

First UMC of Evanston Leadership

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Report from the Nominations & Leadership Development Committee

Asterisk () indicates new to the committee or role*

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair: Matt Moy Johnson*

Vice Chair: Obi Fox-Nnebedum*

Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu

LMAC Rep: Phil Crihfield

Class of 2028: Bob Easter*, Hannah McLean*

Class of 2027: George Asante, Mary Cauble, Obi Fox-Nnebedum, Matt Johnson

Class of 2026: Sam Erickson-Ely, Matt Peters, Jeanne-Marie Daly*

BOOK OF DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair: Martha Rudy

Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox

Liaison to Finance: TBD

Class of 2028: Elizabeth Barbour*, Hugh Williams*

Class of 2027: Grant Bailey, Don Baker, Carol Barnett

Class of 2026: Kris Kallembach, Rob Meyer, Joe Womack, Martha Rudy

The BoT serves as the steward of the church's building and investments. Trustees liaise with community around neighborhood development and special events (e.g., Evanston Garden Walk, Open House Chicago).

Trustee Subcommittees

Investment Subcommittee

Chair: Carol Barnett

Class of 2028: Charlotte Winters*

Class of 2027: Eric Alonso, Carol Barnett, Phil Crihfield

Class of 2026: Bob Hetzel, Andrew Baker, Karen Larkin Young

Planned Giving: Phil Carihfield, Matt Moy Johnson, Pastor Grace Imathiu

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair: Rich Grodsky

Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox

Church Treasurer: Tom Scott

Church Financial Secretary: Melissa Appelt (through June 2026)

Liaison from SPRC: TBD

Liaison from Board of Trustees: TBD

Liaison from Church Council: TBD

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Jim Hagedorn

Finance Committee Members at Large:

Class of 2028: Helen Newland*, Jim Lynch*

Class of 2027: Tom Clemens, John Cheney Egan, Tom Scott

Class of 2026: Rich Grodsky, Shirley Keene-Gefvert, Katy Clusen

NOMINATIONS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Rev. Grace Imathiu, Senior Pastor

Vice Chair for Nominations: Evelyn McGowan*

Vice Chair for Leadership Development: Mark Henry*

Staff Liaison: Mary Taylor-Johnson

Class of 2028: Mike Cline*, Mark Henry*, Roxann Specht*

Class of 2027: Jon Fox-Nnebedum, Sydney Harkrider, Evelyn McGowan

Class of 2026: Liz Blackwell, Emily McClintock, Nancy Pendergrass

The committee works to (1) identify and nurture the gifts and passions of the congregation; (2) on the basis of those gifts and passions, identify and recruit persons for various First Church leadership and other ministry roles; and (3) provide intentional leadership development opportunities for adults and youth.

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Beth Swanick (until Oct. 1, 2025), Linda Brennan (until June 30, 2027)

Senior Pastor: Rev Grace Imathiu

Executive Pastor: Rev. Britt Cox

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Leah Holzwarth*

Class of 2028: Linda Brennan*, Tom Butler*, Ann Weatherhead*

Class of 2027: Jeff Carlton, Cheryl Anderson*

Class of 2026: Craig Chambers, Abby Neal, Candance Chow*

The work of SPRC includes: providing support and accountability for clergy and staff members; meeting with staff (including clergy) around annual goals and priorities and providing feedback on performance; hearing and responding as appropriate to staff concerns; budgeting (negotiating with Finance and Stewardship committees, getting alignment and agreement), hiring and firing (writing job descriptions, posting jobs, interviewing, offer letters, termination letters); conflict resolution staff-to-staff and congregant-to-staff; responding to e-mails and other feedback from congregation; soliciting feedback from the congregation; update handbook; review benefits; prepare for church conference.

PROGRAMMATIC COMMITTEES AND INTEREST GROUPS

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Chair: Dennis Barbour

Vice Chair: TBD

Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2028: Debbie Baugher*, Friedrich Doku*, Laura Mills*

Class of 2027: Joe Agne, Ron Anderson, Dexter Bailey

Class of 2026: Dennis Barbour, Jan Womack

The mission of the Adult Council is to provide opportunities to learn, reflect, and explore in a supportive community so that we can grow in our relationship with God and each other, and learn how to live out our faith in the world. Our goal is to offer a variety of formats and topics throughout the program year that support the strategic plan.

ARCHIVES

Co-Chairs: Patty Baker & Cate Whitcomb

Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Members: Marge Bradford, Marcia Epting, Janet Lutz, Barb Miller, Joann Rea, John Rea

The Archives exist to organize and retain documents, media and memorabilia that tell the history of the church's membership, worship activities and mission outreach.

CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

Staff: Colin McDonald

Class of 2028: Jessica Hager*, Meg Lohr*

Class of 2027: Eli Hetland

Class of 2026: Zoe Dillon (youth), Greta Nieuwsma (youth), Mary Hetzel, Stephanie Peters

Children's Council acts as a working committee in cooperation with the Director of Children's Ministry, with a practical focus on supporting the immediate needs and long-term vision of various children's ministries. During the church program year (September-May), members are expected to serve at least one hour per month leading/assisting, according to their preference, in Messy Church, Sunday school, Children's Chapel, and/or children's fellowship groups and activities, in addition to attending monthly meetings after worship. Our shared efforts serve to honor, embolden, and celebrate children's spiritual formation, connections, and active participation in the life of First Church and our world.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Lindsay Theile*

Staff Liaison: Rev. Britt Cox

Communications Staff: Claire Amey

Class of 2028: Christian Farr*, Jennie Schumann*, Lindsay Theile*

Class of 2027: Beverly Olson, Matt Diener

Class of 2026: Bruce Baumberger, Joe Bare, Wendy Istvanick

The Communications Committee works to improve the tools and messages used to connect our congregation and the community to the First Church mission.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE

Chair: Keith Slater*

Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2028: Susan Prout

Class of 2027: Brooke Cline, Jim Erickson, Teresa Grodsky, Keith Slater

Class of 2026: Karen Bailey, Connie Gilman, Genevieve Costello

Congregational Care Subcommittees:

Greeting Card Ministry: Glynis Doyle

Teas at Retirement Communities: Glynis Doyle

Lay Visitor (Leaders): Janet Lutz

Meals Ministry: Brooke Cline

Memorial Receptions: Susan Prout & Keith Slater
Advent Luncheon: Stephanie Clemson

The Congregational Care committee is made up of chairs of the subcommittees (Greeting Card ministries, Lay Visitor leaders, Meals Ministry, etc.) and members-at-large. Their mission is to support the work of these various ministries.

FAITH FORMATION COUNCIL

Chair: Mari Leonard*
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2028: Robert Harris*, Antoinette Senjanovich*, Courtney Zirkle*
Class of 2027: Glynis Doyle, Virginia Lee, Mari Leonard
Class of 2026: Marlyse Wiebenga, Andrew Schumacher, Marge Bradford

The Faith Formation Council offers groups, classes and other resources that help participants to grow in their relationship with God and to connect with one another through prayer, reflection, and sharing of their faith journeys. We believe that through deepening spiritual practices, participants will be better equipped to love and act in the example of Jesus, who himself was deeply grounded in these practices.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Cherie Asante
Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Class of 2028: Jim Johnson
Class of 2027: Deborah Hays, Kelsey Morton
Class of 2026: Cherie Asante, Krys Juleen, Leah Holzwarth

The Fellowship Committee coordinates after-worship community hour and leads all-church special events including Rally Day fellowship, Chili Cookoff, and Bagel Sunday. The committee also oversees ongoing fellowship groups.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Lynelle Diener
Staff Liaison: Mary Taylor-Johnson

Class of 2028: Tom Clemens*, Vivian McWilliams-Green*, Ray Newland*
Class of 2027: Lynelle Diener, Liz Raymond, David Smith

Class of 2026: Debbie Zimmerman, Jean Clipperton, Ivy Joe Kuruvila*

The Membership Committee works to think strategically about and develop strategies for inviting and welcoming visitors into the church; connecting and engaging both visitor and members to opportunities for “growing in our relationships with God and living our faith in the world”; encouraging discernment and participation in the Inquirers membership process, and strategies for promoting member retention and re-engagement.

MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY

Chair: Beth Tipton

Vice Chair: *Pending*

Clergy: Rev Britt Cox

The Mission and Outreach Chair and Vice Chair (Chair Elect) facilitate coordination between the various mission and outreach projects with the goal of (1) supporting project coordinators in leading their respective mission and outreach programs via quarterly meetings; (2) helping with volunteer recruitment and management (e.g., use of Realm); (3) providing supports when new projects are developed, during leadership transitions, and when projects are sunset; and (4) helping with ad hoc projects as needed. The Mission and Outreach Committee Chair’s role at First Church is analogous to the Board of Church and Society’s role in the United Methodist Church.

M&O Ministry Project Teams

Bundled Blessings Diaper Bank

Co-Chairs: Sue Hagedorn & Krys Juleen

Dexter Bailey, Nancy Brown, John Bausch, Lynne Carlton, David D’Arcy, Pam Kendall, Shanah Slade, Caroline Wagner.

