

Potential Church Council Members Bios – 2023

SOUTH ABBOTSFORD CHURCH

The following individuals have allowed their names to stand for affirmation to our Church Council as described in our bylaws. Affirmation is scheduled to take place at the Spring Special General Meeting on June 11, 2023 at 11:30 am. Please review the following background information in order to become acquainted with these individuals.

Potential Council Members

Eldon Friesen (3 year term)



I am a child of the King, married to Sheila and together we have 2 grown sons who married beautiful talented ladies. We have 7 wonderful grandchildren who (all but 1 grandchild) live here in Abbotsford.

Growing up in southern Manitoba, my 4 brothers and 1 sister did not realize until we were older that we were truly blessed. We had a large supportive extended family, never mind our own strong loving family. My grandfather Friesen was a minister, my uncles were ministers so church has always been a part of my life. We lived on a larger farm and work was always something

that was before us! But we enjoyed it (most of the time)!

On June 14, 1968 at 14 years old while attending a crusade in the local town, I realized that my grandparents or parents faith was not enough. I needed to have a personal faith and gave my life to Jesus that day. Baptism followed a year later and I am thankful that God's grace has been with me ever since. Growing up I loved history, geography and exploring. December 7, 1971 started that *exploration* in true life as I, along with my parents, decided that I would join my uncle and aunt in Abbotsford until Christmas, but as I have often said, Christmas has not come yet as now more than 50 years later I am still here! In April 1974 I was thrilled to marry Sheila (Balisky). Before retiring, Sheila worked in the Abbotsford Hospital for more than 41 years.

For more than 25 years we attended Grace Church on McMillan where I served and led the Missions Committee, sang in the choir and a men's quartet, and served on the elder board. It was in early summer of 2000 that I started having weird stomach issues which I thought was stress and although it might have been, it ended up being stomach cancer. On November 27, 2000 I had surgery to remove approximately 2/3 of my stomach. It was the day before I went home from the hospital that still is so clear in my memory. That day the doctors came and suggested I would celebrate my 50th birthday but maybe not the 60th!

I went to sleep with that thought and had a dream that was so vivid. In the dream, I was walking in a long tunnel created by bushes or roses, something that was brushing me and poking at me. There seemed to be a light at the end of that tunnel and when I pushed through (as I recall) with considerable effort, I saw Someone standing at the end who said "you will be all right". This person was the Light! Chemo and radiation forced a strength that I could not do on my own. It was so

tough and now more than 22 years later, I still get emotional thinking that through. Through it all, God's faithfulness and the prayers of family and church carried Sheila and myself.

Since 2002, we have called South Abbotsford Church our church home and are blessed to be part of a loving supportive Life Group, enjoy playing pickleball, riding our e-bikes and going for picnics. The Lord is faithful and good!

Joe Wieler (3 year term)



I am the oldest of three children in my family, where my mom had a strong relationship with Jesus and my dad encouraged us to follow mom's example. I grew up in King Rd MB and I loved our church. I was always involved in the programs, and it felt like I was among family. At about 8 years old, I made the decision to follow Jesus and at 16 I was baptized.

After graduating from MEI, I met Karlena at College and Career at Eben Ezer Church. We have been married for 21 years and have four children: Joshua (14), Kaleb (12), Elijah (10), and Abigail (5). In 2018, after we moved back to Abbotsford from Kitimat, BC we started attending SAC in the fall and became members in February 2020. As a family, one of our favorite things to do is to hit the slopes – usually at Manning.

Our family manages a turkey farm just down the road and I am a Site Supervisor for Alpha and Omega Construction. Over the last few years, I have had the chance to participate at SAC in various ways: Freedom Session, Sunday School teacher, Greeter and as a KOZ leader. One of my fondest memories of serving at South Abbotsford Church to date was during the flood. The farm we were managing (we have since moved the farm out of the flood zone) was flooded and friends reached out. It grew from there and it was such a breath of fresh air during COVID times. People were helping each other and serving together, not fearing each other. The flood and COVID were very hard times, but God brought blessing through that whole experience.

I am seeing the hard work that Council has been doing and I get excited about what is ahead for our church. If affirmed, I hope to be a positive active voice on Church Council and actively work towards seeking God's plan for our church.