

# Carrie Nielsen



Petition for **Carrie Nielsen**, nominated for a three year term to the **Board of Trustees**, (2024-2027)

Carrie has been a member of Main Line Unitarian Church for 16 years. She has served on the Membership Committee, the Nominating Committee, and a Senior Minister Search Committee. She has taught multiple Religious Education classes, including Coming of Age and Adult OWL. Carrie has also organized a number of all-church intergenerational environmental service projects. In addition, Carrie looks for little ways to participate in the life of the church, from welcoming visitors at coffee hour to organizing the activity packs for kids to use during service.

You can often find Carrie, along with her husband, Bill, and her daughters, Celia (11) and Anya (7) participating in MLUC activities at church and in the community. They have marched in Pride Parades, attended protests and rallies in their yellow shirts, planted trees, cleaned up streams, and helped to provide meals for the hungry. Her family also enjoys the fun times at church – toasting marshmallows, watching movies in their pajamas, and dancing whenever they get the chance.

For the past 16 years, Carrie has taught Biology and Environmental Science at Cabrini University. Now that the university is closing, Carrie is looking for a new teaching job in the area, at the high school or college level. She and her family live in Bryn Mawr with their hamster, Nala. For part of the year, her parents, Jann and Pat Nielsen, live next door. Carrie and her family enjoy reading, hiking, and theater.

MLUC has offered love and support to Carrie and her family through good times and bad times, and she is dedicated to helping the church grow and flourish as it works to transform lives.

# Susan Tachau



Petition for **Susan Tachau**, nominated for a three year term to the **Board of Trustees**, (2024-2027)

Susan was raised as a Unitarian in Louisville, Kentucky, and joined MLUC when she and her family moved to the Philadelphia area 33 years ago. Susan and her husband, Mark Anderson, have three adult children (Michael, Julia, and Carrie) who attended MLUC's RE program.

Susan has participated in a number of MLUC's programs, including teaching (grades 1, 4, and 8), serving on the Church School Committee, chairing the Auction Committee for three years, serving on the Personnel Committee, volunteering for the now-named Family Promise of the Main Line program, and being active in Small Group Ministry.

Susan recently retired as founder and CEO of Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, a statewide non-profit organization that provides financial education, advocacy, and loans for assistive technology.

As part of her retirement plan, she continues her advocacy on issues related to disability rights and independent living. As a friend of MLUC's Social Action's Reproductive Justice task force, Susan also leads trainings and forums related to effective advocacy. Among the many friends Susan and Mark have made at MLUC are Ann and Ev Keech. Together, the two families, along with their adult sons (Michael and Will), have created a new home ownership model for people with disabilities. Many members of this church community have provided their support to make this model a success.

Susan and Mark enjoy visiting their friends and families, including spending time with their two young grandchildren, as well as traveling, vacationing on Cape Cod, reading, hiking, and playing tennis. Susan is eager to have an opportunity to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees and is looking forward to making connections with many more MLUC community members and to helping the church fulfill its mission.

# Jim Koveos



Petition for **Jim Koveos**, nominated for a three year term to the **Board of Trustees**, (2024-2027)

Jim's journey with MLUC began in 2004 when he first visited and became a dedicated member, alongside his wife Maria Reyes, in search of a spiritual haven for their family, including their now 22-year-old son, Nikolas. Amidst exploring various local congregations, Jim found his true sense of belonging and resonance with MLUC.

His commitment to MLUC transcended membership as he delved into active participation, particularly within the Church School. From volunteering in diverse capacities to eventually teaching 4th grade, Jim's engagement extended to serving on the Church School Committee, where he supported three different Directors of Religious Education.

In 2014, Jim transitioned to a role on the Board of Trustees, coinciding with a period of significant transformation for MLUC. Tasked with participating in the Capital Campaign initiative during his initial year, Jim embraced the opportunity to connect with members on a personal level, advocating for their pledges through home visits. Jim's work on the Mission Task Force helped the congregation define its mission, and that experience empowered him to assist the trustees in envisioning a mission-focused church. In Jim's second year on the Board, he served as the Board's Secretary and improved the format of its minutes to better show the discernment that went into Board decisions. Also in that Secretary role, Jim organized and managed the Board's system of online documentation.

