

2019 ELECTION

# Candidate Biographies

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for office beginning January 1, 2020



First Unitarian Church of Dallas



## Kassie McLaughlin, President

Kassandra (Kassie) McLaughlin is a member of First Church and has attended the church with her wife, Michelle Touchet, and two sons (Jake and Sloan) since 2011. She and her family are all native Texans, use the term “y’all” without irony, live in Oak Cliff and believe in community, good karma and good coffee. Kassie attended the University of Texas and the University of Michigan, has a B.A., M.S. and a J.D. She practices commercial real estate law as a transactional attorney and is a partner at Bell Nunnally and Martin. Kassie has served on several non-profit boards in the capacities of Chair of Buildings and Grounds, Chair of Audit, Co-chair of Trustee’s Committee, Secretary, Chair of Sponsorship, Director over

Sponsorship, Director over Programs, Director for the philanthropic arm of a 501(c)(3). She believes that (1) service is both a privilege and an obligation, (2) First Unitarian Church, through its congregation and staff, is poised for further greatness, and (3) she can happily and joyfully provide her services to the goals of our church.



## Dean Castelhana, Vice President

My wife Carol and I have been attending First Unitarian Church since January 2014 and signed the book in April 2016.

Since joining I have served as an usher and, along with Carol, have spent the last year on the Love First Capital Campaign Steering Committee, starting with the feasibility phase and continuing through the present. The experience has been transformative for me personally, having contributed to such an important aspect of our future, not to mention getting to know and truly appreciate our leadership and staff immensely.

Professionally, I own a small commercial mortgage lending firm here in Dallas by the name of Graham Mortgage Corporation. Since graduating from Iona College in the New York area in 1980, I have spent my entire professional life in the commercial real estate finance field on a local and national basis. I presently own and have in the past owned my own business, understanding the rewards, challenges and responsibilities of such endeavors.

I do have a passion for what I call “campus life” at the church. I enjoy classes, connecting with other members and serving the church however I can.

It would be a great honor to have a chance to serve this important institution in a leadership position.



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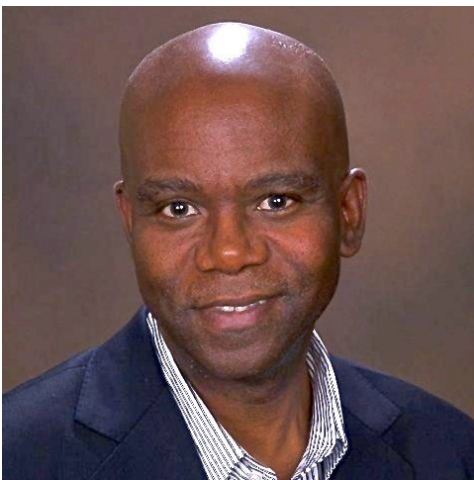
## Bogdan Baciu, Treasurer

Bogdan joined First Unitarian in 2015 and became a member in 2016. Bogdan was born in Romania, grew up in Canada, and finally settled down in Dallas a decade ago. He was drawn to the First Unitarian community due to the inclusiveness, the thoughtfulness, and the deep desire and willingness to create positive lasting change for others. In his short time here, Bogdan has been involved in several semesters of religious education at the kindergarten level, as well as serving as the Treasurer for the 2018 year.

Bogdan holds a finance background. Currently, he is the CFO of the Pet Vet, a provider of veterinary services currently operating veterinary hospitals inside Petco stores. Previously he worked at Ryan, LLC, a corporate tax firm as the Senior Vice President of Finance, and before that he held roles in restructuring and investment banking, primarily at Barrier Advisors, an affiliate of Highland Capital Management, L.P.

Bogdan obtained a B.S. in Accounting and Finance from the University of Texas at Dallas, and a B.A. in Economics from Queen's University in Canada. He is currently pursuing a M.S. Accounting degree at The University of Texas at Dallas.

Bogdan's hope and intent lies in serving to help ensure that our church has financial stability over a long time horizon.



