

Nominees

For the Board of Trustees, all three-year terms

Mark Andersen, an Emerson member for about 10 years, says, "Emerson is the first church I ever formally joined, because it feels like home to me." He served on the Leap of Faith ad hoc committee and, after several years as an usher, served as ushering committee co-chair with his wife, Holly. He was on the organizing committee for the Southwest UU Conference when it was last held at Emerson. He retired recently from a career as a scientist, engineer, and technology journal editor in the oil industry and is currently working on several novels that he hopes Hollywood producers will tear themselves apart to film. Regardless of the eventual outcome, he's enjoying making stuff up for a change.

Nancy Lipp joined Emerson 10 years ago after a move from New Orleans with her husband, Stephen, six years after becoming a UU. While at Emerson she has chaired a covenant group, chaired the church's auction, and been a child and adult religious education teacher. She has also volunteered in the office and been active in the Leap of Faith project, in communication efforts, as a member of Woman's Alliance, and in the weekly stitches group. An engineer by profession, Nancy now teaches physics at The Tenney School.

Ruth Alkons Wolinsky joined Emerson in 2012. She says: As an ex-Catholic from rural eastern Pennsylvania, Emerson was the first church she felt comfortable in after "shopping around". Ruth met her husband, Matt, at Pitt during undergrad, then followed him to North Carolina; he did graduate work in geology at Duke and she in environmental engineering at UNC - Chapel Hill. They moved to Minneapolis for 4+ years, Matt as a post-doc at the Univ. of Minnesota, and Ruth working as a consultant engineer. In January 2009 they moved to Houston where Matt took a job with Shell. Their daughter, Elena, was born in 2011, and Ruth has worked at home most of the time since. Besides a few part-time jobs, she has spent the past 4.5 years as a volunteer, as an officer for her local Engineers without Borders chapter, president of her HOA, and volunteering for events at her daughter's school. At Emerson, Ruth teaches RE, is a supporting player on the AV team, and chaired the 2015 Emerson Auction.

For the Committee on Ministry, both three-year terms

Phillip Baxley says, "My wife and I were members of Emerson Church in the 1980s, and our daughters attended the RE program. We rejoined the church 3 years ago, and participate actively in the Orchestra. I recently retired from Shell Oil, after 32 years as an engineer, business executive, and board member. Nancy and I have 4 children, and have lived in Houston 37 years."

Robert (Bob) Hanson describes himself as "66, born and raised in Chicago, IL area. 1971 graduate from Illinois Institute of Technology with BS in Mathematics. As a result of a low draw in the draft lottery, spent three years in the US Army (SC, OK, GA, NC). Attracted to Houston for IT position with Pullman Kellogg (now KBR) in 1975, then worked for Sonat Offshore Drilling (now Transocean). Retired in 2015 after 17 years with VALIC, an AIG subsidiary providing retirement services. Married Beverly Edwards, third generation Unitarian, in March 1976 at Emerson Unitarian Church. Raised two children with support from Emerson Religious Education, Jeffrey (Oakland, CA) and Barbara (Chicago, IL). Have grandchildren ages 3 and 1 in Oakland. Thank goodness for Skype!"

For the Nominating Committee, all two-year terms

John Hammer writes: I began attending Emerson around six years ago with my wife, Beth, and children, William and Molly. I have served as Religious Education Committee chair and am still active in RE and the Coming of Age program. I have served on the AV committee and participate in the performing arts including the Emerson Players and musical performances.

Kenneth Jones says: I am a father of three, struggling husband of 35 years, middle school educator, former community organizer, social, economic and political activist and all-round Legend in My Own Mind! I have been a Unitarian Universalist for the past 25 years. I have been a member of Emerson for the past 10 years. I have served as a teacher in the youth RE program for several years, participated as a mentor in the Coming of Age program, served on the Youth RE Committee and chaired it for a brief stint. I have facilitated the Our Whole Lives program for youth and twice facilitated the Building Your Own Theology adult RE offering. Currently I serve as a member of the Adult RE Committee and as a member of the Social Action Council. Most recently I have served the congregation as its representative for the UU Voice for Justice of Greater Houston and serve that organization as a member of its Steering Committee. In addition, I am one of two congregational representatives for the Texas UU Justice Ministry serving on its advisory board. I am in the process of applying to become a member of the inaugural class of Justice Building Innovators of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), a role in which I hope to elevate Emerson UU Church as leader in social justice work in our city, state, nation, and beyond.

Kris Taylor reports that she and the Millennium came to Emerson at about the same time. Since then, she's been busy greeting newcomers (and just about anybody who walks in the door on Sunday morning), selling and schmoozing at the bookstore, and serving on the auction, stewardship, district conference planning committees and the Committee on Ministry, which she co-chaired in 2012. She is just completing a three-year term on the Board of Trustees and served as Board president in 2014. Away from Bering Drive, she is a freelance writer, editor and public relations counselor (no alarm clock, no commute, and no dry cleaning bills!), teaches classes in public relations at the University of Houston and serves as the volunteer coordinator for the Houston Grand Opera Guild boutique. She reads voraciously, stitches avidly, gardens hopefully and lives with a very entertaining rescue dog, Max – a dorkie both by DNA and general temperament.

For the Outreach Committee, a three-year term

Karen George writes: I've been a member at Emerson for over 20 years – first attending because of the Religious Education program for my 2 daughters (now 27 and 23!) I've participated at various times in the RE program, the intergenerational orchestra and a few committees. I have very much enjoyed serving on Emerson's Outreach Committee this past year and look forward to continuing this work. My primary community involvement has been through organizations focusing on women's issues. I'm a past board member and board chair of Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, past board member and current advisory board member of The Women's Resource and I'm currently on the Board and President-Elect of The Women's Home. I am also very involved in many capacities at Rice University. Professionally, I'm a CPA and have worked many years for Ralph S. O'Connor & Associates.