

Nominees for the Board of Trustees:



Jim Pashek

Mary Weidner and I have been attending First Unitarian Church for about 30 years. Our sons Ben and Greg went through the RE program and still talk about their visits to Walden Pond and Washington DC as part of their UU high school group. We now have five wonderful grandchildren ages 4 to 13 with a sixth on his way. I have been active in the Building Committee, spear heading the solar panel project, storage closets in the hallway to the RE wing, new carpeting and many other projects. I co-chair the Addictions and Recovery Ministry, usher on the fourth Sunday and have been a Coming-of-Age mentor. I co-chaired the BREC Committee that explored architectural solutions to replacing the Mason wing. I have been a member of the UUCF Covenant Group, served on the Nominations Committee and have met regularly for years with a wonderful Covenant Group. Professionally, I started a landscape

architecture and planning firm in 1986 and continue today as a senior advisor on a part-time basis. I am currently chair of the board for Audubon Society of Western PA and formerly chair of the board of Sustainable Pittsburgh. In 2021, I co-authored a book on municipal planning titled "Off the Shelf and Into Action." Mary and I live in Point Breeze and I love to play Pickleball, ride my bike, kayak and travel.



Maria Lauro

I have a long history with First Unitarian Church, having attended Sunday School in the 1970s, and returning in 2005. My church activities have included volunteering for Religious Education (RE) activities, serving on the RE committee and serving as chair during the period that Steven Mead was our Interim RE Director; serving on the search committee for the interim minister; serving on the Social Justice Endowment committee; and currently serving as co-chair of the Stewardship Committee. I came back to First Unitarian looking for religious education for my son, Leo Sweeney, who is now a law student at American University, and stayed for the community. I'm honored to be nominated to serve on the Board of Trustees.



Richard Dum

Donna Hoffman and I have been members of First Unitarian for about 20 years. We moved to Pittsburgh in 2000 for research faculty positions in the Department of Neurobiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. I am semi-retired but continue my neuroscience research 2 days a week. Although I have no experience in governance at First UU, I served as secretary of the Board, was a member of the Ministerial Search Committee, the Religious Education Committee and the Memorial Garden Committee at May Memorial Unitarian Society, Syracuse, NY. We were members there for 20 years. Here, we have been members of Covenant

group #1 since it was started, something Donna and I requested from Rev. David Herndon. We have maintained our friendships within the congregation while we spent most Sundays pursuing our passion for nature- hiking, biking and backpacking throughout PA, the USA and around the world. We never wavered in our financial support for First UU and knew that it was an essential community of like minded persons. Now, as we have aged and nature pursuits are more difficult, we have come home to community.

Religious journey. I was raised in a relatively conservative Protestant church where I internalized the story of the Good Samaritan as a moral lode star. In graduate school, we attended a Quaker meeting and were married in a Quaker ceremony. When we moved to Syracuse, NY forty years ago, Donna and I discovered May Memorial Unitarian Society and have been Unitarian ever since. As a scientist, I find that science and religion are surprisingly closely allied. Both are motivated by curiosity about how the world works and seek to influence nature, health and events in the real world. However, I think that science reveals more about the mystery and wonder of life than does traditional religion. Recently, Erica Shadowsong told the story about how the belief that the messiah was among a group of quarrelsome children was transformative. I think the actual message is that the messiah is- among us. Only by acting collectively, cooperatively and compassionately can we realize the true vision of a safe, loving, peaceful world. I want to foster a passionate connected community here at First UU. A community that will have the resilience to continue well into the future. In other words, the connections we make engender cooperation, and with a measure of compassion allow people to flourish. I am grateful to those who kept First UU alive and well through leadership changes and the pandemic. Now, it is my turn to give back to this community and accept a position of leadership.

Nominees for the Nominating Committee:



Bill Schuetz

My wife Pat and I joined the First Unitarian Church in the summer of 1994. I was a social studies teacher at North Hills High School then and retired in 2002 after 32 years in the classroom. We have enjoyed our retirement traveling, reading, and spending quality time with our grandchildren. At church I have served on the Board, the Canvass Committee, an Auction Committee, various other groups, and most recently on the Personnel Committee.



Becky Studer

I have been a member of First UU since ~ 1999. I retired from VAPHS and the University of Pittsburgh where I did biomedical research. My husband, Jim, and I will celebrate our 60th anniversary in May and we have been part of a Covenant Group for many years. My avocations include reading with 4 book groups, walking my dog Zena, and gardening, beekeeping, and maintaining the 1850's cabin on our property in Greene County. Our daughter Meg and her husband Ian are in Chicago and our son Ahren is in Rockville MD with our daughter in law Casey and our grandsons Connor, Isaac, and Ben. I have been part of the old Social Justice committee, the Green Sanctuary Team, the Board of Trustees, served a prior term on the Nominating committee, and led the UU the Vote activities in 2020 and 2022. I am active in the Women's Alliance, EJAT, am the First U liaison with UUJusticePA and lead the Postcard writing effort to raise our UU values with our PA elected officials.



Mary Weidner

Jim and I first started attending First Unitarian in 1995. When our six year old twins asked about God, Jim replied: "Talk with your mother.....". Luckily a neighbor suggested First Church. Since I was raised liberal Protestant, and Jim without religion, it has been a perfect fit for us. Our sons went to Sunday School classes here, Coming of Age, OWL and belief presentations upon graduating from high school. Very early into our membership I was recruited to help plan a Women's Retreat Weekend exploring world wide Goddess belief systems, and became active in Womenspirit. I have served on the Undercroft Gallery Exhibitions Committee, Ushers and Greeters, Addiction and Recovery Ministry, Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, the Nominating Committee, and am member of long running Women's Covenant and Couples Covenant groups, I am a Professor of Art

Emerita from Carnegie Mellon University where I taught in the School of Art for 37 years. My paintings, drawings and installations have been shown throughout the United States and abroad.

As an artist member of the church, I have had a solo exhibit in the Undercroft, and have participated in several group shows. During a membership drive, I made portraits and caricatures depicting dozens of congregants, and helped the children of the church do the same. I have lectured at Sunday Forum on "Women in Art". For the 100th Anniversary Commemoration of our Women's Alliance initiative to clean up contaminated drinking water in Pittsburgh, I made numerous illustrations. Most recently, with the encouragement of Rev, Kate Walker and Religious Education Director Erica Shadowsong, I painted a large Friendship Tree for Khasi Hills School in India. Congregants decorated leaves for the tree, and Rev. Kate then presented it at an important celebration at the school.