



2025 Elected Leadership Slate

**Introducing the First Unitarian
Church of Dallas elected leadership
slate for 2025.**



Kendra Trainor (President)

In 2016, Kendra found her spiritual home at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Since becoming a member, she has contributed in various roles, including serving on the Board of Trustees, singing with the Sanctuary Choir, co-directing the Christmas pageant and teaching preschool through 8th grade Religious Education classes. She is dedicated to ensuring religious education is welcoming and inclusive for all children.

Kendra's ten-year-old child, Campbell, has grown up in the church, dancing in the aisles, participating in Sunday School, and experiencing a profound sense of belonging. Kendra deeply values the close-knit and compassionate community that consistently provides support for her family.

With 18 years of experience as an educator and administrator in both public and private schools, Kendra holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Therapy, a master's degree in Special Education, and a school administration certificate. Her expertise lies in fostering inclusive learning environments and facilitating conflict resolution through collaborative problem solving. Currently, she serves as a Special Education Coordinator in Frisco Independent School District, where she plays a pivotal role in training and collaborating with district staff to ensure students in need of additional support receive high-quality services. Her unique ability to foster productive discussions and find creative solutions has made her a catalyst for positive change within her district.

Kendra is excited by the opportunity to continue to serve First Unitarian Church of Dallas as President of the Board of Trustees.



Steve Dennis (Vice President)

Steve Dennis has been attending First Unitarian since 2005 and has been a member for more than a decade. He's currently in his second term on the Board of Trustees, and previously served on the Capital Committee and Strategy Implementation Steering Committee.

Professionally, Steve is a strategy consultant, keynote speaker, and podcast host focused on retail innovation and the impact of digital disruption. He is also the best-selling author of Remarkable Retail: How to Win & Keep Customers in the Age of Disruption and Leaders Leap: Transforming Your Company at the Speed of Disruption.

Steve received his MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration and a BA in Economics from Tufts University. He has two daughters, Elena and Claire, both of whom now reside in Chicago.



Stephanie Duelm (Treasurer)

Stephanie finds the things she values in a church at First UU Dallas: a caring community, a focus on making the world better, a place to regularly be reminded of things bigger than herself, inspiring words, and beautiful music. She has been involved with First UU Dallas since 2012, and has taught children's RE for many years. Stephanie has participated in the Circles program, the Foodies and Friends group, the Spiritual Parenting group, and is active in the Virtual Connections group. She is the current treasurer. She is grateful for the religious education and connections her children Sophie (16) and Peter (12) are receiving at church.

In her professional life, Stephanie loves being an accountant. Her life as a CPA has varied from tax practice with a global accounting firm to accounting and grant writing for Tarrant County College Foundation. Stephanie is currently the Senior Accounting Manager at Tarrant County College where she has fun with spreadsheets, reports, and auditors. She is excited to bring her experience in working with governing boards to the Board of Trustees at First Unitarian Church of Dallas.



Jordan Michel (3-Year Board Term)

Jordan Michel and his wife, Donnice, came to First Unitarian Church of Dallas in 2007, seeking a choir. They found a choir and eventually a church home, joining the church in 2009. Since then, Jordan and Donnice have added three children (ages 14, 10, and 6) to their family. They value the community that the church provides for their family and see the church as an integral partner in the spiritual development of their children.

Jordan works in the electric utility industry and has spent the last six years in his company's Center for Excellence and Innovation, supporting enterprise-wide continuous improvement efforts. Prior to his current role, Jordan worked for eight years in energy efficiency and three years in market research. Jordan is also a Texas Master Naturalist and enjoys spending time outdoors, learning about and supporting native ecosystems.

Jordan's past service to the church includes participation in the Sanctuary Choir, facilitating children's and adult religious education classes, Social Action Council, and a two-year term on the Nominating Committee. Having completed Faith Forward's Spiritual Leadership Path and his term on the Nominating Committee in 2023, Jordan looks forward to becoming even more engaged in church leadership next year.



