

## **Report of the Nominating Committee**

### **MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association**

**April 18, 2020**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present eleven highly qualified, enthusiastic candidates to you today. We began our work last April, staffing an information table at the Regional Assembly. This allowed delegates and visitors to learn about elected governance in the Region, and a few folks indicated interest in serving in the future. We began with these candidates and candidates from last year who indicated that they might be interested later. Regional staff, particularly Andrew Zallar, assisted us in setting up Internet video meetings and in twice canvassing the Region's congregational lay leaders and ministers by email, asking for nomination suggestions. Notices were also placed in the MidAmerica Messenger asking anyone interested to contact us. The result is the slate we present today. In addition to their qualifications and enthusiasm, these nominees, if elected, will provide viewpoints diverse in age, gender, sexual orientation, UU experiences, professional skills, and location. In short, we are proud of our work.

Our work this year was greatly simplified by your vote last year changing the bylaws to provide for election of Board officers by the Board, rather than by the delegates at the Regional Assembly. Thank you!

We worked to improve our process this year. We have expanded and emphasized our candidate tracking table. We are again staffing an information table at this assembly, and we invite you to drop by for discussion and recommendations. We have created a database to track Board and committee members' appointments, elections and term and service eligibility to help us comply with the by-law changes made last year. The committee shares and archives documents through a Dropbox file with common access. We have a small budget allocation and we expect to spend it on a professionally-led diversity seminar when our new members take office this summer.

Still, despite these efforts, a serious problem has arisen. None of the three persons of color on the Board chose to continue their service, and the Nominating Committee also will lose both of the persons of color who worked with us this year. We received no recommendations or applications for candidates who identified as persons of color. Thus, none of the nominees on the slate recommended to you today identified as a person of color, and there are no incumbent persons of color.

The Board recognized what was happening to its makeup and asked us to concentrate on nominating persons of color. Departures from the Nominating Committee became evident only late in the process, but we were aware of them before making our final recommendations. The reasons for the departures vary widely, so more than one remedy will be needed.

Representation of persons of color in our leadership is an important, ongoing goal. Nothing can substitute for having their lived experience in our leadership. Unitarian Universalism is having a denomination-wide debate about how and sometimes if we can collectively and effectively combat white supremacy. And yet, we must recognize that asking persons of color to deeply engage with these discussions from leadership positions is asking for a significant amount of unpaid emotional labor. The Nominating Committee is more than willing to consider and promote the inclusion of people who choose to take that on, regardless of color.

Now, we are pleased to make the following nominations:

#### **Nominations for the Board of Trustees**

For the Term Expiring in 2023 – Dorit Bergen (Incumbent), Madison, WI

For the Term Expiring in 2023 - Jim Moir, Dearborn Heights, MI

For the Term Expiring in 2023 - Autumn Mahoney, Brighton, MI

For the Term Expiring in 2021 - Rae Jane Araujo, West Chester, OH

For the Term Expiring in 2021- Hans Kelson, Bloomington, IN

#### **Nominations for the Nominating Committee**

For the Term Expiring in 2022 - Mel Priese, St. Louis, MO

For the Term Expiring in 2022 - John Lunsford, Terre Haute, IN

For the Term Expiring in 2022 – Julie Brock (Incumbent), Brighton, MI

For the Term Expiring in 2022 – Scott Emison Clair, Des Moines, IA

#### **Nominations for the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference**

For the Term Expiring in 2023 - Rollie Hanson, Shorewood, WI

For the Term Expiring in 2023 - Charles Lewis, Des Moines, IA

The Nominating Committee plans to forward a suggestion to the Board in a timely manner for filling the Board-appointed position on Camp Unistar’s board, but we have not yet identified anyone. This position requires that the nominee have attended Unistar. If you know of a former camper who might be interested, please tell us!

The Nominating Committee fears that simply repeating the current process will result in similarly disappointing diversity results next year. So, we are asking for your help. If you are a person of color, please consider becoming a candidate for leadership in our MidAmerica region. Everyone, PLEASE consider the persons of color in your congregations. Talk with them about why you found the work of the Region important enough to attend today and ask them to consider helping our elected governing bodies represent all UUs in the Region. Ask anyone interested to contact us, or you can forward their names and contact information to us, at [midamerica@uua.org](mailto:midamerica@uua.org).

## 2020 Slate of Nominees for the MidAmerica Region Election

The Nominating Committee of the MidAmerica Region has submitted their slate of candidates for election at the Annual Meeting in Rockford on April 18, 2020.

Under the [MidAmerica Region Bylaws](#), individuals may run by Congregational Action. The Bylaws read:

### Article VII. Nominations

“Section 2. **Nominations by Congregational Action.** A member of a congregation in good standing with the Region may be nominated for any position to be elected by formal endorsement of the governing bodies of at least ten (10) congregations within the Region. Nominations by congregational action must be received by the Secretary no fewer than thirty-five (35) days in advance of the Annual Meeting at which the election is to be held.”