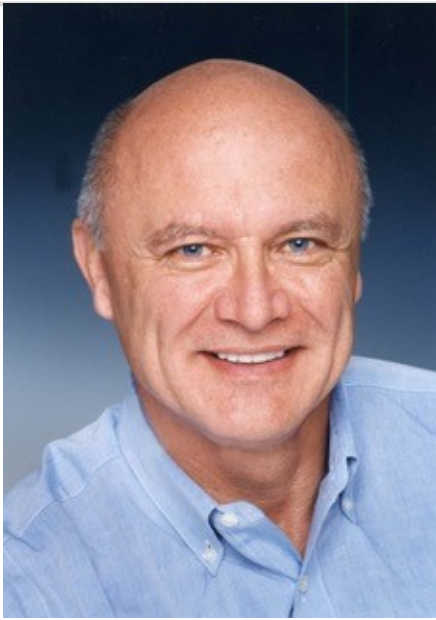
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## Eric Bing, Trustee-3yr term

The unexpected death of the relative of a friend and his memorial service at the church brought me to the First Unitarian Church of Dallas for the first time in 2013. I was deeply moved by the unconditional love and support shown to this family despite the fact that none of the family members were church members or ever attended services. The values that the church expressed and demonstrated at that moment were the same as those that have guided my thoughts and actions much of my life. So, in 2018, I joined the church and have become actively involved. Since joining, I have been a teacher in the Children's church, served as a Co-Chair of the Child Development Center

Committee and traveled to Boston with church members to learn more about the church's deep and strong historical roots. I am currently a member of the Sanctuary Choir.

Outside of church, the focus of my work for nearly 3 decades has been on improving health and educational systems for poor and vulnerable communities in the US and abroad, primarily in Africa and the Caribbean. I am a physician, health systems researcher and Professor of Global Health at Southern Methodist University where I also teach and conduct research on social impact and direct SMU's Institute for Leadership Impact.



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## Greg Grosh, Trustee-3yr term

Hi, I'm Greg Grosh, Candidate for the Board. I think this is, or shortly will be, my fourth year as a member of First UU and, like others, started attending prior to that.

For more than two years I have both taught/facilitated and been a substitute teacher for the Sunday morning 9 AM Religion Studies courses. I met and worked with many First UU members at North Dallas Shared Ministries for over two years.

My other Church/Non-Profit experience that relates closely to the First UU Board position includes Past Chairman of the Board of the Austin Zen Center, Member of the Vestry (3 years) of St Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, Treasurer of St Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, and Director of Information Technology/Network/Database/Software for St Thomas.

I've spent forty five years in computing - mainly high end consulting in software, strategy, marketing and communications. I founded a software company and grew it to 130 employees in four countries. I see First UU's immediate future combining our existing audio/video/internet presence, our internal and external communications and being/doing 'church' all into a single, integrated concept space.



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## Betty Loy, Trustee-3yr term

My name is Elizabeth Ann Loy, better known as Betty. My professional life involved hospital administration, strategic planning, and research. I obtained my doctorate in Audiology from the University of Florida. While at Children's Medical Center I was a Director of Planning and simultaneously working with my research team from the University of Texas at Dallas and UT Southwestern Medical Center. My team and I did research with families where at least one child was deaf and had received a cochlear implant. In 2009, I co-authored a textbook, *Cochlear Implants: What Parents Should Know*, with Peter Roland, M.D., then chairman of the Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery department at UTSW.

Upon my retirement from healthcare in 2016, I searched for a meaningful community to replace my group of friends and co-workers at Children's Medical Center. Fortunately, I found First Unitarian almost immediately. By February 2017 I knew I wanted to learn more about this wonderful church. I attended all the Inquirers classes, a circle group, helped with lake clean up, North Texas food bank service, helping hand out food at the Wilkinson Center, and attended several different Sunday classes. By Mother's Day of that year my wife, Barbara Seale, started attending with me and by August of 2017 we had joined the church! Since that time I started coordinating the Quill Card team assignments, joined another circle, and joined Kindred Voices.

I accepted the call to be considered to serve the church on the Board for two reasons. One, I thought my experience in strategic planning could be useful to this growing organization. Two, I want with all my heart to give back to a community from which I have already received so much.

Our family consists of two married sons, six grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews, all of whom provide the necessary chaos for good times. We enjoy birding, kayaking, cooking, reading, and watching British TV.





## **Diana Bacon, EMGF Chair (Endowment Committee)**

Diana Bacon has been a member of First Unitarian Church since 2005. She has been involved with the planned giving program and served on the Endowment Memorial Gift Fund Committee. This is her fifteenth year of teaching children and teens in the Children's Religious Education program. The last several years she has spent with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Odyssey and Coming of Age programs as an advisor. She has served on the Love First Capital Campaign Committee.

Diana is a Wealth Advisor and has earned the Certified Financial Planner and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst designations. She owns a small financial planning firm in Dallas. She has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a Master of Business Administration with a Corporate Finance focus.

