

# FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY BROOKLYN

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

## Special Nominating Committee

The 5 members of the Special Nominating Committee were appointed by the Board of Trustees and will be responsible for selecting a slate of nominees for the 7-person Senior Minister Search Committee. All members in good standing will be eligible to apply for a position on the search committee. Watch for future information about the application process coming in the next year.



**Mike Alcott** has been a member of First Unitarian Congregational Society for the past 25+ years. He and his wife, Sara, have been active in the congregation throughout much of that period. Both of their children were raised in First U's religious education program. Mike has served as President of the Board of Trustees, on the Finance Committee, and on the Committee on Ministry. He is most proud of serving on two search committees that resulted in Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons becoming our Senior Minister and Rev. Meagan Henry becoming our Director of Education

Ministries (and now assistant minister). Mike and Sara have lived in the Ditmas Park neighborhood of Brooklyn since 1999.



Octavia Findley has been attending First U for a year and a half, having had arrived in September 2023. She gave a sermon during Summer Session 2024 and has hosted Equinox and Solstice Services for the Congregation. When she is not strolling about Prospect Park, she can be found at the library, the bookstore, or at the least pretentious coffee shop she can find. Her interests include environmentalism, woodland and forest ecology, history, classics, indigenous religions and jurisprudence. She is currently a student at CUNY Queens College for a

Master's in Library Science.



**Patrick Gunn** (he/him) has been attending First U with his wife Laura and their three children since 2006. During his membership he has been an RE/OWL teacher, has participated in several special project teams, has served terms on the Committee on Ministry and the Leadership Development Committee, and is a former co-president of the Board of Trustees. Professionally, Patrick has spent over twenty-five years in various roles throughout the film and television business, as a producer, studio executive, and manager of content libraries.



**Rita Pearl** first walked through the doors of First Unitarian 26 years ago and found a community that was deeply involved in social justice and antiracist work through the Weaving the Fabric of Diversity group. As an active member of Weaving over the next 25 or so years, she took part in and helped lead many workshops, forums, acts of social witness, and social events – all with a focus of social justice through the lens of anti-racism. For many years, she organized dinners of friendship between our congregation and the

local Muslim and Haitian communities, and also through Juneteenth lunches. She has served on various other congregational committees, including the Worship Committee, participated in several covenant groups, and is a regular UniFair volunteer. Rita worked for many years as a secretary at the NYU School of Medicine and is now retired. She and her late husband, Derek, made many friends among the members of this vibrant, active and supportive congregation. She is grateful that she made the choice to visit First U all those years ago.



**Rachel Stark** grew up Lutheran, left religion as a teenager, and only discovered Unitarian Universalism as an adult in their late twenties, desperately in need of both community and a space that didn't ignore the difficult realities of the world we're living in, but still found and fostered hope and a will to work toward a better future. During their time at First U they were a founding member of the Immigrant Solidarity Committee—and, at one point, the committee's co-chair—facilitating cottage meetings to address

members' questions and concerns and ultimately helping lead the congregation to a nearly unanimous vote to become a sanctuary congregation and to host refugee families as they applied for asylum, reunited with children from whom they'd been separated, and worked to establish lives here in NYC or elsewhere in the country.

Currently, Rachel is a member of First U's Connections Committee, working to make the congregation a welcoming space for newcomers and returning members and friends alike. Outside of First U, Rachel is a senior editor of award-winning books for children and teens, a dancer, an artist, an animal lover, and an activist with a particular interest in building queer community and advancing workers' rights.