

2026 Election Information



Our church leadership structure

Our congregation is governed by the Board of Trustees in partnership with staff. The Board of Trustees is nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the annual meeting of the congregation.

What the Moderator does

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

What the Board of Trustees do

The Board oversees all matters related to personnel and property. In the past, six Trustees were elected; two each year for a term of three years. This year, with the Board expanding from six to nine Trustees, we hope to elect three Trustees to three year terms, one Trustee to a two year term, and one Trustee to a one year term. The Board then elects a Board Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The Board also appoints a church Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer. These five people 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 held monthly throughout the year.

What the Nominating Committee does

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.

Other church leadership roles

There are many opportunities for leadership outside of the Board, Nominating Committee, and Moderator roles. For example, First UU also has a Finance Committee and comptroller, as well as many teams working with the staff to help make church life happen: Worship, Membership, Stewardship, Safety, Justice Action Ministry, Religious Exploration, Audio Visual, Grounds, and more.

Board Moderator (1 Year Term)

Vanda Sucheston Hughes

She/Her



Board Moderator (1 year term)

How long have you been associated with First UU?

58 Years

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

Caring Team

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

I really value that love is the doctrine of the church.

Why do you want to serve?

I like to help out

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

Being a teacher has made me comfortable speaking with people and managing them in a diplomatic manner. My own personal identity is very connected with the church as I grew up attending and have been here ever since , except for the 6 years I was living in Florida.

Board Members (various terms)

<p>Dr. Jennifer Nichols She/Her</p>  <p>Board of Trustees 3 Year Term</p>	<p>Kathleen Fowler She/Her</p>  <p>Board of Trustees 2 Year Term</p>
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How long have you been associated with First UU?

<p>Since 2011</p>	<p>31 Years</p>
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How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

<p>Assisting with childcare, assistant teacher (multiple ages), youth group, teen covenant group, adult OWL, wisdom path, first Friday</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarter time Minister of Pastoral Care during transition, 1 yr. • on Pastoral Care team ~20 yrs • on the PT Council ~15 yrs. • assist Terasa officiating at Memorial Services/weddings • co-captain of a Rummage Sale, • co-facilitated several Anti-Racism programs
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What do you value in the church's mission and community?

<p>I value our openness to the larger community and our support for LGBTQ youth, adults, couples. I value that as a congregation we bring UU principles into living practice via community activities such as BREAD, JAM, OWL.</p>	<p>I value the ability to be part of a religious organization that upholds love, goodwill, and openness to exploration of life's deepest questions over dogmatic obedience.</p>
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Why do you want to serve?

<p>I hope that I can bring my administrative and leadership experience and skills to help the community and advance our common values. First UU has been a source of strength for my family and me – because others have served to continue our traditions and ensure that our church continues. I'd like to do my part to ensure that it's there for a family like mine in the future.</p>	<p>I want to experience and become involved with a wider way of serving individuals and our community than I have previously engaged with.</p>
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What life experiences, skills, and personal identities will you bring to your role in church leadership?

<p>I have extensive professional experience ranging from college professor, department head, teacher instructor, and fiscal educator to HR manager and now State IT professional. A majority of my career has been about survival. As a single mother of two, my career has mainly been about solidifying the future of my family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the process of training and serving as a hospital chaplain, • Through the MFC process that guided me toward ordination and Final Fellowship, • Through serving as a minister in our tradition for the past 17 years. - • Through these processes and my work with a Jungian Analyst for many years.
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**Raina
Bradford-Jennings**
She/Her



Board of Trustees
3 Year Term

**Cara
Seidt**
She/Her



Board of Trustees
3 Year Term

How long have you been associated with First UU?

I've been attending First UU since May 2023! The very first service my wife and I attended was a youth-led and bridging service. From then on out, I knew this was the place for me. It is very rare to find churches who value the voices and perspectives of every single generation that attends. This is why I wanted to make First UU my spiritual home.

I've been attending First UU for about 11 years.

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

I started getting involved in the larger UU community in summer/fall 2023, attending First Fridays and Rainbow Connexion. Throughout the last 3 years, I have enjoyed participating in various church fundraisers, groups and gatherings, and am always seeking to experience more that First UU has to offer.

I've been volunteering for the Spirit Play II RE team since 2022. I was retained to serve as First UU General Counsel in Sept. '24, & as a part of that work, joined the Safety Team. I've also participated on the Anti-Racism Curriculum Task Force since Sept. '25 & was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Trustees in Oct. '25.

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

Two beautiful things about First UU are our commitments to expanding our horizons while also taking time to honor the present. I value that we are constantly challenging ourselves to show up for our communities, in addition to encouraging our members to realize that Rest is Resistance. We want to transform our world AND nurture each other while doing so.

I value the way our mission calls us to engage diversity by welcoming, listening, & empowering. For our vision of healing to be real, we must be a place where different voices are actually heard & seated at the table. My goal on the Board is to ensure our decision-making remains inclusive, reflecting our commitment to serving everyone in our community.

Why do you want to serve?

I would like to support our goals of creating community, working for justice, and engaging diversity, by building on what past leaders have done to create a more racially and ethnically diverse space. I hope to support those who are already doing the proactive work (not reactive) when it comes to prioritizing the accessibility of our church and congregation.