Diana and her husband Eric have two children, Eli and Jill. Their family has two rescue dogs, Maggie and Junior. Rescue dogs are a family passion with Diana having served on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer of Operation Kindness, no-kill animal shelter. She is a competitive weightlifter (Olympic style) and a CrossFit Kids coach.



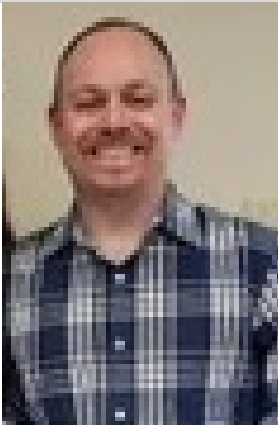
## **Emily Gould, Nominating Committee-2yr term**

I've been coming to First Unitarian Church of Dallas for about nine years and have been a Unitarian Universalist for a little over a decade.

My professional background is varied, with a theme of connecting people with the information and resources they need. After attending college in Toronto, I moved to Baltimore to serve in AmeriCorps. I worked for nonprofit organizations in my Baltimore neighborhood for about five years total, focused on connecting schools and communities with relevant resources. My favorite job was facilitating programming at and raising money for a nonprofit community library. During that time, I also spent a year teaching English in eastern Germany.

When I moved to Dallas, I took a detour into the wine industry for a couple of years before moving to the tech industry. I've been working at the world's largest software development platform and community for the past six years. I started out working with customers on the support team, transitioned into writing documentation, and now head up content strategy and design on the product team.

It's an exciting time at our church as we implement the plans funded by our capital campaign and programs like Love Beyond Belief. It's also a critical time to bring our message and programs to the wider world. Finding leaders who can support those initiatives and everything else the church does is important to our goals and plans. I'm excited for the opportunity to serve on the Nominating Committee as a way to give back to the community that's given me so much.



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## Jae Schmidt, Nominating Committee

Jae Schmidt has been a member of First Unitarian Church of Dallas since 2018 and has been actively engaged in the First Church community with his partner, Amber Raley, since relocating to Dallas in 2014. Jae grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and was confirmed Roman Catholic. He graduated from Mount Saint Joseph High School, attained his Bachelor of Arts from Goucher College, and his Master of Business Administration from the Goizueta Business School at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Jae currently serves on the Circles Steering Committee and has recently completed his first year as a Circles co-facilitator.

Professionally, Jae works as Director of Development for HCA Healthcare's Physician Services Group in North Texas - leading network development through practice acquisitions and physician contracting across HCA's network of 16 Medical City Healthcare Hospitals. Jae's career has been based in neurosciences administration – with 20 years' experience most recently serving as HCA North Texas' Vice President of Neurosciences, Orthopedics, and Rehabilitation Services, and previously as Chief Department Administrator for the Departments of Neurosurgery and Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine/ Emory Healthcare in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jae and Amber have enjoyed being an active part of the First Church community – especially in the areas of lay ministry, social justice, and Amber's participation on the Building Committee. Jae looks forward to greater opportunities to share his expertise in strategic planning and business development to support the Church's strategic planning. Finally, he looks forward to opportunities to support the UU Youth, as Jae's daughter Jemma has relocated to Dallas, and participates in weekly church activities and coming of age classes. Outside of church Jae is a passionate supporter of the arts, and enjoys chess, bicycles, and family time outdoors.



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## Kirk Hunter, Nominating Committee

Kirk Hunter recently retired from Texas State Technical College in Waco after 33 years as Associate Professor and Chair of the Chemical Technology Department. Prior to his teaching career, he worked as an environmental chemist for both a consulting firm and an instrument manufacturer. Kirk continues to be professionally active in national technical education and chemical safety initiatives with the American Chemical Society.

At First Unitarian Church he has served as a Greeter, a facilitator for the Inquirer's Series and currently serves as a member of the Love Beyond Belief Implementation Task Force and a member of the Circles Steering Committee.

He and his wife, Maureen Moore, live in Waxahachie and have been Church members since 2009, although they have been attending since 1986 when they were married by Rev. John Buehrens. Kirk's interests include playing fiddle for contra and English Country Dances and hosting sessions for old time musicians twice a month at Dallas Heritage Village.

He sees service on the Nominating Committee as an important role in helping to identify strong leadership for the Church. He looks forward to getting to know more of the members at First Unitarian.