



# WHITTIER AREA COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 2022 CHURCH LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE BIOS

### CHURCH BOARD CANDIDATES

CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS: Denise Watkins, Enid Eck, Olga Garate, Rick Williams,  
Steve Arredondo



NAME: Hector Gonzalez  
SPOUSE: Bettina  
OCCUPATION: Medical Doctor Family Medicine  
COMPANY NAME: Family Care Specialist Medical Group  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2004

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH:  
Came to faith at Frontier Ranch Young Life Camp in High School

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?  
Previous Board Member at WACC, board member for Urban Youth Workers Institute and Young Life Committees

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?  
God continues to faithfully bless WACC with resources to bring "People to Jesus and Jesus to people" despite pandemics, social unrest, and times of doubt. I

look forward to seeing how he uses us in the future.



NAME: Brandon Martínez  
SPOUSE: Lisa  
OCCUPATION: Director of Learning Design  
COMPANY NAME: Noodle  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2019

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH:  
I grew up in the church and was raised in a Christian home. I was baptized in December of 1996 at the Sunny Hills Church of Christ.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?  
I have over 8 years experience as a high school assistant principal and principal. I have been on many committees including serving as the league representative for the California Interscholastic Federation, Southern Section (CIF SS). I was a high school teacher for over 9 years and served on many committees and accreditation

teams (four in total). I am also in my 12th year as a higher ed professor at the University of Southern California and have also served on many committees and dissertations. I am currently the head cross country coach and assistant distance track coach at California High School, where I mentor and coach with about 60 high school student-athletes.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

God is breaking social barriers through WACC’s mission of bringing Jesus to people and people to Jesus. This work alone has expanded our reach into our diverse community, including WACC en Español and other outreach programs. WACC is truly a beacon in the city of Whittier and surrounding areas. We are just getting started!



NAME: Mona Valdez  
SPOUSE: Danny  
OCCUPATION: Associate Director of Outreach and Events  
COMPANY NAME: Pacifica Graduate Institute  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2018

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH.

Ms. Rose in Sunday School, at the foursquare church I grew up in, extended an invitation when I was 10 years old. I prayed with her, accepted Jesus into my heart, and Ms. Rose and the class celebrated my decision.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

Five years ago, I had the privilege to serve at the Welcome Center and the last three years I’ve been a part of Next Steps to help others explore ways to connect at WACC. My husband, Danny, and I have been committed to our community group for just over five years and starting this year, he and I started leading Rooted small groups for a 10-week experience. In my profession, I’ve worked in admissions for post-secondary education for over 18 years which has allowed me to be the first impression for the various institutions along with creating opportunities to promote outreach and community partnerships.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

It’s been encouraging to see first-hand, from Next Steps and the small groups my husband and I have facilitated, how there’s a genuine response from the congregation to want to do what God can do through them, which includes reaching more people to know of God’s love. That response comes from their own experience, more recently, to have WACC and its ministries online during the pandemic AND now having a warm welcome as early as driving on Campus. Our congregation gets real opportunities to grow, be connected and supported wherever they’re at. For many, this means more now than ever after this challenging season.



NAME: Kim Songer  
SPOUSE: Rick Rodenbucher  
OCCUPATION: Elementary School Principal  
COMPANY: East Whittier City School District  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2007

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH:

During high school, I began to seek a relationship with God, but it wasn’t until I was married and a mom that I chose to become a follower of Jesus. I have had the blessing of growing in this relationship, and raising my three daughters in the church.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

I have worked with children’s ministries, women’s ministries, and the Alpha and Rooted programs. I feel blessed to have the spiritual gifts of leadership and discernment. These gifts have been beneficial when I served as a Board member in the past. I have an innate understanding of what is required to serve as a leader in our church.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

God is at work in many ways at WACC. The biggest blessings I have witnessed include the transformation of hearts that occur in the Alpha ministry. Another tangible way that God is at work at WACC is through the focus on serving. We are a church without walls and God is using all of us as disciples to share His word.