Any endorsements for an individual who wishes to run must be received by MidAmerica Board Secretary, Dorit Bergen, by no later than March 14, 2020. Ms. Bergen can be reached at [midamerica@uua.org](mailto:midamerica@uua.org).

## Nominations for the Board of Trustees

### Term Expiring in 2021 - Rae Jane Araujo, West Chester, OH

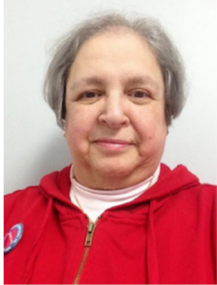


Rae Jane Araujo is a member of Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church located in Cincinnati, Ohio. She has been a UU for 40 years. She is active in her church's Social Justice Collaborative, is treasurer of the Unitarian Universalist Council of Greater Cincinnati (cluster), and is currently President of the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference. She is a past board member of UUJO (Ohio's state-wide social justice network).

She has been active in her church, serving several times as Treasurer, and has been involved with the following: Co-Chair of the Universalist Convocation Planning Committee, Labyrinth Arts Festival Steering Committee, Finance Committee, Stewardship, Welcoming Congregation, and Ministerial Search Committees. She was Chair of the Building Committee when the church was built in 1985. She served on the board of the Heartland District (before the creation of the MidAmerican Region) and served as its Treasurer. She is also involved with a wide range of non-UU social justice movements including the Coalition for a Just Hamilton County.

Before retirement in October of 2018, Rae Jane was the Technical Sales Manager for Howden American Fan. She is married to her husband, Russ, and is the mother of two grown children (who are also UUs). Rae Jane loves spending time with her four granddaughters and one great-granddaughter.

## **Term Expiring in 2023 - Dorit Bergen, Madison, WI**



(Incumbent) Dorit Bergen has been a Unitarian Universalist and a member of the First Unitarian Society of Madison (FUS) since 1976. She currently serves on the FUS Board of Trustees and as one of their lay ministers. Dorit helps coordinate the FUS team that volunteers mornings at one of the Madison area shelters, and is the FUS liaison to the Dane Sanctuary Coalition. Outside of FUS she is the current president of the council of a local peer to peer support group for seniors, and co-president of a chapter of a teacher charitable organization. Dorit is a retired middle school math teacher.

## **Term Expiring in 2021- Hans Kelson, Bloomington, IN**



Hans Kelson has been a Unitarian Universalist since he was five years old, when his family joined the UU Church of Bloomington, Indiana. He became a member in his own right in 2016 at the age of sixteen. Since then, Hans has served as youth liaison to the board, attended the Youth Midwest Leadership School in 2016, served as a delegate to General Assembly in 2019, and been involved in regional youth leadership activities. Currently, Hans serves on the MidAmerica Young Adult Steering Committee.

Homeschooled throughout his schooling years, Hans has been able to take advantage of many opportunities to forge his own path. In 2015, he helped found the Interfaith Community of Environmentalist Youth (ICEY) which organized local home weatherizing events, started the area's first "solarize" campaign, and traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Friends Committee on National Legislation's annual Spring Lobby Weekend. He currently works for Monroe County Government as a computer technician, and is starting his own tech consulting company. In 2018, he was elected to the Benton Township Board, where he is working to raise awareness about local governance and shore up fire protection services for his rural community. Hans enjoys playing guitar, reading high fantasy, and participating in a local pool league.

## **Term Expiring in 2023 - Autumn Mahoney, Brighton, MI**



Autumn Mahoney lives just outside Detroit, Michigan and has been a member of Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton since 2012. There, she served on the CUUB Board of Trustees for six years, including time as board secretary. She has also been active on the Communications Team and currently serves as the congregation's technology coordinator. She comes to Unitarian Universalism from a pagan perspective, and grounds her own spiritual practice in a deep connection with the natural world.

Autumn is a computer scientist with a bachelor's degree from Michigan Technological University. Professionally, she serves as Chief Scientific Officer for a tech company in Ann

Arbor. Outside of work, she can often be found inventing in her home lab or mentoring her daughters' middle-school robotics team.

She is an active social justice activist, focusing most intently on the struggle for transgender rights and equality. Her lawsuit against Michigan's secretary of state helped lead to increased access to accurate gender markers on drivers licenses, she has fought for increased access to trans-affirming healthcare, and she currently serves on the board of a non-profit that is committed to the empowerment of the trans community.

Autumn sees in Unitarian Universalism great potential for radical inclusion that can continue to deepen through our deliberate, collective work in identifying and pushing back against systems of privilege and division.

## **Term Expiring in 2023 – Jim Moir, Dearborn Heights, MI**



Jim Moir spent his childhood in the RE program at 1st UU Detroit. In the 50+ years since, he has been active in 7 UU congregations. He was the founding president for Spirit of Life UUs, an emerging congregation in Odessa, FL. Jim has visited at least 40 congregations to participate in programs or worship.

Work in congregations included many different experiences—worship, teaching, social justice, and growth. He served 20 years as a Youth Advisor, including two terms on the Florida Youth Council. He was the Growth Chair for Florida District in the early 2000's.

