaint college town, and not that many folks wear a hat, but I feel called to serve and minister to those who enter our doors. With the grace and peace of our Lord, I pray that his kingdom come. I would love to speak with you all; you can find me in the cowboy hat.



### **Aaron Rhinehart—Deacon Candidate**

I grew up in a church home and received my faith in Christ at the age of two and a half. I started to take it more seriously in high school when I was discipled by my youth pastor. During my college years, God convicted me that I needed to live in a way that I would meet the qualifications of a church officer (elder or deacon). For most of my life, I attended non-denominational Bible churches and have served in a variety of capacities from small group leader to usher. Shortly after Robyn and I were married, we helped start a church plant in the Scofield Farms area of north Austin where I served as an elder.

God called our family to Redeemer in January of 2014. Since coming to Redeemer, I have been actively involved in teaching 1st grade School of Discipleship with Robyn for many years (some of us learn a little more slowly than others!), ushering during first service, and serving as a deacons' assistant since 2020.

I have lived in the Austin area since 1995, excluding the time that I spent at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. After earning my BS in Electrical Engineering Technology in 2003, I came back to Austin as fast as I could to escape the cold. Since graduating, I have worked in several Austin technology companies including AMD and Ixia Communications (now Keysight). I have been employed for the past eight and a half years as a systems engineer at Dell, working on developing server hardware and memory systems. I currently live outside of Georgetown, near Taylor, on 14 acres with Robyn and our three children (Evan, 15; Nathan, 13; and Margaret, 11), my in-laws, 19 goats, numerous chickens, and a couple of guardian dogs.

When I have spare time, I enjoy playing many types of board games and reading. Throughout the year, I also enjoy making various sweet meads and wines, and sharing my latest creations with whoever is interested.



## **Andrew Waller—Elder Candidate**

I was born in Saint Louis, Mo., to Christian parents (Richard and Carol Waller) who taught me to know the Lord. My family attended a PCA church in the Saint Louis area until 2005, when we moved to Austin and became members here at Redeemer Presbyterian Church. After finishing high school in 2008, I attended Southwestern University in Georgetown, where I began leading Bible studies alongside some of my fellow students and became more invested in serving God's people through the study of both scripture and the history of the Church. I graduated in 2011 with a BA in History and enrolled in the MDiv program at Redeemer Seminary's Austin campus. I was blessed to be able to remain an active member at Redeemer Presbyterian and continue serving at my home church while in seminary.

I began serving as one of the church's sextons and taught Redeemer's high school students in our School of Discipleship classes. I graduated from Redeemer Seminary in 2015 and by that time had gotten engaged to my wife Taylor, who was a member at All Saints PCA in Austin. Taylor grew up in Tomball, Texas (northwest of Houston), and graduated from UT Austin in 2013. After college, she worked full-time serving international students at UT as a part of Campus Crusade's Bridges International ministry. We married in 2016 and moved to the San Marcos/New Braunfels area for two years while Taylor finished a Master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. Taylor currently works as a speech-language pathologist in Round Rock ISD and serves on Redeemer's missions committee.

While Taylor was in grad school, I taught in the Humanities department at Regents School of Austin for two and a half years. I currently work full-time as a software developer in the legal tech industry. I am a PhD candidate in New Testament Studies at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, where I study the influence of early Jewish literature on the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. I am also a licentiate in the South Texas Presbytery, where I provide occasional pulpit supply for churches in our area. I currently serve Redeemer as a member of the Central Parish shepherding team, a School of Discipleship instructor, and a small group leader.



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