# NOMINATING COMMITTEE CANDIDATES

CURRENT NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Jim Fletcher, Isaac Garate, Kim Songer, Monica Wilson, Jack Wong, Courtney Bushyeager and Arlie Ankerberg



NAME: Monica Wilson  
SPOUSE: Jeff  
OCCUPATION: Teacher working with homeschool families  
COMPANY NAME: Sage Oak Charter School  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1981

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH  
When I was 12, I attended a Youth Evangelical Meeting in Buffalo, NY and accepted Jesus as my Savior that evening.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?  
Over the past 40 years, I have served in many capacities at WACC. Currently, I am a member of the Community Engagement Team with the Book Ministry I started seven years ago, sharing books with foster teens and families transitioning out of homelessness. In the past, I have coordinated Women's Bible Study for the church, been co-leader for a Bible Study group, served on the Women's Ministry Team, planned socials for our Sunday School class, and organized house building ministry trips to Tijuana.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?  
WACC is in a unique position right now to reach out to our surrounding communities and open our doors to our neighbors. With our beautiful new building, we are ready to welcome many new attendees and bring them closer to Jesus. Our new Spanish ministry will also be a great outreach to the community. As we open up more, after the pandemic, we are able to offer Bible Studies, our sports ministry, community groups, and various ways of serving to all who call WACC their home. God is doing amazing things at WACC!



NAME: Isaac Garate  
SPOUSE: Olga  
OCCUPATION: Pre Need Funeral Planning and Insurance  
COMPANY NAME: World Wide Family Associates  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1995; attending since 1989

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH  
I was raised in church from Day 1 but made the decision to receive Jesus as my personal Savior at the age of 19.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?  
I am an ordained Minister and have served as a Pastor, worship leader, choir member, youth and singles leader, spiritual mentor and associate Minister, and Sunday school teacher for many years.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?  
I believe He continues to use our fellowship as a lighthouse in Whittier and the surrounding communities. Through the many opportunities of service, fellowship and Bible study He uses us to reach and disciple new generations of believers. The Kingdom of God is also being advanced internationally through our ongoing commitment to support our global partners wherever the Spirit of God opens up an opportunity. Amen and praise God!



NAME: Jack Wong  
SPOUSE: Liz  
OCCUPATION: Registered Nurse  
COMPANY NAME: Surgery Partners  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1996

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH

At the age of twenty-one, my best friend from college became a Christian and began to witness to me about Christ. At the same time, a co-worker, a messianic Jew, also began to witness to me. Soon, I gave my life to Christ.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

I taught high school Sunday school for four years at Eastside Christian Church. I coached youth sports at WACC for six years and have refereed youth basketball at WACC for fourteen years. Professionally I was the general manager of a small, privately owned business for sixteen years and currently work as a recovery RN.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

WACC is advancing God's love in reaching the unsaved and in caring for the people in the local community by fostering and developing in and through its members a heart for our fellow human beings. WACC gives all credit and glory to God and believes in His Word, The Bible. WACC nurtures and cares for the health and spiritual well-being of its members.



NAME: Arlie Ankerberg  
SPOUSE: Bill  
OCCUPATION: Program Director  
COMPANY NAME: Health Partnership  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1996

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH

At eight years old, after viewing a film at church that told the story of a little boy who asked Jesus into his heart, I prayed to trust Christ as Savior at home with my mom and dad. During my experiences of community at Bethel College, along with the early death of my father, I began to grow in a deeper, more active relationship and intentionality in following Christ.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

As a long time member of WACC, I bring a strong network of friendships with others. I have worked with many different ministries at WACC in the past twenty two years with Health Partnership. As a candidate for the Nominating Committee, those relationships and experiences would be helpful in identifying future volunteer leaders.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

I see God at work through the stories of transformed lives, as WACC seeks to bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus. The meaningful messages shared on weekends bring encouragement as the congregation grows in faith in the context of the world in which we live. WACC is relevant locally and globally, recognizing the power of stories and lives we impact.



