



2023 General Assembly

Delegate Nominees



Catalina Bertani first started attending First Unitarian when her oldest child was in Pre-K and she realized she had no idea what she wanted to teach regarding God, faith, or religion. Fortunately, she discovered First Unitarian, and it was a very natural fit she hadn't even known really existed before that. 20+ years later, Catalina has been involved in too many church activities, projects and committees to even name. She has developed deep ties to other members as well as to the community as an institution. At First Unitarian she has learned what it means to call oneself a Unitarian Universalist. Catalina is trained as a midwife and mother of 3 young people aged 27, 25, and 14. She feels qualified to represent our community at GA as a longstanding member of our congregation, a mother, a midwife, a Latina woman, an immigrant, a New Yorker, and a conscientiously fun individual.



Diane Crothers been a UU in spirit since Palm Sunday 1965 when she heard the late great Jack Mendelsohn preach at the Arlington Street Church in Boston about voting rights in Selma. She thought to herself, "This is a church?!" Two months later she was registering Black voters in Alabama. That summer changed her life's trajectory, leading Diane into work as a textile union organizer in North Carolina, an organizer of second wave feminist organizations in New York, and a co-founder with the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg of The Women's Rights Law Reporter. Diane was an active member of All Souls Church in Washington, D.C., for many years in the 1980s and 1990s, singing with the Jubilee Singers, taking the class Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, raising her Black son in the RE program, and becoming a life member of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation. In the 2000s Diane was a member of Fourth Universalist and All Souls in Manhattan, and then she moved to Brooklyn and started attending First Unitarian, where she's been a member of the Women's Leadership Alliance. Diane represented First Unitarian at the 2021 General Assembly in 2021. She looks forward to being able to attend GA in person once again with other First U members and to meet and connect with UUs nationally.



Michael DeSantis is deeply committed to living out the Mission of First Unitarian, and the values our Unitarian Universalist tradition. Since 2020, he has been pursuing a vocation as a UU minister because he hopes to devote his life to offering care to individuals, communities, and our world as a whole. Inspired by his concern for ensuring others' material and spiritual wellbeing, he has worked in a variety of social justice and pastoral care roles: mentoring Indigenous youth in Montana, advocating for policies to support houseless youth in Oregon, and serving as a hospital chaplain to patients and families here in Brooklyn. Michael carries the stories and memories of the many people he has been blessed to meet in these roles with him wherever he goes. He will bring these experiences, as well as his perspective as a non-binary young adult with

multiple UU congregation experiences, into his role as a GA delegate. Given the special importance of this year's GA because of the Article II vote, Michael is especially interested in participating in the process of shaping a more just, loving future for our UU faith. he hopes to do this work by thoughtfully and generously contributing to the dialogue about what values our UU tradition should center moving forward. he also hopes to gain additional wisdom from workshops and sessions that can deepen his ability to live with empathy, tolerance, and commitment to promoting individual and collective liberation however he can in his future life and UU ministries.



Julie Elting Has been a Unitarian Universalist for 30 years and has been involved in three congregations. "The disconnect during my 20 years in Hawaii was related to that after Sunday service it seemed I just attended a university lecture. I didn't feel anything in particular but our RE was awesome and my children were surrounded by loving and committed families as they grew up." In Hawaii Julie did a 2-year term as chair of the RE committee and was on the committee for 4 years. She also taught RE and Our Whole Lives (OWL) on and off over the years. Julie led the pledge drive twice, hosting amazing and profitable events - A

Night in Italy and Back to the 60's :) Here in Brooklyn, Julie has found what she personally needed all along. First Unitarian allows her to feel joy and express caring in a spiritual way. That makes it easy to share with others. Julie is now chair of the Share the Plate Committee and president of the Women's Leadership Alliance, where in both roles she gets to give away money!! Julie say this "puts her right in the mix of inspiring and empowering others in their own journeys."



Beth Evans first came to FUUB over thirty years ago where she found community for her family. The values of First U fit well with her own, and the lack of dogma made it palatable to two young parents coming from different faith heritages. Beth serves on the Board and has relished the opportunity to learn more about how this congregation can be a source of community and spirituality for so many others. In her early years at First Unitarian, Beth spent a good deal of time volunteering in the religious education program. She is now the board liaison to the Religious Education Council. She spent many years involved with other members in a range of activities from the fun of ice cream socials (who remembers those?)

to the serious work of social justice done through the Weaving and Immigrant Solidarity Committees, to the work of contributing to the spirituality of the community by organizing a showing of the film, “Mission: Joy – Finding Happiness in Troubling Times.” Beth serves as the Board liaison to the Connections Committee, formerly the Membership Committee, and enjoys working with the congregation in real life as well as online when she hosts Zoom Sunday services. Attending GA will be an opportunity to integrate more into the fabric of Unitarian Universalism beyond our Brooklyn congregation.



Lisa Pacenza has been a member of the First Unitarian congregation for almost 20 years, and currently serves as a Trustee of the First U Board and as Treasurer of the Women’s Leadership Alliance. She represented First U as a delegate to the virtual UUA General Assembly in 2021 and serves as a Head Usher. Lisa works in strategic marketing and communications in the professional services industry.