Soup Kitchen

Chair: Dave Koester (through December 2025)

New Leadership and Structure: *in progress*

First Friday Lunches

Coordinator: Rich Hobson* (through June 2027)

Kathryn Calkins, Willi and Marcia Epting, Bob and Susan Henderson, Mary Hetzel, Pam Johnson, Barb Miller, Diana Mawhinney, Debby Pool

Sunday Lunches

Coordinator: Karin Dillon*

Emergency Overnight Shelter (w/ Interfaith Action)

Coordinator: Sharon Campbell

Walk for Warmth (w/ Interfaith Action)

Coordinator: Interfaith Action delegate(s)

Interfaith Action of Evanston

Britt Cox, First Church delegate

Courtney Zirkle*, First Church delegate

Melissa Appelt, Board Member

SNAPGap (w/ Interfaith Action)

Coordinator: Interfaith Action delegate(s)

Change for Change

Coordinator: Mission & Outreach Chairs (as needed)

Star Tree

Coordinator: Linda MacCracken

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Chair: Bonny Roth

Vice Chair: Marianne Griebler*

Coordinating Team

Bonny Roth, Chair

Marianne Griebler*, Vice Chair

Joe Agne, Liaison from the Adult Christian Education Council

Judith Campbell, Earth Care Coordinator

Lisa Jacob*, Race and Ethnicity Coordinator

Todd Bowen*, Reconciling Congregation Coordinator

The Social Justice Chair facilitates coordination between the three groups in the Social Justice area with the goal of (1) identifying collaborative opportunities within the SJ area; and (2) providing opportunities for the congregation to engage in hands-on justice and activism work. The Social Justice Chair's role at First Church is analogous to the Board of Church and Society's role in the United Methodist Church. The Vice Chair assists the Chair and ascends to the Chair position one year later.

The Social Justice Coordinating Team meets regularly for the purposes of collaboration and identifying ways to expand opportunities and the number of persons engaged in this ministry.

Racial Justice Committee (renamed from Race and Ethnicity)

Coordinator: Lisa Jacob*

Staff: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Melissa Appelt*, Roger Baugher*, Mary Cauble, Robert Harris, Winder Holeman*, Lisa Jacob, Malik Kemokai*, Richard Mosley*, Belinda Numbi*

Earth Care Committee

Coordinator: Judith Campbell

Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Phyllis Bird, Judith Campbell, Kathryn Calkins, Scott Fosdick, Marianne Griebler, Paula Scholl, Jennie Schumann*, Ann Sinclair*, Roxann Specht

Reconciling Congregation Task Force

Coordinator: Todd Bowen*

Staff Liaison: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Todd Bowen*, Kathy Cheney-Egan (checking), Antoinette Senjanovich, open to other persons who want to serve in this area

To celebrate First Church as a fully inclusive congregation and to hold the church accountable for living up to that inclusivity. For 2025-26, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee asks this group to develop their vision: *What is the role of First Church's Reconciling Congregation Team post-General Conference Charlotte?*

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Dan Owens and Eileen Chambers

Senior Pastor: Rev. Grace Imathiu

Marion Clemens

Katie Fahey*

Alli Henry*

Steve Prout

Paula Scholl

Tom Scott

Cate Whitcomb

YOUTH COUNCIL

Chair: Chris Nieuwsma*
Staff Liaison: Sydney Harkrider

Class of 2028: Chris Nieuwsma*, Chris Baker*
Class of 2027: Susan Dittmer*, Devon Thrush
Class of 2026: Lily Cline* (youth), Dorothy Jennett* (youth)

OTHER LEADERSHIP ROLES

TOTAL CHILD BOARD

Chair: Lisa Kampwirth, Total Child Director
Board Chair: Jackie Owens (church member, TC parent)
Treasurer: Jeff Wolfe (church member, TC parent)
Executive Pastor and Staff Liaison: Rev. Britt Cox

Members at Large:

Nasim Alexander (TC parent)
Nancy Ansorge (former TC teacher)
Lorraine Murphy (TC parent)
Miles Shultz (church member, TC parent)

Advisory board for Total Child Preschool

LAY MEMBERS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Representing this congregation (July 2024-July 2028)

Phil Carihfield
Jim Hagedorn
Leah Holzwarth
Henry Pleas
Colin McDonald

Alternates: Grant Bailey, Katie Brick

NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE, LAKE NORTH DISTRICT, AND JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

(Term began July 2024)

Jurisdictional Conference Delegate: Nancy Pendergrass (lay)

Jurisdictional Conference Reserve Delegate: Rev. Britt Cox (clergy)

NIC Annual Conference Committee: Martha Rudy

NIC Annual Conference Shepherding Team: Rev. Britt Cox (Justice and Mercy Ministries Designate)

NIC Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries: Ilsup Ahn (Co-Chair), Katie Brick

NIC Board of Ordained Ministry: Rev. Britt Cox

NIC Board of Pensions: Beth Swanick

NIC Board of Trustees: Grant Bailey

NIC Council on Finance and Administration: Rebecca Smith

NIC Council on Young People's Ministries: Jim Hagedorn

NIC Committee on Personnel: Jim Hagedorn

NIC Commission on Archives & History: Cate Whitcomb

NIC Credentials Committee - Nancy Pendergrass

NIC Assistant Secretary for Standing Rules: Nancy Pendergrass

Lake North District Shepherding Committee, Lay Academy Team, Committee on Personnel, Youth Team: Jim Hagedorn

Lake North District Committee on Church Building and Location: Martha Rudy

Lake North District Youth Lay Member to Annual Conference: Laura Thrush

Church Conference Recording Secretary

Cheryl Haack

University Christian Ministry Board

Katie Brick

9/4/2025