NAME: Spencer Sahagun  
SPOUSE: Kristin  
OCCUPATION: District Leader  
COMPANY: PetSmart  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2003

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH

I grew up a believer, however did not regularly attend church. I accepted Jesus as my Savior after I began attending WACC in 2003.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

I have served in various ministries at WACC, including; Women's Ministries, Sports Ministries, Alpha, Men's Ministries and currently serve primarily with the Welcome/Parking Team. Professionally I am responsible for leading a team of 600 leaders and associates, where I am responsible for leader identification, development and overall performance. I have previously served a three year term

on the nominating committee where I worked with fellow members to prayerfully identify and nominate candidates for church leadership positions.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

I am blessed with the opportunity to connect with many church attendees each Sunday and I am fortunate to hear firsthand the connections we as a church make with the individuals in our community. I hear from both children and adults the genuine impact and encouragement our pastors give through the weekly message. I believe we are living in the most challenging times of our lives, and through WACC we continue to bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus.



NAME: Marilyn Grove  
SPOUSE: Bob  
OCCUPATION: Registered Nurse  
COMPANY NAME: Health Partnership  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1976

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH

I grew up in a Christian home and accepted the Lord as my personal savior at the age of 12 at a Church summer camp.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

I have served as a deaconess in the early years of WACC and have been a group leader in Women's Bible Study. I have served as board president with Shelter's Right Hand. For the past 20 years, I have been a nurse advocate with Health

Partnership.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

I have seen evidence of tremendous growth of love and commitment to Jesus. This love has reached out to all ages in our community and to other parts of the world. There are many opportunities to find a place to belong and grow in our spiritual walk.



NAME: Beth Miller  
 SPOUSE: Chad  
 OCCUPATION: Speech Language Pathologist  
 COMPANY: East Whittier City School District  
 MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1996

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH

My faith in God began with my earliest memories that were filled with experiences of His love and grace, including decisive moments in my youth, in college and in my mid-twenties. By the grace of God, I continue to experience growth in my faith day by day, sometimes in daily "manna" moments and other times in monumental seasons.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

My first experiences serving at WACC began 22 years ago when I joined Jr. High staff. I transitioned to High School staff and continued mentoring the same group of girls as they journeyed through high school. The year after my students graduated, my husband and I served together in college

ministry for seven years. More recently, I have had the joy and privilege of teaching first graders in Sunday School and serving on the Church Board as a member and then as Chair. My occupation as a Speech Language Pathologist has given me a passion for special needs ministry in our church as well as an opportunity to minister in "ordinary" ways each day as I work with children and families.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

God is clearly present and at work in our church. My experiences with different groups within our church body have shown over and over again that God is moving here. I see WACC as a faith community that is expressing God's Biblical truth and grace through weekly teaching and worship experiences, focusing on smaller groups that foster community and life change, and reaching out to our community with a message of the hope in Jesus. There's no place I'd rather be.



NAME: Michelle Laven  
 SPOUSE): Lance Laven  
 OCCUPATION: I work inside the home and homeschool our 3 children  
 MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2018

DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH.

I grew up in a Catholic home alongside my sister, raised by our single mother. In Junior High School, we were invited by friends to join a local Christian youth group, and that is where I met Jesus and began my relationship with Him. I was baptized by immersion at 15 years old and publicly professed that I had accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

In 2012 I began serving on the Leadership Team in the MOPS Ministry (Mothers of Preschoolers) at WACC. After 3 years of serving as Publicity Leader and Discussion Group Leader, I stepped into the MOPS Coordinator Role, leading the ministry for 3 years. In 2017, I accepted the staff position at WACC as Director of Women's Ministries, where I was honored to serve for the past 4 1/2 years. During the pandemic, it became clear that God had called me back into my home to care for my young and growing family. I made the difficult decision to step out of my role as Women's Director to embark on our homeschooling journey. We continue to attend and serve as a family at WACC, within Women's Ministries, Children's Ministries, and Jr. High Ministries.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

Throughout my time at WACC, I have had the privilege of seeing many individuals and families come to know the great love of Jesus through countless Sunday services, ministry events, grow groups, and community service opportunities. I believe that WACC is led by a faithful group of leaders who are fully committed to serving God with their whole hearts and sharing His love with others, both inside the church and in the community. I have experienced firsthand the joy that comes from serving others and witnessed lives being transformed by following

Jesus' lead. WACC continues to be a church that seeks intergenerational community, encouraging generations to grow together in faith and nurturing the faith of all ages.



