

**First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus  
Annual Meeting May Newsletter Supplement**

Annual Meeting  
Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11:30am

2016 Board of Trustees Candidates

2016 Moderator Candidate

2016 Nominating Committee Candidates

Candidates for Settled Minister Search Team

## **2016 Board of Trustees Candidates (two to elected to 3-year Terms)**

**Jim Conlan** I became a member of First UU in 2009. Since joining, I have been chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Interim Minister Search Committee. I regularly volunteer at the YWCA Family Center, helping to prepare dinners. A few years ago I also enjoyed serving as a mentor in the Coming of Age class. While working on the Strategic Planning Committee, we created the congregational survey and began work on changes to the governance structure. One result from our work was the vote last year on the reduction of the board size. As a member of the board, I hope to respect the many great traditions we have established as a congregation here at First UU, while also helping to lay the foundation for future growth and goals.

**Carolee Noonan** After being active in UU congregations in central New Jersey, I sought out a UU congregation in Columbus when we moved to Ohio. While cautiously entering into this community, having been stretched thin with many volunteer roles in NJ, it was a pleasure to gradually get to know people in this UU community. I found the later Sunday morning service friendly, but crowded (particularly in the classrooms and parking lot). The first service was a more welcoming option, but provided minimal religious education classes for children and no choir. Ben was six and Delia was four when we came to Columbus. Being a person who disavows complaining without working to make it better, I dove headlong into the Religious Education community as a strong advocate for RE programming at the early service. I had the pleasure to work with Directors of Religious Education Caroline Balderston Parry and Jolinda Stephens, serving on the RE Council and teaching various age groups, as children and youth programming grew for both services, and when Spirit of Life Choir formed, it was a natural fit to join.

In the wider congregation, I served on the Search Committees for Rev. Lane Campbell and Rev. Eric Meter. In other UU congregations, I served in various capacities, including Worship Committee Chair and Board Member. I'm stepping away from a leadership role in Religious Education and am very much looking forward to getting to know more people in our congregation while serving as a Board Member. Thank you for considering me to fill the role of Board Member in our congregation.

## **2016 Moderator Candidate (one to be elected to one-year term)**

**Chas Williams:** My vision for my church is that it continues to grow and be a welcoming place for all seekers of good faith. I see many changes happening in the governance and staffing of the church which will make it a better place. I want to continue to be part of the church's social justice outreach and spiritual practices.

I am a native of Columbus and an attorney by profession. I have been a member of the First UU since 1975. I have served on the Board twice, once as Chair, and have been active in church life almost continuously on many levels. As a result of my profession, I have broad experience with the governance issues of nonprofit corporations and leadership development in general.

*IMPORTANT NOTICE: In addition to the candidates listed in this article, the members of the Nominating Committee would invite any member in good standing to nominate themselves or another by submitting the signed petition required to Board of Trustees by May 18, 2016 to be considered for election.*

*Nominations for positions to be filled by election at any properly-called meeting, in addition to those of the Nominating Committee, may be made by petition in writing signed by twenty-five (25) or more members of the church. The petition and written consent of the nominee must be submitted to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees at least three days in advance of the meeting at which the election is to be held.*

***Please come and be part of our Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday, May 22, 2016 at 11:30am***

## **2016 Nominating Committee Candidates (three to be elected for two-year terms)**

**Donna Adassa** When searching for a spiritual home and community after an illness in the family in 2008, I found a welcoming and loving community that helped to heal my heart. Since then, I've been involved in several church activities including JAM, the auction, rummage sale, the Senior Lunch, and as a Sunday morning volunteer for the Pastoral Team. As a participant in covenant groups I have made some lifelong friends.

For those who do not know me, I have been a lifelong Union member. My first union action was as a teenager, picketing for the United Farm Workers in California. I was also an active member of the Columbus Women's Action Collective in the 70's and 80's. I have been a member of four different unions and served on my Chapter Board and on the OCSEA District 6 Board for two terms. I believe my various life experiences will be an asset in discovering talents and leadership skills in our members. I want to be part of the creation of a community that facilitates a spiritual home for ALL here at First UU. I am ready to be a member of the Nominating Committee and help our church move into this next phase of life. I'm honored that the current Nominating Committee believes I have the right stuff to join them, and I hope you'll agree.