Frank Morris (3-Year Board Term)

Frank and Winston, his wonderful wife of 65 3/4 years, joined our church in 2018 after a long spiritual journey. Frank's journey involved participation and exposure to prominent African-American preachers in the national Baptist Convention (conservative Black), the American Baptist Convention (progressive Black), the Society of Friends (while serving overseas), and the United Church of Christ where he served as the highest voluntary lay official. Win had been telling him for decades that he was really a Unitarian and after finding First Church, he now knows she was right.

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(cont'd.) At First Church, Frank benefitted from Circles, and bridge and theatre small groups. He was more involved in the UU social and legislative (political education) activities and also the group meeting for concerns about Justice in the Middle East. He has been most involved in the Sanctuary Choir and the Racial Equity Task Force. After learning from a RETF outreach class Frank led a class and later worked to develop an RETF alumni continuing education group. As part of that effort Frank gave a recitation about our American history that we refuse to acknowledge because we prefer myths that historians acknowledge as untrue. Frank plans to update and give this presentation on a biennial timetable.

Other than church activities, Frank recently retired as a CASA volunteer for 12 years, and served on the national boards of the AARP, the Education Testing Service (ETS) and has received major Civil Rights awards from NAACP chapters in the west coast, Midwest and the Washington DC area. He is cited as a History Maker in the Smithsonian, thehistorymakers.com.

Professionally Frank has been the director of a DC political non profit (The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation), an academic professor and Dean (Colgate, Northwestern, U Maryland, Morgan State, UT Dallas), and a decorated Senior US Foreign Service Officer. His education includes degrees from Colgate (high honors), Syracuse (Masters from the Maxwell School), Georgetown (Masters Foreign Service), and MIT (Ph.D)

After 65 3/4 years, Frank and Win have 4 children, 7 wonderful grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. He looks forward to reinforcing the Social Justice outreach and great preaching from the Amen Corners.

John Daniel (3-Year Board Term)

John Daniel joined the First Unitarian Church of Dallas on April 8, 1991, after many years without attending a church or following a particular religion since his college days. His first volunteer role at First Church was as part of the Sunday morning usher team. From July 1995 to December 1999, he served on the Church's Board of Trustees, with his last two years on the board spent as Treasurer. He also co-chaired a capital campaign and completed a term on the Nominating Committee. Notably, he co-chaired the Minister Search Committee that recommended Aaron White as the new "called" minister. More recently, he chaired the First Sunday Giveback Committee for two years, helping to restart it after COVID restrictions were lifted.

Throughout his time at First Church, John has enjoyed working with the youth. His first experience was as a substitute advisor, accompanying the YRUU youth to "The Mountain" in North Carolina. He participated in the SumFun! program for two years, taught 8th Grade OWL (Our Whole Lives) for ten years, and served as a YRUU counselor for nearly three years. Currently, he teaches 6th Grade OWL, a role he has held for the past four years. Outside of First Church, John has volunteered with Reading Partners for eight years.

Professionally, John practiced law primarily in the Dallas area and served as the elected County Attorney of Real County, located in Leakey, Texas, for about eight years until his retirement in 2000.





Dean Castelhana (Endowment and Memorial Gift Fund Committee, 1-year term)

Dean Castelhana arrived at First Church in January 2014. He joined in 2016 and was asked into leadership by Reverend Kanter in the summer of 2016 to work on the Love First Capital Campaign. He calls that a very fulfilling experience over five years which culminated in cutting the ribbon for the new building as board chair. Dean joined the Board of Trustees in 2018 and later served as Board Vice President and Board President.

Since completing his term on the Board, Dean has been on the Associate Minister Search Committee and now serves on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Dean has served as an usher, participated in spiritual leadership training and contributed in many one-off projects here at church. He is proud to be asked to serve on the EMGF as finance and investments are his chosen profession over a 40-plus year business career.

If asked he will tell you, one of the great highlights of his church experience was the adult coming of age trip to Boston in 2018. On that trip he made many of the now longtime connections with fellow congregants. His goal is to continue to contribute in a meaningful way and to make deep connections with church members and staff.

You will hear him say “See you around the campus”. Dean invites you to do just that and start a conversation.



