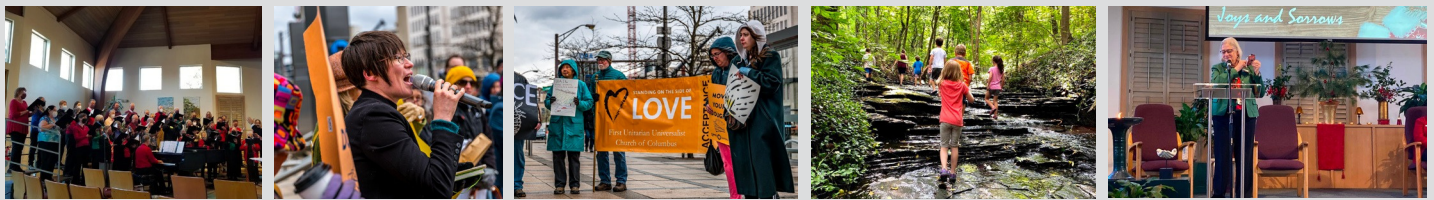


2025 Election Information



What is our church leadership structure?

Our congregation is governed by the board of trustees in partnership with staff. The board of trustees is appointed by the nominating committee and confirmed at the annual meeting of the congregation.

What does Moderator do?

The Moderator presides over the business meetings and any special meetings of the church.

What does Board of Trustees do?

They oversee all issues related to personnel and property. Six trustees are elected; two each year for a term of three years. The Board then elects a board chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The board also appoints a church treasurer and an assistant treasurer. These six persons along with the Church Moderator (also elected at the annual meeting) comprise the six officers of the church. There are ex-officio members of the board as well. These are the ministers, the Director of Administration, the Director of Religious Exploration, the immediate past board chair, and two youth representatives, selected by the youth to serve a one-year term. The open board meetings are monthly on the 1st Wednesday.

What does Nominating Committee do?

The Nominating Committee is composed of six elected members serving two year terms and the immediate past chair of the board of trustees. The committee works throughout the year to identify engaged, thoughtful and energetic congregation members in good standing for consideration and election at the annual meeting. They select the board of trustee candidates, the moderator, candidates for nominating, of whom three are elected. They may also nominate members of a search committee for a settled minister if needed. The church constitution also provides a petition process of nomination.

What other leadership opportunities are there to serve within the church?

There are many opportunities for leadership outside of the Board, Nominating Committee or Moderator roles. First UU has a personnel committee, a finance team, a treasurer, assistant treasurer, and comptroller. As well as many teams working under the staff that help make church life happen: Membership, stewardship, worship, JAM, religious exploration, audio visual and grounds.

Meet The Candidates

Moderator

**Charles
Williams**
He/Him



How long have you been associated with First UU?

I have been a member of First UU since 1975.

How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

I have served on the Board twice, been Chair and Vice Chair of the Board and have been the Moderator once. I have been on the Nominating Committee and various other committees. I taught RE classes, sang in the choir for years, and was the church legal counsel for 40 years having just retired in 2024.

What do you value in the church's mission and community?

I value most the freedom to pursue a religious and spiritual life without dogma and guided by reason and our Seven Principles. No one tells us what to believe or how to pray or how or whom to love. This is very comforting and valuable in today's world.

Why do you want to serve? To preserve our community, we rely on the democratic process. The Moderator is the one person who makes sure that our congregational meetings proceed with order and deliberation so that we can live our values moving forwards. I have been Moderator and enjoy the experience of seeing the congregation in action.

What life experiences, skills will you bring to your role in church leadership?

In my profession as an attorney, I have led many meetings of non-profit corporate boards and residential communities. I have the skills to lead a meeting, to stay on time and to keep to the agenda topics, to keep order and move a meeting to a successful conclusion.

Nominating Committee Candidates for 2025

3 will be elected for a 2-year term

**Denise
Riffle**
she/her



**Gabby
McDonald**
he/they



**Matt
Hollander**
he/him



How long have you been associated with First UU?

I began attending First UU in 2019.

I have been an active member for approximately 1.5 years, although my family also attended FUU when I was very young. It's been a warm, enriching, and stabilizing community.

After moving to Columbus in 2021 I started attending FUU. Since then, I participated in the membership class (Spring 2023), became a church member.

How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

I joined the Chalice Choir in 2019 and have been singing with them ever since (with of course a significant pause for the pandemic). I officially became a member of First UU in 2023. I have contributed baked goods to various events and done some volunteering, most recently as a host for walking the labyrinth in December. I attended the Labor Day Retreat for the past two years and am hoping to go again this summer.

I've been a consistent attendee on Sunday services. I'm an active member of the UU Millennial group, even hosting our Christmas party. I've also been a member of the Caregivers of Young Children group. There have also been more members of First UU that I am getting to know and it is a great community to be a part of.

FUU is my first experience with Unitarian Universalism. My Mom worked as a Presbyterian Minister and I grew up in that faith in Des Moines, St. Louis and Dallas. As a sociology grad student, one of my professors was a UU and more recently my sister joined a UU church, both contacts influenced my engagement with Unitarian Universalism.

What do you value in the church's mission and community?

Like a lot of people in the world right now, I don't want traditional religion, but I do want to spend time with a group of like-minded people. We don't have to be friends with someone already, or wrestle with schedules. We just show up on Sundays and someone is always glad you're there.

Real world engagement,
intergenerational wisdom,
intentional statements paired
with impactful action, collaboration.

Joining FUU has helped me align my values with my actions. I appreciate its focus on community, political action, social justice, inclusivity, and environmentalism. Additionally, FUU's emphasis on spiritual growth resonates with me, as I value its invitation to enhance empathy and emotional understanding.

Why do you want to serve?

I want to be a part of nurturing and building this community. I want First UU to be a place where more people who are afraid and lonely right now can feel love and hope and can see a way forward.

I wish to take an active role in shaping the world around me. The FUU community has been important to me and my daughter and I see this as an opportunity to push myself out of my comfort zone for the betterment of myself and the community.

I want to strengthen my connections to FUU and the local community in Columbus. The biggest influences on my orientation to a service vocation have probably been how I was raised and my academic training in sociology (specifically the role of civil society in democracies).

What life experiences, skills do you bring to your role in leadership?

My career has been in listening, helping, and facilitating. I started out in tech support, and moved on to documentation and creating instructional materials. In my personal life, I organize game nights and create fun experiences for everyone. In other words, I know how to listen, take in everyone's perspectives, and reach consensus.

Empathy and kindness come naturally to me. I spent 2 years hosting a podcast about atheism, and serving as the president of the Boston Atheists. As a queer single parent, I've spent a lot of time exploring and understanding my gender identity. I am an optimistic yet disillusioned millennial who values real-world connections over digital distractions. Over the past few years, I've focused on self-care, deep listening, and healthy boundaries.

An additional relevant dimension of my life experience has been my interest in Latin America. In my relationship with my wife, a Mexican immigrant, I have been challenged to improve my Spanish, learn more about Latin America, and confront my own assumptions about Mexico and immigrants. I would like to explore further ways that FUU can productively engage with diversity of Central Ohio communities, across lines of race, class, gender, religion and language.

Nominating Committee Candidates for 2025

3 will be elected for a 2-year term

Deborah Weaver
she/her



Mark Krueger
he/him



Victoria Yanovich
she/her/hers



How long have you been associated with First UU?

I have attended First UU sporadically for several years. I began attending regularly for about 3 years and joined two years ago.

I started attending First UU Columbus in fall of 2021 when my wife started working at OSU.

I joined First UU right before the COVID-19 shutdowns began. I started attending in November of 2019, and shortly, I completed the membership class in February of 2020.

How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

I have gotten to know several members once I joined First UU and I attended several events as well. I volunteered to help set up for last year's Rummage Sale and tended bar for the Silent Auction Event.

I sing in the Chalice Choir. I help maintain the church grounds and was on the Welcome Team.

I started my UU journey in Ann Arbor, MI in the late 1980s. I was active in the young adult group, and later on a team researching and developing small group discussion topics. Over the years I have participated in Chalice Circles and other small groups and facilitated a Fathering Circle.

I've been involved in various aspects of First UU and the wider UU community. I was briefly on the Worship Team during the height of COVID-19. I joined the Youth Group as an adult advisor in Fall of 2022, and I've been volunteering since then. I've represented First UU as a delegate in 2023 and 2024 at General Assembly. I volunteer at CERSI (Central East Region Summer Institute) as a touch-base adult youth advisor. Nationally, I have recently been appointed to the Board of CUUPS, the Covenant of UU Pagans, which helps support all the local CUUPS chapters across the US.

What do you value in the church's mission and community?

I am very happy to be involved in a spiritual organization that values the worth of everyone and is committed to helping marginalized groups feel like they are valued and included by our members. The diversity of our congregation is very refreshing. Any time I am involved at First UU I know I will learn something in great conversations.

I am drawn to the church because as a community it does NOT claim to have ALL the answers, but seeks to ask good questions and answer them in loving and thoughtful ways. I value that we welcome people of all genders, sexual orientations, and races, and that we work to bring about social justice in the wider community.

I value that we put love at the center of all that we do. Love and compassion are things that are desperately needed in this world. I especially appreciate and value the diversity of folks who enter our doors. Whether it is diversity of gender, orientation, ethnicity, race, or difference of thoughts/belief, I value that we take time to listen to everyone. Lastly, and most importantly I deeply value our community. That's why I originally sought out First UU.

Why do you want to serve?

