

NOMINEE BIOGRAPHIES

Jack Acri, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Jack Acri serves on the Discernment committee. He is member of the Northeast Ohio School of Ministry and has served on its Steering Committee. He has guided three mission trips to assist resettled Syrian refugees and enjoys an interactive relationship with a Youngstown mosque.

Fran Apltauer, Nominating Committee, class of 2021. Fran is a member of Christ United Church in Olmstead Falls and a former Moderator of the Western Reserve Association.

Jim Ebbenga, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Jim has been an active member of Grace UCC for 5 years. He currently serves as Financial Secretary and is on the Stewardship Team. He formerly worked part time in Wider Church Ministries in UCC headquarters and has served on Pastor Search Committees of 2 other local churches.

Mark Frey, Association Council, class of 2020. Mark served the Bath Church UCC as Associate Minister and then as Senior Minister. He serves on the Ohio Conference Visioning Team, is a Common Global Ministries Board member and volunteers with the United Church Homes Capital Campaign for Abundant Life.

Kelly Fuhrmann, Secretary, class of 2020. Kelly is a member of First Congregational Church in Jefferson.

Ruth Garwood, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Ruth lives in Cleveland Heights and will be serving her second term on the Committee on Ministry.

Cheryl Goggans, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Cheryl's religious life journey has been complex, including backtracking, dead ends and joyful places where she can dwell in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. She is currently exploring the history of the worship culture of African American communities while she tries to embrace the creation of multicultural places of worship.

J. Bennet Guess, Association Council, class of 2020. Ben is a member of Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Cleveland and executive director of the ACLU of Ohio. He is a former UCC National Officer and Executive Minister and prior to that, he served as a local church pastor in Kentucky.

Brent Gundlah, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Brent is pastor of St. Paul UCC in Navarre. He worked in the financial industry before beginning a second career in ministry. Brent participates in various ecumenical and community activities in Navarre and the Fairless School District and is currently a member of the YMCA of Western Stark County's Board of Directors.

Sprite Johnson, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Sprite is an ordained minister at Bethany UCC in Cuyahoga Falls.

Steve Johnson, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Steve is an ordained minister serving at St. Jacobs UCC in Leetonia.

Kathy Ketchum, Committee on Ministry, class of 2020. Kathy was ordained United Methodist minister. In 1996, she returned to her home town of Elyria and transferred her orders to the UCC. Kathy served Pilgrim Church in Elyria, then worked full-time as a Christian counselor at Psych & Psych Services and is currently pastor at Community of Faith UCC in Elyria.

John King, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. John's educational degrees include a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Theology. His pastoral ministry has led him to service in eight different churches, including 10 years of ministry in El Salvador. He now serves as pastor of Richfield UCC.

Luke Linden, Committee on Ministry, class of 2020. Luke serves as the senior pastor of United Church of Christ Congregational in Medina. He is currently working toward his Doctor of Ministry through the Methodist Theological School in Ohio with an emphasis on transformational leadership and is a member of the UCC Next Generation Leadership Initiative.

Steve Luke, Association Council, class of 2020. Steve served as president of his Lutheran congregation in Canton for many years. He joined Kent UCC and now serves on the Worship and Arts Committee and is an usher. My passion for the local and wider church is to encourage "out of the box" thinking and discourage thoughts of "that's how we have always done things."

Ian Lynch, Moderator, class of 2019. Ian is pastor of Old South Church in Kirtland. He has served on the Association Council as vice moderator and co-moderator. Ian has been part of the Vision Team working to draft a plan to have a single UCC judicatory in Ohio, Northern Kentucky, and West Virginia.

Rachel McDonald, Association Council, class of 2020. Rachel is an ordained minister serving South Haven UCC in Bedford.

Chuck Monroe, Association Council, class of 2019. Chuck is a retired faculty member and administrator for the University of Akron. He is a member of Bath Church (UCC) where he has served on the Youth Board, Evangelism and Spiritual Life Committee, and greets worshippers on Sunday morning.

Cindy Norwood, Committee on Ministry, class of 2020. Cindy is a nonprofit executive with experience in leading teams and building strategic alliances. Cindy has served on pastoral relations committees, audit committee and served as a deacon, board president and elder in the Disciples of Christ church. She currently serves as prayer leader in South Haven UCC.

Phyllis Richards, Association Council, class of 2020. Phyllis graduated from Case Western Reserve University and Ashland Theological Seminary. She is on the faculty of On One Accord Ministries and works in the national setting of the United Church of Christ (UCC) on the Humanitarian and Development Team, promoting the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

Steven Savides, Vice-Moderator, class of 2019. Steven is an ordained minister and a member of the First Congregational UCC in Akron

Eric Strickland, Committee on Ministry, class of 2021. Eric serves as the Associate Pastor at Zion UCC in North Canton where his primary ministry is with children, youth, and young adults. Prior to being called to Zion UCC, Eric served as the pastor at First Congregational UCC in Coloma, MI. Eric feels called to a ministry of social justice and equality for all of God's people.

Jason Thompson, Association Council, class of 2020. Jason was called to serve West Park UCC in Cleveland in 2017. Raised in the Southern Baptist tradition, he explored a number of religious traditions during his early adult years in San Diego before joining the UCC in 2010. Jason is an enthusiastic biblical storyteller and has a passion for interfaith and ecumenical partnerships.

Heather Tuck-Macalla, Association Council, class of 2019. Heather was raised, baptized and married at Dover Congregational Church in Westlake and currently calls home Avon Lake United Church of Christ. She has served as Sunday School Teacher and Worship Team Member.