

Meet the Ministerial Search Committee Slate of Nominees

On Sunday, May 17, Albany UU members will be asked to vote on a slate of nominees for the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC). These individuals have been selected by the Nominating Committee to represent Albany UU in the search for a settled minister, whose tenure will begin with the 2027-28 church year.

In accordance with the revised bylaws, **congregants will vote on the entire slate of candidates, as a whole**, not on individual candidates. Only active Albany UU members are eligible to vote.

The MSC slate of nominees, each of whom is listed below with a brief biography, was selected from a strong and talented pool of candidates. The Nominating Committee followed a thorough and difficult process that took various candidate skills, abilities and demographics into consideration. We believe this slate brings together a highly dedicated and capable team that offers complementary skills, will work together effectively and best represents the diversity of our beloved community.

Lisa Baranik

Lisa Baranik is a new member of Albany UU and has previously been part of several Unitarian Universalist congregations, including those in Raleigh, NC and Athens, GA. She has been actively involved in community-based social impact work, including with the Capital Region Refugee and Immigrant Roundtable, and has contributed to initiatives such as supporting the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry in strengthening pathways to self-sufficiency for those it serves. Lisa holds a PhD in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and is currently an Associate Professor in the Management Department at the University at Albany, where she also serves as an Associate Dean in the School of Business. She lives in Delmar with her husband, Brandon, and their two young children.

Jonathan Bick

Jonathan attended Schenectady NY and North Olmsted, OH UU congregations in the 1970s as a child and youth and Albany UU since the 1990s. At Albany, he volunteered with children and youth programs on Sundays while his children, Avery and Julianna, participated in the program through high school. Currently, Jonathan volunteers on the facilities team and as Gardening Coordinator. He recently retired from NYS after a career in the health and human services field and holds a MS in Public Administration. Jonathan lives in Colonie and enjoys woodcarving and volleyball as well as outdoor activities, travel and music.

Michele Desrosier

I joined Albany UU in 2000 and have had the joy of raising my three children within this congregation. Over my 26 years of membership, I have served in a variety of roles, including the Religious Education Council (2002–2005), RE Council Chair (2005–2007), Personnel Committee (2010–2013), Board of Trustees (2013–2017), and most recently

the Ministry & Operations Team (2020–2025). These experiences have given me a deep understanding of many aspects of church life and governance. Professionally, I have worked across Fortune 500 companies, technology firms, and nonprofits, where I have led organizations, managed teams, and hired senior staff. Together, my congregational involvement and professional background provide a strong foundation for thoughtful contribution and collaboration as a member of the Ministerial Search Committee. The selection of our next minister will shape our congregation and its growth for years to come. I am grateful for the nomination and honored by the opportunity to take part in this important and strategic work.

Jaye Holly

Jaye Holly has been a member of Albany UU for nearly 15 years. In that time, she has been involved in a variety of ways, including serving on the Social Justice Council, helping to launch the Growth Through Service project, participating in Meaning Matters and Beloved Conversations, co-facilitating the Racial Healing Handbook and the My Grandmother's Hands study groups, being part of the BIPOC group, serving two terms on the Ministries and Operations Team, and most recently, coordinating the Sunday Morning Safety Team. She is part of the team that brings UU Weekend at Silver Bay to life each year. She also was a part of the Interim Minister Search Team in 2023. Beyond Albany UU, she works as the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for a statewide child welfare agency. Prior to this role, she traveled around the country and around the world as consultant helping human services organizations build trauma-informed workplaces. Her master's degree is in Human Resources Development. She is a Certified Diversity Executive ® and also has a certificate in Diversity & Inclusion from Cornell University. She and her wife Judy live in Delmar, with their dog Oscar. Jaye is also active in her community. She served on the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative for the Town of Bethlehem. She currently serves on the task We Are Bethlehem working group, which promotes diversity and inclusion in the community, and is serving on the Bethlehem Pride planning team.

Heidi Newberg

Heidi has been a member of the Albany UU congregation for 27 years, along with her husband, Lee Newberg. She has served Albany UU in a variety of capacities, including strong involvement with the church expansion that resulted in Community Hall and two terms on the Board of Trustees. She is currently a member of the Finance Committee. Heidi led two recent Interim Search Committees; the first was unsuccessful and the second one resulted in hiring Rev. Ann. These two experiences connected her with staff at the UUA and a wide variety of minister candidates and helped her to better understand the ministerial search process.

Stephanie Saunders

For more than a decade, my husband and I have been active members of our UU communities. We moved to the area in September 2021 and were happy to find Albany UU. It is a wonderful community and congregation in which to raise our daughter. Over these last five years here at AlbanyUU I have been part of the Transition Team, a

Sunday guide for the Programs for Children and Youth, and a member of the Congregational Life Committee. Additionally, at our previous congregation, I served as a member of the Adult Faith Development Committee, a Pre-K to Kindergarten RE teacher and a member of the Board of Trustees. We currently live in Voorheesville with our two cats and expanding gardens. I work as a researcher with the New York State Education Department. In this role, and in my previous program and policy evaluation roles, I have spent a great deal of time working to understand multiple perspectives and communicating across diverse groups. I believe my commitment to the UU faith and AlbanyUU community would be an asset in helping search for a new minister. Our family is grateful to have found AlbanyUU, and I look forward to the possibilities of having a deeper role in ministerial search and the growing congregational fellowship here. Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Strong

Karen Strong became a member of Albany UU in 2022 and has been deeply involved in congregational life, including serving as co-chair of the Programs for Children and Youth Council and organizing the Octavia Butler Book Group. She is a long-time Albany resident and lives there with her family. Karen works as a consultant for environmental nonprofits and has spent decades serving on nonprofit and governmental boards, developing deep experience in governance, hiring, and leadership transitions. She values thoughtful, values-based decision making and is honored to serve the congregation in this important role.

Nominating Committee, MSC Subgroup
Nellson Moore, Chair
Dawn Dana
Zoe Hutchins
Randy Rosette
Vida Wehren