Being a member of First UU gives me joy and hope. I really want to give back what I can for these valuable gifts.

At a time when our institutions are at least undervalued and often under attack, I feel called to serve the church with the goal of strengthening it to better serve our congregation and our larger community. I also want to serve to strengthen my ties to the church.

I am eager to serve First UU because I want to give back to the community here. I've grown so much since I first entered the doors here, and I see so many faces that I have still to meet, including folks discovering First UU for the first time. I want to spread that spark and energy that people shared with me when I joined, with others here who are looking for that spark.

What life experiences, skills & personal identities will you bring to your role in leadership?

I have a wide range of business experience including owning my own business and working in a service role in several organizations. I am a creative thinker, an artist, a gardener and a listener.

In my consulting and software development career, I spent 30 years managing people and groups which included interviewing, hiring, and promoting people. I was very lucky to work with bright, motivated people, so managing them was not difficult. And in managing I formed an identity: I saw myself as a facilitator: someone who guided people towards work and positions that interested and stretched them, and which, out of necessity, served the needs of the company also. When people encountered problems, I facilitated getting them help, but held them accountable.

I'm a white polyamorous pagan transgender millennial woman. The lens I see the world through provides me with a unique perspective that I can bring to the table, and help lift up other folks with marginalized identities. My experiences & skills vary. My profession is in IT, as a Systems Engineer at a local hospital. I consider myself an extrovert and I love engaging with others. I'm eager to bring my unique experiences, skills, & personality to the church leadership.

Board of Trustees Candidates for 2025

Kristen Hartmann
she/her
3 year term



Bill Fiorini
he/him
3 year term



Tara Mullins Cosme
she/her
2 year term



How long have you been associated with First UU?

My wife and I became members in 2022, after having been friends of the church for six months.

Introduced by friends to the experience of First UU, I have been an enthusiastic member for fifteen years.

I have been associated with First UU since 2010.

How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

I have been on the Welcome Team and volunteered with Rummage, Auction, the Pride march, booth, and Rainbow Connection. I have also been a previous GA delegate (2023), and attended CERSI (2024). Currently, I volunteer with the Alternative Worship (NoUUrish) team, CUUPS, and am one of the Covenant Relations team.

I have participated in the church choirs, the safety task force, the finance committee, and the recent Build the Bridge campaign. I often join the numerous volunteers whose labors generate our many church events. The loving support I find in this church community encourages me in my journey toward deepened awareness, personal growth and fellowship. I anticipate my service on the board of trustees will come during a time of possibility and challenge as our church experiences sustained growth. Support for church staff and leadership, assurance of financial security, and the shaping of our institutional governance are pressing matters.

I have served as RE Teacher, on the RE Team, on the 2021 Reopening Task Force, as Moderator, and have most recently been involved with Coffee Team and Alternative Worship Team. An outreach program of First UU, I have also served on the SYC Committee for the past three years.

What do you value in the church's mission and community?

Inclusion, belonging, and the sense of hope that I get from the community we have here. I really feel like this church is growing into itself and becoming a stronger community. It's hard to see day to day, but looking back on the difference between now and '22 is profound. I'd like to be a part of that change and...

I believe the church's greatest gift has been my marriage to my marvelous wife Barbara. I am inspired by the congregation's support of suppressed people – be they LGBTQ+, immigrant, poor, black, et al. I join the call to social action that is the hallmark of our church.

I'm one of those folks who was a UU before I knew it had a name and a place. I really appreciate having access to so many like-minded folks doing likeminded things. At First UU in particular, I love all the ways our physical space is utilized around the clock in such diverse ways and by such diverse groups.

Why do you want to serve?

...help bring our church into being a more vibrant and inclusive community. I look forward to learning more about its governance, and using my skills and talents to help make this community more resilient, more open, and more hopeful.

I believe these concerns must be decisively addressed in a way that pulls us together and forward. I aspire to be a positive and unifying force in this work.

I feel equipped to lead the congregation forward during this very important period of growth and transition.

What life experiences, skills do you bring to your role in leadership?

I'm a cisgender married lesbian with previous board experience who has spent her career in nonprofit business management and fundraising. I believe in staying curious about as many things as possible both in life and theologically, and leading any group by connecting the task in front of me with the larger strategy it maps to. I'm also darn good at PowerPoint, presentations, and reading a profit and loss statement.

A retired family physician, I am sensitive to the trials and burdens imposed on many people. I have led efforts to create rural health centers and cultivated healthcare teams drawn from diverse disciplines. I recognize that effective and confident group process is essential to form lasting remedies.

A few hats I wear that lend experience well suited for another leadership role include:

- Parent to three children
- Founder and co-owner of one small business, co-founder self and co-owner of two others
- Civic and Community Leader
- Ganthers Place Neighborhood Event Coordinator
- Co-Leader, Parsons Avenue Business Network