In 2004 Jim and his wife Robin moved to Chicago so he could pursue UU ministry. Sadly, Robin contracted cancer. They moved back to Michigan to be near family and Robin succumbed in 2007. Jim completed coursework for a Master's in Religion, but elected to "retire" from seeking ordination. Currently Jim has a ministry of sorts as Youth Librarian for the Dearborn Heights City Libraries.

Currently a member at Northwest UU in Southfield, Jim teaches Sunday school and is the liaison to the larger UU movement. He is a big picture person, excited about a chance to strengthen UU congregations and institutions.

## **Nominations for the Nominating Committee**

### **Term Expiring in 2022 – Rev. Julie Brock (Incumbent), Detroit, MI**

(2018-2020) Rev. Julie Brock serves as the Consulting Minister to the Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton, Michigan. A life-long UU, Julie grew up attending the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit, where she served as board member and in many other leadership roles.



Julie recently completed her internship at the First Unitarian Society of Madison and worked as a chaplain resident at the Mayo Clinic. She graduated from Starr King School for the ministry in 2014, where she served as student body co-president. Julie has been very active in youth and young adult activities, serving as the moderator of the Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult steering committee.

### **Term Expiring in 2022 – Scott Emison Clair, Des Moines, IA**

Scott Emison Clair has been a member of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines for the last 16 years. During that time he has served on the Religious Services Committee, on the Council of Congregational Ministries, facilitated multiple adult and youth RE Classes including OWL, Small Group Ministries, Soul Matters, Wellsprings, and Coming of Age, and is currently on the Board of Trustees.



Scott has also been active in a variety of health related nonprofit work including founding a statewide HIV and Hepatitis Advocacy Group and serving on the board of a local Federally Qualified Health Center (Primary Health Care). He is married to Lori and they have two kids. Scott's "day job" is working as a data scientist determining the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

### **Term Expiring in 2022 - John Lunsford, Terre Haute, IN**

John Lunsford lives in Terre Haute, IN and along with his husband David is a member of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Terre Haute. John currently serves as chair of the Building and Grounds Committee as well as Board Member and Past Board Chair. On Sundays and most church functions he runs the Audio/visual system at the church. Technically retired since 2014, he enjoys boating on any river and the seemingly endless maintenance projects any church seems to need. David is active in the church and works at a local area hospital, they share their home with a small furry tornado named Molly.



## **Term Expiring in 2022 - Mel Priese, St. Louis, MO**

Mel Priese is a third generation Unitarian Universalist member of Eliot Chapel in Kirkwood, MO where she hopes to continue the legacy of involvement and leadership that her grandmother and mother began with Eliot's founding. As a youth, Mel participated in RE, OWL and the Senior High group, often helping plan and lead activities. She also helped plan and host youth conferences as a member of the Southern Area Youth Council, and has attended various UU enrichment programs throughout her youth and young adult career such as the Youth Midwest Leadership School, Youth Summer Seminary, and the Meaning Makers spiritual retreat. Currently she works with Eliot's Young Adult Group to build a strong and inclusive community.



After graduating in May 2019 from the University of Missouri - St. Louis with a Bachelors of Liberal Studies in Art and Music, Mel completed a social justice internship through the UUCSJ, working with the Rural & Migrant Ministry, Inc. in New York State.

## **Nominations for the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference**

### **Term Expiring in 2023 – Rollie Hanson, Shorewood, WI**



Rollie Hanson has been a member of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee since 2005. His search for a religious community and spiritual home brought him to Unitarian Universalism. He is committed to social, racial and gender justice, particularly for young people. He also is concerned with the wellness of the earth and environmental issues. He served in his congregation as a Pastoral Care Associate, a Worship Associate and also has been a member of the Children's Religious Education Committee. He taught Children's Religious Education for various grades over the past 12 years and is currently a Youth Advisor for the High School Youth. He will be participating in Beloved Conversations at First Church this spring and looks forward to engaging more on anti-racist, anti-oppression work this year. He is starting my first term with the Mid-America Region Committee.

His day job is working as an attorney in a small practice in the Milwaukee area. He does some general practice areas such as Estate Planning, Probate and Bankruptcy as well as litigating consumer issues such as auto fraud, illegal collection actions and defending homeowners facing foreclosure.

### **Term Expiring in 2023 - Charles Lewis, Des Moines, IA**



Charles Lewis is currently serving as the Director of Finance & Administration of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines in Des Moines, Iowa, a position he has held since February, 2018. He previously served in a similar capacity at Eliot Unitarian Church in Kirkwood, Missouri, from 2008 to 2017. He is currently a member of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

He is a Member-at-Large of the Board of the Association of Unitarian-Universalist Administrators, and also served on the Board previously while working at Eliot Chapel. He served on the Board of Trustees of Emerson UU Chapel of Ellisville, Missouri, while he was a member there. Charles brings a proficiency with institutional finance, governance, and administrative practice with him, and looks forward to new opportunities to serve our wider movement.

Charles lives in West Des Moines with his wife, Nancy, a scientist and registered patent agent, their two daughters, and three cats.