

Report of the Nominating Committee

Each year a Nominating Committee is appointed by the Congregation Council to discern, seek, and nominate candidates for expiring or unfilled terms on the Congregation Council. The Nominating Committee also brings forth members of the Congregation to participate at the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly as Voting Members of the Assembly.

The Nominating Committee thanks outgoing those council members Allen Jensen and Teresa Ringness.

The Nominating Committee for this term is Gwen Flory, Allen Jensen, and Teresa Ringness. We thank each of these members for serving.

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for election as First English Congregation Council Members beginning February, 2023: Nancy Baden, Kristin Mondy, Benjamin Rode, and LaRu Woody, each for a full three-year term.

Nancy Baden

“I have been a member of FELC since 1974 when I moved to Austin to attend UT. I have visited this church at least twice annually since infancy as relatives from both sides of my family were members here. I married here and my kids, Joel and Tessa, were confirmed here. (Tessa was baptized here as well; Joel was born in Germany. By the way, Pastor Merle and Ginna Franke came to Germany to see us when we lived there... love those house calls!) I retired at the end of Pandemic Year 1 from being a speech pathologist for almost 40 years.

I came to First English because I knew people. I stayed because I met people I came to love. I appreciate our church’s efforts to be in tune with issues of social justice. The pain and glory of the FELC softball days cemented many friendships. I have served in Learning Ministry capacities, as a Stephen Minister and as a choir member. I am currently on the board of our Child Development Center, which looks forward to celebrating its 50th birthday this year! FELC has nurtured a lot of our community’s children during those 50 years. I enjoy gardening, camping, reading, hiking and eating whatever my husband, Randy, prepares.”

Kristin Mondy

“I have been a long-standing member of FELC, first growing up as a child and attending the child development center and becoming confirmed at FELC. I later was married in the church and after moving away to pursue my medical/professional career I moved back in 2008 with my husband and 2 young children to live with my mother (who was also a long-time member). I was previously on the council during the time that my children attended FELC’s Child Development Center. Currently I work at Dell Medical School as the Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases. I am so grateful that Covid has slowed down! Outside of work, I really enjoy traveling with family, enjoying all kinds of water-related activities (our family recently developed a passion for scuba-diving), playing tennis/pickleball, and attending/supporting live music in the Austin area.”

Benjamin Rode

“I’ve been a member of the congregation of First English Lutheran Church since January of 2022, and I’ve been affiliated with it and its former ministers for some while longer than that. I first came to Austin as an undergraduate at UT in 1984, receiving my degree in Plan II Liberal Arts in 1988. It was during that time that I first became acquainted with Robert Karli through the Lutheran Campus Ministry Council. I returned in 1990 as a graduate student in philosophy, received my PhD. in 2000, and in the meantime got to know Michael Coffey in my hometown of San Antonio while he was serving as associate minister at Christ Lutheran Church in Alamo Heights where my parents were members. In 1997 my residency in Austin was cemented when I was hired as a knowledge representation specialist at a local tech company called Cycorp: largely on the strength of my dissertation, which concerned making sense of common sense in algorithmic terms. This activity has been my professional and personal occupation ever since. During all this time, I attended services at First English on occasion. In early 2022, having become a regular presence at online worship and with the pandemic finally in abeyance, it seemed to me the moment had arrived for finally formalizing the relationship. I have been an active member since, and I look forward to helping the congregation navigate its impending changes in whatever capacity I can.”

LaRu Woody

“Fred and I joined First English shortly after moving to Austin in 1978. We visited First English while searching for a new church home. But it was the visit by Pastor Merle Franke, who came visiting with a six pack of beer, that reassured us that we had arrived home.

I attended law school at UT law and was a prosecutor at the Travis County District Attorney's Office for many years. I am currently an adjunct professor at St. Edward's University in the Criminal Justice department.

All four of our sons and three grandchildren were baptized at First English. Over the years I have taught Sunday School and have served on Church Council, the Vicar Committee and the last Pastor Call Committee.”

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for election as Synod Assembly Voting Member for the 2023 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly: Nancy and Randy Baden.

Respectfully submitted,
Gwen Flory
Nominating Committee