**Marilyn Beerman** In 2009, Tom and I felt a need to reconnect to a church community and decided to try First UU. The first service we attended was the September Water Ceremony and we knew we had found our home. It was a perfect spiritual fit, and it gave us an immediate community of like-minded new friends. I have been and continue to be involved in many areas of service and activities at First UU. I am on the Pastoral Care Team and I am a Sunday morning Greeter the first Sunday of each month. I am also a Network Member of BREAD, a volunteer for Faith Mission and I help with the Senior Luncheons and the Auction. Last September, I joined the Chalice Choir, and I love singing with this wonderful talented group. I am honored to be asked to be a candidate for the Nominating Committee, and if elected, look forward to being a part of keeping First UU strong and thriving into the future.

**Kelly Blake** I've been attending First UU for 20 years and have seen this community traverse many transitions: two senior ministers, several interims, bringing on a permanent associate minister and director of RE. Grow from a mid-size to large congregation. Expand the RE program. Each of these cycles for growth had its own challenges and opportunities, for First UU to reconsider itself and its place in the community. Raising my boys here, I've watched them grow in our unique youth programs such as OWL and Coming of Age. Singing in the choir allowed me to experience the beauty of our music program. We are in a time, once again, to reconsider ourselves. As a member of the Nominating Committee, I would like to give back to the community, in this time of transition and growth, helping to shape our future leadership.

**David Maywhoor** Having been raised in the Catholic tradition, my wife Carol and I came to First UU because we were looking for a spiritual home where the girls could learn about the great all without their brains being sucked out and replaced with fundamentalist goop. Since joining First UU in the late 80's, I have been a member of the RE Committee, Board of Directors, Co-Chair of the Social Justice Committee through the transition to Justice Action Ministry, at least one search committee, a BREAD Network member and am currently co-facilitator of the Grief Recovery group and a COA mentor. I am a firm believer in servant leadership. I like to build decks, paint surrealistic images, walk in the woods, write poetry, and make a heck of a good spaghetti sauce. I would apply my 20 years facilitating organizational development to help us grow strategically while having fun in the process.

**Dennis Rankin** My name is Dennis Rankin and I am running for the Nominating Committee for First UU. My partner and I have been members of the church since 2008. We have made many friends here and have certainly seen some changes. I was recently on the Board, serving as secretary for two years. I served on the Strategic Planning Committee for four years, Stewardship for one year. I have worked on many workday days at the church, cooked breakfast for the 9am service, help with auction checkout and have addressed the youth classes on GLTB issues. I work at Ashland as a Regulatory Affairs Manager. I work on a number of committees for my profession, as well as those that benefit the City of Columbus. My hope for our church, to remain a thriving community that embraces diversity and attract young active family participation. I am excited for First UU's future.

**Chris Sullivan** I have been attending First UU since August of 2009, and have been a member since August of 2012. As a participant in, and a facilitator of, small-group ministries since my first year here, I have been involved with Covenant Groups and Wellspring. These have been a great way for me to get to know a variety of people and, as a result, I am now a member of the Caring Committee and have recently become a Co-Coordinator for memorial service receptions at First UU. I want to engage younger and newer members in service to the church. After serving the past year as an appointed member of the Nominating Committee, I am ready to carry that experience forward as a full two-year elected member.

#### **Candidates for Settled Minister Search Team. Vote for five.**

**Lou Bernard** I have been a member of First UU for 11 years. I'm married to Julie Henderson, and we have two teenage daughters: Rowan (16) and Fatima (13). Both girls are SYC alumni! Our family is a multiracial family through international adoption, which has helped transform my views of family, race, politics, religion and life! At First UU, you probably know me mostly as a Sunday School teacher; I've taught 4th and 5th grade, 1st grade OWL, and seven years as an 8th grade OWL teacher. But mostly, I am known as Rowan and Tima's dad. As an educator, I have taught in Columbus City for 28 years (24 of it teaching 4th and 5th graders). I have served on many committees and have been a part of various teams during my career: faculty representative to the union, *part of many interview teams for hiring new teachers*, and currently heading both the 4th grade team and the school's Technology Committee. I believe the skills that I have gained as an educator, working with diverse groups to solve problems—especially my time served on various interview teams—will allow me to serve the congregation effectively as a Search Committee member.

My life, in all aspects, revolves around family and kids. I believe this church's lifeblood, its future, lies with its families. The decision this committee makes will affect the lives of the families and children of this church, conceivably until those children leave for college. Parents, youth and RE need to have a voice on this committee, and I can be that voice.

**Allie Bonsteel** I graduated from Miami University with a double major in Women's Studies and Sociology. I have also obtained an MBA. I am currently employed by a bank based in California, where I underwrite loans for small businesses. I have been a member of First UU since early 2010. In my time here I have had the pleasure of facilitating Path to Membership classes for the past three years. I attended General Assembly as a delegate in 2014. This is my first year teaching Sunday School working with 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders in our Neighboring Faiths program. My husband, Dan Gerritsen, and I live in Westerville with our son, Pierce, who just turned 2. The Senior Minister that is chosen by this congregation will play a significant part in shaping this wonderful community for many years to come. It would be an honor to serve on this committee.

**Lisa Brandt** I first became active as a UU at Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Chandler, AZ, where, having left home to start my career on the other side of the country, I found a true spiritual home—community, shared values, and music. I was a member of the choir and pastoral care committee, directed the bell choir and the intergenerational band and orchestra, and attended many events in the wider UU community, including 2012 GA.

My husband and I joined First UU about a year and a half ago, although we've been attending since we moved back to Ohio for the birth of our son almost three years ago. Through covenant groups, the Labor Day retreat, and other events, this church has given us a place to call home, and I've started to find ways to participate further, most recently as a member of the Worship Team. I teach music for Columbus City Schools at the district's international lottery school, where I have the privilege of working with an energetic, diverse student body.

I'd love the opportunity to serve First UU as a member of the Search Committee. During my seven years at VUU in Arizona, we experienced the retirement of our minister, a search period with two interim ministers, and the joyful welcome of a new settled minister. I think I can bring that recent experience and fresh perspective, tempered by a deep desire to understand the many points of view of our members and friends.

**Anita Bucknam.** I have been a UU since 1980. I moved to Columbus in 2006 for a faculty position at Ohio State (but didn't accept the job until I knew that there was an active UU congregation here!). I became a First UU member shortly thereafter. Since then, I have been in a Covenant Group, served on the Membership Committee, taught Getting to Know UU and the Path to Membership course, chaired the Membership Committee, served on the Board, served on the Strategic Planning Committee, and am currently the vice-chair of the First UU Atheists, Skeptics and Humanists Group.

I care deeply about First UU, and would be honored to serve this congregation by helping with the important job of the search for a new Senior Minister. I am also willing to put in the hours and hard work this position will entail. I would bring to this position excellent writing and editing skills, which will be important as we prepare the packet needed to "sell" First UU; practical experience and formal training in survey research, which will be helpful as we poll the congregation to determine what we are seeking in our new minister; and practical experience in interviewing and hiring, which will be useful as we review applicant submissions and try to select the person who best fits the needs and desires of First UU.

**Christine Davidson** I came here seven years ago as an SYC parent; got curious, signed my kids up for RE and started attending. When I was asked to teach Sunday school that first year, it seemed to be a good opportunity to get to know the community better and decide if it was a good fit for us. It was. About five years ago, we became members. I volunteered in the RE office, joined the RE Council, and was president of it during the transition from Jolinda to Rev. Lane. This fall I moved over to the Adult Programs team. In November, I was honored to be asked to serve on the Coordinating Team and now have a better understanding as to how the senior staff identifies and addresses the needs of our community.

I'm also well acquainted with SYC: This is my second year as Parent Council Chair and I've been involved with, or run, the scholarship auction for the past five years. My four older boys have all attended and the youngest will start in the 2's class this fall.

I'm excited about the search for a settled senior minister, and would like to help with that process. I think I have a good idea of what many of us would like in a minister, as well as what we need on the business end of things to help our congregation keep growing a healthy and vibrant community.

**Larry Drake** I'm honored to be nominated to serve on the search team for our next settled minister here at First UU. My wife Heidi and I joined the church about three years ago. Having both retired, we found ourselves looking for community and were steered toward First UU by our niece, who belongs to the UU Church in Arlington, Virginia.

I was brought up a Presbyterian in Texas and Ohio, attending Sunday school and services regularly. The high school youth group was a particular highlight for me, and I represented our group on a Presbytery youth council. During my junior year, I was chosen to serve on the committee to call a new minister our church, a duty I took very seriously and enjoyed very much. Philosophical differences led me away from the church during college, not to return until joining First UU, where philosophical differences are welcomed.

After graduating from the College of Wooster, I married, had kids, worked in the greenhouse and plastics industries as a technical manager, wrote and performed songs on the guitar, acted and built sets for a community theater, read lots of books, got divorced and remarried, played tennis and golf poorly—led a pretty average American life.

Since coming to First UU, I've joined the choir, served on the BREAD Team, been a member of a covenant group, performed in the talent show, and been a Coming of Age mentor. The community we sought in joining the church we have found in plenty, and I would consider it a great privilege to help select our next settled minister.