Currently, Jim lends his expertise to the audiovisual team, stationed at the back of the Sanctuary during Sunday services, ensuring quality management of the camera.

Beyond his contributions to MLUC, Jim finds joy in recreational cycling, practicing jiu-jitsu, immersing himself in both fiction and non-fiction literature, and savoring moments amidst nature.

# Claudia Gard



Petition for **Claudia Gard** nominated for a three year term to the **Nominating Commiittee**, (2024-2027)

Claudia Gard and her daughter Lauren became members of MLUC in 2016, inspired by Julie Gard who is a UU member in Duluth, MN. A longtime member of the Methodist Church, Claudia came seeking a broader, more inclusive and questioning faith base that provides a variety of learning experiences. Her MLUC Small Group Ministry (SGM) has become a most important part of her spiritual life. She has especially been inspired by David Hunter's classes. Her participation with her SGM as a server at the MLUC auction is an annual event that she especially enjoys.

For the past four years, she and her husband Paul have coordinated a Saturday morning food drive at Ardmore Methodist Church that they began in response to the challenges of food insecurity during the Covid pandemic. She also serves as a volunteer at the Lower Merion Code Blue Shelter program and at Family Promise.

Claudia's career path has taken her from nursing education and administration to school counseling and finally a role as a college planning consultant, specifically for international students. She and her husband Paul, who are both retired, enjoy traveling and spending time with their seven grandchildren who live nearby, with the exception of their granddaughter and her little boy, their great-grandson, who live in Duluth, MN.

# Mary Ann Miller-Messana



Petition for **Mary Ann Miller-Messana**  
nominated for a three year term to the  
**Nominating Commiittee, (2024-2027)**

Mary Ann first joined MLUC 20 years ago, along with her husband and daughter, looking for a liberal and like-minded community for the family. At that time, she was active in the RE program and established Fellowship Dinners.

After spending time in California, she returned home to the Philadelphia area and rejoined MLUC in 2020. Since then, she has participated in Fellowship Dinners, Small Group Ministry, Offering Outreach and Theology Explorers. Outside of church, she and her 90 pound Lab-Bernese, Luna, are active in the Therapy Dog program.



# Gail Burgess



Petition for **Gail Burgess** nominated for a one year term for **Moderator (2024-2025)**

Gail came to MLUC in 2002 seeking a deeper connection and she found it. As a member of MLUC, Gail is grateful that she has been given many opportunities to act on one of her core beliefs: service to others.

Gail previously served two three-year terms between 2016-2022 as Moderator. Due to her great love of Roberts Rules of Order, she is pleased to be appointed to complete Curtis Heckelman's three-year term as Moderator through 2025.

Serving on the Board of Trustees from 2012-2015, she was chair of the Board's Mission Task Force which drafted for presentation to the congregation MLUC's statement of our mission, overwhelmingly approved by the congregation. Gail continued to work as part of the Mission Task Force in the next phase of its work: helping the congregation determine how MLUC can best live its mission. She was involved in MLUC's Legislative Advocacy Team and worked with UUJustice and UU the Vote to spearhead the congregation's efforts during Covid to write over 1,000 postcards encouraging underrepresented voters to vote in the pivotal 2020 election. Committed to our children and youth, Gail has taught Church School for almost 20 years, teaching one group of children from 5th grade through the 8th grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) Curriculum, and she has continued to teach OWL for over 15 years. Gail served on the Church School Committee, from 2007-2010, chairing the group for two years. During those years, the Church School proudly implemented the successful Workshop Rotation program and conducted the Acme Food Drive through which over 3,000 pounds of food were collected by our church school families for the West Chester Food Cupboard.

In her professional life, Gail is now a retired lawyer. She is active in PALS, a local pet rescue, and is the baker at the Black Cat Café in Devon, a non-profit café which supports animal rescue. Besides her family and friends, Gail loves animals, the Phillies, the Jersey Shore, travel, theater, movies, and music--thanks to WXPB she is known as "the music person" in her family. She is most proud of her abiding relationship with her stepchildren, Dan and Nicki.