Stephanie Womack (Nominating Committee, 1-year term)

If you had asked Stephanie prior to 2017 if she would find a “church home” she might have laughed at the thought. But on Mother’s Day 2017, that’s exactly what happened. She not only found her church home, but also the people she didn’t know she’d been searching for. Knowing that being inquisitive about spirituality is not only allowed but encouraged only helped to solidify that First Church is where Stephanie needed to be. Feeling truly welcomed each time she walked on campus made Stephanie want to find ways to help support this amazing place and the work its members do.

It wasn’t long before a friend introduced Stephanie to the Women’s Evening Alliance and she soon became a member, and is currently serving as president. Stephanie’s involvement at First Church includes serving beverages to many smiling faces in Café Channing, serving on the committee that ultimately hired Rev. T. J. FitzGerald, and was participating in a year long leadership program. Stephanie currently serves on the First Sunday Giveback committee, Racial Equity Taskforce, and as an advisor for the 9th grade Odyssey/ Coming of Age group (Boston is as amazing as it sounds!).

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(cont'd.) Outside of church, Stephanie was a Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters Dallas for five years and sat on their junior board.

Stephanie keeps the lights on by working as a Litigation Bodily Injury Claims adjuster where she is able to put her passion for helping people to use in a variety of ways. Stephanie thoroughly enjoys her work but is happy to have found service work that truly fulfills her.

The most important part of Stephanie's life is her family, both chosen and genetic. She is grateful to be able to spend a lot of quality time with many amazing people, including some little people who she hopes will still want to be around her as they grow up and will be proud of our efforts to ensure reproductive access for all, create a more racially equitable society, and help people have the lives they want during this one life we are given.

Stephanie looks forward to serving First Church in a new capacity.

Patty Bates-Ballard (Nominating Committee, 1-year term)

Patty Bates-Ballard began attending the church in 1999 after experiencing a church-sponsored Journey Toward Wholeness weekend focused on racial healing. Patty joined the church in 2009. Highlights of her church involvement include Journey Toward Wholeness Anti-Racism Group, Nonviolent Communication Love Beyond Belief Group, Racial Justice Action Team, Wednesday Connect Group, Green Sanctuary Committee, Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator for the church Strategic Plan, Caring and Inclusive Community Team, and serving as a summer RE teacher. The church has been an essential part of her life and the lives of her sons, Kory and Kaden.

Professionally, Patty is a speaker, writer, educator, and mediator who helps teams communicate effectively across differences. Author of the books *ACE-ing Conflict, Judgment or Joy?*, and *Navigating Diversity*, she is CEO of WordSmooth and developer of the Harvest Respect program, supporting school districts, police departments, corporations, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations to communicate effectively across differences so they can better fulfill their missions. Patty honed her ACE-ing Conflict system over her 25+ years of leading Harvest Respect learning sessions, community dialogues, community mediations, and a series of court-ordered learning sessions conducted for a member of the Aryan Nations. Patty also is a skilled grant writer, specializing in outcomes and inclusive storytelling. She is a volunteer for the African American Museum of Dallas and Dallas CORE and a member of National Association for Community Mediation.





Lisa Huddleston (Nominating Committee, 2-year term)

Lisa visited First Unitarian Church on Christmas Eve 2021 with her fiancé and has been attending ever since. Lisa grew up Methodist and was seeking a church that challenged her to be her better self while being fully accepting of her transgender adult child. She joined the church in April of 2022. Lisa is an usher and has thoroughly enjoyed learning more about the church and Unitarianism by participating in various Sunday educational classes and groups such as SACReD training, WEA, Book Club, Interweave, Live Theater Exploration, Keeping it Reel and is attending the Boston Heritage Trip in October 2024.

Lisa is the mother of two adult children and is engaged to be married to Michael Buss. She is also an avid yogi. She currently lives in Addison with two rescue dogs who are her comic relief to life.

Professionally, Lisa received an undergraduate degree in Interior Design and a MBA later in life. Currently Lisa works for JLL and is the Global Occupancy Planning Lead for a fortune 500 tech company overseeing 3.5 million square feet of office space. At work Lisa participates in Building Pride, JLL's LGBTQIA+ Business Resource Group, where she has spoken to an audience of over 800 employees promoting education and acceptance, hoping to create a more inclusive organization for all JLL's employees.