NAME: Bobby Duran  
SPOUSE: Sandy Duran  
OCCUPATION: Event Production & DJ, UPS  
COMPANY NAME: Bobbito The Chef  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2018

**DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH:**

When I was young I came to Christ through VBS. Later in life I recommitted my life in Jr. High. I grew up in a christian home and am grateful for my parents' leadership in their home.

**WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?**

I currently serve behind the scenes with Union Creative and have helped volunteer in many areas here at WACC. I worked for Urban Youth Workers Institute a Non- Profit for 15 years as our event producer & production manager. I served as an elder at my previous church Mosaic for 3 years. I was part of the search committee at WACC for a Jr. High Pastor which helped select Adam De La Torre. I served as the Torrey Conference producer for one year at Biola University.

I have a history of working in the professional training and coaching industry for over twenty years. My skills in these areas would help bring strength to the Nominating Committee as they select church leaders to support WACC's mission and vision.

I am passionate about building relationships and cultivating memorable moments for my clients, friends and community.

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?**

I see God at work here at WACC and in the future of our church. The next generation leaders that are emerging out of our Children's Ministry, Jr. High and High School Ministries are our future church. The future is young and multi-ethnic. Youth leadership is growing in our church community and around the world. God is moving and using WACC as a beacon of hope. I want to be a small part of what He is doing in his kingdom as we strive to become a City of Grace.

## AUDITOR CANDIDATES



NAME: GARY CATES  
SPOUSE: Carol  
OCCUPATION: Certified Public Accountant (Retired)  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 1996

### DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH:

I received Jesus as my Savior and was baptized at age 12. I rededicated my life to Christ in 1986 at age 34 as a member of Hacienda Heights Baptist Church.

### WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

My qualifications include that I was the managing partner of Vilmure, Peeler & Boucher CPAs from 1994 to 2013. I was also a partner with LSL CPAs located in Brea prior to my retirement in 2019. I have over 45 years of experience as a CPA working with individuals and small businesses in the tax, accounting, and business advisory areas. I have served on the finance committee at WACC for 13 years. I'm involved in Men's and

Community Groups. I also serve on the WACC Welcome Ministry Team in the parking lot.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

God has blessed WACC with amazing resources; both financially and with gifted staff. We must continue to be good stewards of what God has given us to use for His glory. My desire is to serve God with the talents and expertise He has given me as WACC expands its outreach in our community and around the world. I believe God will continue to change lives through WACC as we remain committed to our mission to bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus.



NAME: Rebecca Leos  
SPOUSE: Matthew  
OCCUPATION: Controller  
COMPANY NAME: Friendly Hills Bank  
MEMBER OF WACC SINCE: 2018

### DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME TO FAITH.

I grew up going to church and was baptized as a child and raised in a Christian home

### WHAT AREAS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD THAT WOULD QUALIFY YOU FOR THIS EXPERIENCE?

I have been serving on the WACC finance committee since 2019. I have also participated in serving with the Next Steps program at WACC. I

volunteer as Pack Committee Chair, one of the key three members for my children's Cub Scout organization. Professionally, I have been managing the accounting department at Friendly Hills Bank of Whittier for the past 15 years.

### WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH WACC?

I see God working through WACC in our outreach events to our local community. Our teamwork with other local churches in addition to the generosity of people at WACC is reflected in Love Whittier, the Benevolent Fund, Welcome Home, and the Foster Program. I am eager to see what God has planned for us to continue to bring Jesus to our local community.