**Donna Greenman** I love First UU. It's my home, my community, and my spiritual haven. As a member for 17 years (my fourth UU congregation), I have seen social justice and spiritual growth thrive. I want to see that continue by calling a settled minister who honors our mission, shared values, various beliefs, and has the warmth and intelligence to strengthen them. My gifts are: people person who brings love and integrity into my work, Covenant Group Facilitator and Trainer (Steering Team) for many years, member of first Pastoral Care Team, member of the choir, volunteer coordinator for Cooking for Faith Mission, member of Committee on Shared Ministry, COA Mentor for two incredible teenagers, member of Rev. Fowler's Ministerial Committee for three years, Hospitality Chair for the Capital Campaign, and many other functions to carry on the work and mission of our church. I bring a strong sense of caring and spirituality to groups and understand self-care and group process. As a Life Coach I have the ability to listen and be present to others. I also love children (Special Education and piano teacher) and believe we have an incredible RE and School for Young Children. I value all aspects of First UU and would want our new minister to strengthen and grow them. I also think it's important to put the congregation's needs/wants before mine. I realize I will be representing all of the congregation on this Search Committee. If elected I will give this mission my top priority and will be honored to represent you.

**Judy Kleen** First UU is my family. I have been a member since moving to Columbus in 1984. I am retired from OSU, where I was the Finance Director for the College of Veterinary Medicine. Now that I'm retired, you will see me practicing ballroom dancing in Fellowship Hall with my sweet husband, Bob Mills. I am the proud grandmother of four great kids who, unfortunately, don't live in Columbus. Here at church, I am very active in the Chalice Choir. I have served as Treasurer for several terms, as Personnel Chair, and as Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign for the Worship Center. I am currently one of two church members on the Coordinating Team, along with our ministers and church administrator. We are piloting the new administrative model adopted by the Board last year. I use my organizational, team-building, and people skills, and my positive, caring outlook, to help create the best outcomes for our church. I was on the Search Committee that brought us our beloved Rev. Mark. I would be honored to participate in the team that will recruit our next inspirational, loving, justice-seeking and energetic Senior Minister.

**Christine McDevitt** I see the Settled Minister Search Committee as a group with the responsibility of representing the current congregation's needs/wants in relation to our next Senior Minister. The information you give us through the Visioning Circles will help guide us in our search. (Please participate in the Visioning Circles!) With my background as a Social Worker (since 1989) and my 20 years of self-employment as a licensed Massage Therapist, I bring a unique skill set to the table. I can be objective, caring, cooperative and independent. I served on many interdisciplinary teams as a social worker, which means I have experience dealing with several different viewpoints at one time and can handle the potential conflict that sometimes arises when those things converge. I am excited at the opportunity to be part of the search team who will find our next Senior Minister – the one who will move our congregation forward, while also being centered in the worship traditions valued by our congregation. I hope you will consider voting for me to be on this team.

**Morgan Patton** I began coming to First UU about five years ago, after my partner, Cara, and I had our first child. We got involved by attending service, participating in First Friday, and joining the group for Parents of Infants and Toddlers. Currently, I teach religious education classes and serve on the team that leads the Soulful Sundown Service. In the past, I have offered a summer lay-led service, served on the Interim Minister Search Committee, and volunteered for Coffee Hour.

Why do I want to be a part of the Search Committee? I care about the First UU community and want to help us continue to be strong. There are a number of things that I would want in a settled minister. As an atheist, I want someone who will appeal to people of all faiths/non-faiths. As an activist, I want someone committed to social and environmental justice. As a parent, I want someone who cares about families.

But I know that what I want is not most important. What is most important about this process is figuring out what WE, the congregation, want. Who do we want to become? How do we envision the evolution of our community? These are questions we need to consider. I would be honored to be on the team to help facilitate these conversations.

**Marc Pinsonneault** I am a lifelong UU and have been a member of First UU since 1994. The church is an important part of my life here. I have served the congregation as Board Chair; Co-Chair of the 2001 Capital Campaign; and Chair of the Annual Pledge Drive. I'm also a long-time Sunday School teacher, storyteller, parent of two now-adult children who grew up in the church. I also helped my wife Julie set up the annual Labor Day retreat. I'm an astronomy professor at OSU, where I have advised the FOCUUS campus outreach effort.

I'm honored to be considered as a candidate for the Ministerial Search Committee. I'd view my job on the Search Committee as being, first and foremost, one of listening to our congregation and trying to understand our needs and desires. We would then need to attract the best candidates, conduct a thoughtful and diligent search, and recommend the best match. I believe that my background in the church, and a long history of participating in job searches in my professional work, are important qualifications. A good ministerial search process is a dialog on the future of the church, and I hope that I can be of service in this important effort.