I want to serve on the Board of Trustees because First UU has been a vital space for my family's growth, & I'd like to help ensure it stays strong for others. I believe my perspective can help the Board of Trustees make the practical decisions necessary to keep our community thriving & our mission moving forward.

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

I've been volunteering for non-profits and membership organizations for 15 years, and work in marketing full-time. My personal identities include: fat, Black, woman, pansexual, wife, mother, daughter, non-denominational Christian. All of my identities provide both perspective and bias, and it's important to me to be accountable to that.

Admitted to the Ohio bar in 2006, I have experience in labor & employment law, non-profit legal guidance, & organizational administration through my work representing employees & unions. Combining this experience with my feminist identity, I understand how to protect an institution while staying true to its mission.

Nominating Committee (2 Year Terms)

<p>Matt Hollander He/Him</p> <p>Nominating Committee (2 Year Term)</p>		<p>Deborah Weaver She/Her</p> <p>Nominating Committee (2 Year Term)</p>	
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How long have you been associated with First UU?

<p>After moving to Columbus in 2021 I started attending FUU. Since then, I participated in the spring 2023 membership class and became a church member.</p>	<p>I have attended First UU sporadically for several years. I began attending regularly for about 4 years and joined 3 years ago.</p>
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How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>
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What do you value in the church's mission and community?



<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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Why do you want to serve?

<p>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).</p>	<p>Being a member of First UU gives me joy and hope. I really want to give back what I can for these valuable gifts.</p>
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What life experiences, skills, and personal identities will you bring to your role in church leadership?

<p>In my relationship with my wife, a Mexican immigrant, I was challenged to improve my Spanish, learn more about Latin America, and confront my own assumptions about Mexico and immigrants. I want to explore further ways that FUU can productively engage with the diversity of Central Ohio communities, across lines of race, class, gender, religion and language.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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<p>Norman Maschner He/Him</p> <p>Nominating Committee (2 year term)</p>		<p>Kristin Hehrer She/Her</p> <p>Nominating Committee (2 year term)</p>	
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How long have you been associated with First UU?

<p>12 plus years</p>	<p>Almost a 2 years as a member and a year before that as a friend of the church</p>
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How have you been involved in the congregation and/or the larger UU community?

<p>Facilitator for Living the Pledge , ARA member, Bread team member and mentored for Coming of Age twice.</p>	<p>I am a member of CUUPs and YA book club</p>
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What do you value in the church's mission and community?

<p>To love and serve. To advocate for social justice.</p>	<p>The thing I most value about the church is the congregation, openness, and willingness to accept everyone where they are and bring them into the church as a safe space</p>
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Why do you want to serve?

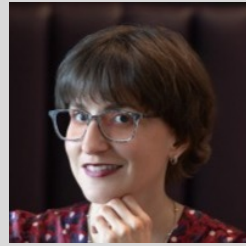
<p>To give back to the community that has furthered my spiritual development.</p>	<p>I just wanted to find a way to give back to the church the way the congregation has given itself to me</p>
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What life experiences, skills, and personal identities will you bring to your role in church leadership?

<p>I am a good listener with a sense of humor. I like to read and find out the truth about events. I am a loving grandfather who is constantly learning about others.</p>	<p>I think I can help by being an advocate for others</p>
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Scarlett Rebman

She/Her



**Nominating
Committee** (2 year term)

Liz Scheltens

She/Her



**Nominating
Committee** (2 year term)

How long have you been associated with First UU?

2023

Since 2018

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

I have been an RE volunteer since fall 2024, and I love it. I currently assist Jen about twice a month in Spirit Play I. I regularly support First UU's democracy and justice actions--from voter registration to attending protests--as well as Feed and Read Ohio. In the past, I've participated in the Millennial Covenant Group.

I am active in the FUU Millennial Covenant Group. I attend church with my children twice per month. I work through the church on political activism.

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

I value the community's open mindedness and social justice orientation. The community inspires me to reflect on how I can live out our shared values. I was honored that Rev. Kelli officiated my wedding at First UU last fall. Attending church together is an important shared activity for my blended family (husband, daughter, and two stepsons).

I value First UU's openness, transparency, and willingness to confront challenging truths while building community. I love that we create a welcoming environment for people of all ages, faith backgrounds, gender identities and sexual orientation.

Why do you want to serve?

I want to give back to the church community. I would be honored to serve on the nominating committee because I know that identifying strong candidates for board service will support the vibrancy of our congregation.

As a younger member (39), I want to learn from the folks who have been building community at First UU for generations and have vast institutional knowledge to share. I also want to ask how we can meet the needs of our community and push ourselves to live our values outside the walls of the church.

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

I will bring the perspective of a millennial and a parent to this role. In my professional life, I have extensive experience working for cultural nonprofit organizations and in higher education. My organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills will serve me well in this leadership position.

I am a journalist and former library worker, and in both roles I have developed strong listening skills. I'm also a public school parent, caregiver of young children, transit and bike advocate, and all of these roles have led me to create community across lines of difference, which I believe is an essential skill in this particular moment.