

# 2020 NOMINATIONS & APPOINTMENTS

## FIRST UU'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Nominations



### TONI WEGNER, PRESIDENT-ELECT

Toni started attending First UU after moving to Austin in 2016 from Winchester, MA (Boston suburb), where she discovered Unitarian Universalism in 2001. It was long way from her Catholic roots, but it was a great spiritual community and good fit for her values. Winchester Unitarian Society (WUS) became a second home for her family, and Toni was actively involved in the Membership Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, Ministerial Search Committee, and leading youth service trips through the church-initiated nonprofit, Gulf Coast Volunteers for the Long Haul. Church members were an incredible support through her husband Dan's illness and death. Toni's youngest daughter, Haley, has been the Assistant Youth Director at WUS for four years.

First UU was an easy transition, and felt like the right fit from the start. Toni enjoys the ministerial team, Sunday services with fabulous music, like-minded people, social justice efforts, and strong sense of community. She currently serves as co-chair of the memorial services team, chair of the ministerial internship committee, member of the stewardship committee, and member of the senior outreach ministry. She has participated in Wellspring, Chalice Circles, 4x4 dinners, and Adult OWL.

Toni is Chief Operating Officer at UT Austin's Texas Extended Campus, which focuses on professional and personal education opportunities for the community. Prior to moving to Austin, she worked in higher ed administration at Harvard Business School and taught in the Psychology Department at the University of Virginia. She is a volunteer with Hospice Austin. Toni loves to travel and has been a passionate racquetball player for over 40 years. She has two adult daughters and an adorable granddaughter.

Toni looks forward to contributing to the First UU community and is honored to be nominated for the board.



## ROB HIRSCHFELD, TRUSTEE - 3 YEARS

Rob was lead to FUUCA by his teenage child, Sage, in 2015 and fell in love with the community here and the UU faith practice. Beyond being involved in regular adult and youth church activities, he helps lead the Middle School youth program and enjoys helping build our RE program. He's also attended General Assembly several times and believes that the National UU Association has a lot to offer locally. Outside of church, Rob is married to Laura and has two other adult children in the Austin Area. He co-founded a software company, RackN, that does some deep magic internet automation and loves to talk about politics, science, technology and the impact of all the above on the human condition.



## KRISTEN RAY, TRUSTEE - 3 YEARS

Kristen joined First UU about three years ago, shortly after moving here for work. She visited this church when she came to Austin for business trips before her move and fell in love with the “breathe in, breath out” weekly meditation, and the water and flower ceremonies.

As a kid, Kristen moved around the east coast as a Coast Guard brat and spent most of her teen years in NYC on Governors Island. After college, she lived in Baltimore until coming to Austin. There were a myriad of formational spiritual experiences along the way and Kristen spent her most of her adult life attending an Episcopal church. The most meaningful aspects she took away were the sense of community that she felt, and the social justice and environment work that she did in Baltimore. She was also heavily involved in the leadership and stewardship teams which provided the opportunity to give back. When she moved to Austin, she wanted to ensure she would be with like-minded folks in her spiritual life. The UU principles and sources provide inspiration. She majored in sociology and is particularly interested doing more anti-racism work including exploring the adaptation of the proposed 8th principle.

Since joining our church, she has been involved in many ways. She meditates on Mondays, participates with Women's Spirituality, and plays games on Fridays. She has been part of Chalice Circle and WellSpring. UbarU has provided restoration with the Women's Retreats. She gave RE a shot last year and helped the 4th/ 5th graders in the classroom. Kristen is interested in deepening her commitment to the church and looks forward to serving in a new capacity.

She works as an HR Business Partner and supports a call center at Spectrum. When not working, Kristen enjoys volunteer ushering at several venues in Austin in exchange for amazing artistic performances.



## DAVID RIEHL, TRUSTEE - 1 YEAR

David Riehl has been a UU since 1987, beginning at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. One constant since then has been his service in the choirs, with his wife, Gretchen. He spent the last eleven years of his working career at the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD), in district purchasing, retiring in August, 2011. In the meantime, fully retired, he has been caretaking for his mother-in-law (now deceased) and doing church and community volunteer work.

David's 22-year career as a business professional in procurement, (and 18 years before that in middle management), has been helpful to him as it involved objective fact-based decision making, looking at any problem and solution from all sides. His focus has always been on the end needs, building consensus for a solution, and implementing a business plan. The work involved communicating with people of all levels, sometimes many people. He was able to put these skills directly to use at First Church Dallas, in a 3-year stint on the Facilities Steering Team, where he participated in gathering the congregation inputs for an \$8M facilities expansion. With the Facilities team he was involved in seeing those requirements through the contracting, design, and construction. He also served on the boards of two different HOA's (Home Owners Associations), including two years as President.

He was born into the Catholic faith, but found it increasingly irrelevant, especially in trying times. David's commitment to the UU Faith is unwavering as he is very attracted to the concept of developing and growing a personal theology in fellowship with like-minded members, unfettered by a rigid creed. If elected to the Board, he pledges to be ethical, loyal, professional, and organized.

# FIRST UU'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

## Nomination



### PHIL HEWITT, MEMBER - 3 YEARS

Phil is a long time UU. In the 1990s, as a member of Neshoba UU in Memphis, Tennessee he was elected board president.

Phil joined First UU in 2012 and has been active in many groups including the Men's Covenant. At First UU, he has also served on the Board of Trustees as a member. He has been active in the Stewardship canvass for several years.

# FIRST UU'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

## Appointments



### VALERIE STERNE, MEMBER

Valerie and her husband, Brendan, have been members of First UU of Austin since 2007. When they joined, they began and ran the young adult group. Since then, they have remained active in the church in a number of ways. Most Sundays you will see them at First UU with their two daughters during second service. Valerie is committed to building the beloved community both within and outside the church walls. She is currently serving on the Change Team in the church, which is committed to dismantling systems of white supremacy within church structures. She is also a founding member of Integrated Schools Austin, which is a grassroots community group advocating for equity, cultural proficiency, and integration in our district schools. After working for 15 years as a public educator, she is now working towards a PhD in Education Policy at the University of Texas. Valerie is committed to the personal, social and structural change that is necessary to realize the ideal of the beloved community.



### TOMAS MEDINA, MEMBER

Tomas started attending First UU, shortly after moving to Austin from NYC in January 2014.

He is a member of the POC (People of Color) group, a member of the Alphabet Soup group for LGBTQIA members, serves on the usher and lay leader teams, has canvassed during the stewardship campaigns, participated in a Chalice Circle, continues to participate in Wellspring, and was a member of the internship committee for Rev. Susan Yarborough. Tomas also served on the Board of Trustees for the last two years and was President of the Board (or as he prefers: Queen of the Board) this most recent year. He very much appreciates the communities he has been welcomed into as he has participated in each of these activities.

Tomas has a law degree and a MFA in theater management but uses neither in his work as a business analyst for a software company. He is, however, an avid theater goer, and has a passion for immigration law. He was honored to work with Alirio in seeking a stay to his deportation. He has also volunteered with American Gateways to provide legal services to women who have been detained by ICE and was humbled to represent a lesbian couple from Guatemala in their asylum case, which they won!

Tomas is looking forward to serving on the nominating committee this upcoming church year.