

BIOGRAPHIES OF 2017-18 NOMINEES

Slate of candidates for 2017-2018 is:

Susan Miles - Board Vice President

Jim VanOstrand - Board Treasurer

Karin Hogan - Board Member at Large

Mara Melum - Board Member at Large

Mary Poul, NLD

Molly Darsow, NLD

Susan Miles TBD

Jim Van Ostrand grew up Catholic in Iowa but has now lived more than half of his life in the Twin Cities, residing for the past 18 years in White Bear Lake with his family. He has taught RE every year since joining WBUUC 9 years ago, and served on the Financial Oversight Committee for the last seven, as well as last year's Special Campaign committee. Jim has been an accountant for 30 years, currently serving as CFO for one of the nation's largest dealers of commercial office furniture. Serving WBUUC has been extremely rewarding for Jim, and he is honored to be nominated for the Board.

Karin Hogen has been attending WBUUC for three years and has been a member for one. (She was previously a member of Unity for four years). During her time here, Karin tries to be as involved in church life as possible. She currently teaches RE classes, sings in the choir, serves on the Sanctuary Church Committee, is a second Sunday greeter, and is part of the Beloved Conversations group. She is a middle school language arts teacher in White Bear Lake where she lives with her family. Karin finds strength and inspiration in WBUUC that she takes with her to her classroom, where she enjoys teaching with diverse materials and infusing social justice themes. Karin strongly supports the work of the UU church regarding social justice and believes that WBUUC is doing important work in the community and the world.

Mara Melum's UU Spirit blossomed from a Catholic father and Jewish mother who gave her the gift of UU communities in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota, and beyond. Mara grew up on the East Coast and was in the first class of women at Princeton University. She has been blessed to experience diversity first hand from living in a settlement house in Philadelphia, as an exchange student in Malaysia, to extensive family time in Harlem. Mara moved to

Minnesota with her husband Eric when he started medical school. They are blessed with two children, Daniel and Arielle. Mara has devoted her career to advancing the state of the art of leadership - in individuals, organizations and communities. This has included roles as a health industry executive, executive coach and strategy consultant, board member, and adjunct professor and author. She looks forward to being of service to this valued community.

Mary Poul joined WBUUC with partner Greg in 2004 before the birth of their first daughter. Their second daughter was honored to be the first dedication in the new sanctuary in 2007! Mary has taught RE for 3rd - 5th grade since 2012, joined the Project Home Committee in 2015 and is on this year's Pledge Committee. Beyond church Mary supports Junior Achievement and Women Venture and looks for opportunities to support causes to help kids. Mary owns a contract manufacturing business and several product businesses. She loves living in a lake community now and plans on spending a lot of time on White Bear Lake this summer.

Molly Darsow began attending WBUUC three years ago with her husband Blake and 6-year-old daughter, Lydia. Molly was previously an active member at First Universalist Church where she served on the First Universalist Foundation Board, the Community Investment Team, and the Arts Committee. Molly works in Addictions Counseling for Valhalla Place, a treatment program that supports people who are struggling with opiate addiction. Molly and her family live in Woodbury, MN where they just completed a new home build. You may have seen Molly volunteering in the RE classrooms or watching the children's choir. Molly and her daughter Lydia were our church "gardeners" last summer. They enjoyed helping the children plant the garden and picking fresh strawberries to share! Molly looks forward to sharing more time with the church community and getting to know fellow members better through her time on the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee.