

## **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Each year a Nominating Committee is appointed to nominate candidates for the Council. The Nominating Committee also brings forth the names of two voting members of the Congregation to attend the annual synod assembly. The Nominating Committee is Heidi Goebel (chair), Lee Baker, Marilyn Olson [outgoing council members] and Fran Collmann.

Prior to discussing nomination for the First English Lutheran Church Council with members of the congregation, we clarified two points with Allen Jensen, president of the congregation council.

We asked permission to allow the nominating committee to have four members this year.

We asked President Jensen to affirm an earlier statement that hereafter it will be possible to attend council meetings via Zoom.

Forced familiarity with improved computer technology during the pandemic has shown us that it is possible to conduct serious discussions, as well as routine business, via Zoom conferencing.

The ability to occasionally (or routinely) attend meetings remotely increases the number of persons who can consider serving the congregation in this way. Council terms are three years with one meeting per month. Many people travel or have reason to be away from Austin for work or family. Some people live far enough from the church that weather or traffic conditions may prevent their attending meetings. Unexpected illness or responsibilities may make it impossible to leave home on a given night. We value in-person gatherings but can now see that including some members on Zoom while meeting in the parlor (when we can meet in the parlor) is a viable option.

Having received permission to proceed in this way, we are proud to have assembled the following slates of nominees.

### ***The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for election as First English Congregation Council Members beginning February 2021:***

Gwen Flory, Todd Jermstad, Mary Lou Larson, Jamie Maillart.

### ***The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for election as Synod Assembly Voting Members for the 2021 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly:***

Merrily Porter and Terry Porter.

Respectfully,

Marilynn Olson

**Gwen Flory**

“I have been a member of FELC since 1964, when my family moved to Austin from the Chicago area for my dad Merle Franke’s installation as pastor of First English. I am married to Bruce (for 40 years!), and we have two grown sons who were raised and confirmed at First English, and 3 precious granddaughters. Merle retired from FELC in 1984, but I remained a member and have been active in church choir, and have served in numerous functions over the years, including as assisting minister, communion minister, on church council, on property/grounds committee and as Sunday School music leader. I also participated on the church softball team many moons ago. I retired in July 2020 from the National Wildlife Federation, where I led fundraising efforts to support environmental programs in 14 states. First English is my church home, and has brought light and comfort to me beyond measure. I look forward to the time when we can all gather to worship together!”

**Todd Jermstad**

“I am a lifelong Lutheran as well as a lifelong Texan. I have lived in Central Texas all of my life and have lived in Austin since 1988. I became a member of First English Lutheran Church in 1989. I attended Baylor University as an undergrad and also received my juris doctorate at the Baylor School of Law. I retired in 2019. Prior to retiring the last job that I held was the director of the Bell/Lampasas Counties Community Supervision and Corrections Department (adult probation). One of my interests is criminal justice reform. Over the years I have either served on or been the chair of several church committees. I have Chaired the Vicar Committee and the Invitation Team and have served on the stewardship committee. I love our church, especially the architecture, the music, the preaching, and the people. Currently my biggest interest in serving First English is volunteering for Casa Marianella. This is an amazing organization with amazing staff. Before Coronavirus, I drove residents to doctors’ appointments, employment services or to the immigration office in Northwest Austin. Since Coronavirus I have been delivering groceries to refugees living in apartments every Tuesday at noon.”

**MaryLou Larson**

“Rick and I moved to Houston in the fall of 2014 from Wisconsin. We found a small parcel of land in Bastrop in the summer of 2015 and decided to start building that fall. We first started to attend FELC in 2016 after our pastor in Wisconsin recommended it to us. We became members in 2018. I’m retired from EMS where I worked in a level one trauma ER as a coordinator and as an EMT. I’m loving having time for projects around the property and visiting with the two kids that live in Texas. We travel often to Wisconsin for family visits, especially making time for our two-year-old granddaughter. I have come to love my FELC family and the fellowship and community I feel. I have had the privilege to work with the staff in the past and would love to continue that relationship via the work of the council.”

**Jamie Maillart**

“I moved to Austin over 25 years ago to attend the University of Texas. I am a Solution Architect at VMware, a datacenter software company. I have been attending First English since late 2015 and officially moved my membership from St. Martin’s Lutheran in the fall of 2020. My faith journey began in my adult life. I was baptized at St. Martin’s on Valentine’s Day 1999 when I was 21. Over the years, I have participated in several other congregations in the Austin area, including Palm Valley, Triumphant Love, and Peace. I have always been involved in each of the congregations, singing in the choir, offering other music by playing saxophone, serving communion, and serving as a Stephen Minister, among other things. I am the proud father of Chester (almost 18), Pearl (15), and Rose (12) who currently reside with their mother in Cedar Park. I love our FELC family and have been

welcomed, supported, and cared for since the first time I attended a worship service. It has been my pleasure to facilitate our livestream worship services during this difficult time. I'm excited about how our church can continue to grow and how we can live out our mission in the years to come."

**Merrily Porter**

"I moved to Austin in 1978 to attend UT and never left! I began attending First English around 1981 when Terry and I married. I officially joined First English in 1988 when our second daughter was baptized. Terry and I have three daughters and two sons-in-law (Mary Kate and John, Caroline and Brady, and Maddie) and four grandchildren (Patrick, Ruby, Andrew, and William). At First English, I've been involved in Stephen Ministry, Sunday School, and Micah 6. I was past president of the Child Development Center. I currently serve on the Congregation Council. I also serve as a communion minister and hospitality host. I am an attorney and am employed as general counsel for a local credit union."

**Terry Porter**

"I was born in Austin and my family joined First English in 1960. I was confirmed by Pastor Merle Franke in 1970. Merrily and I are blessed with three daughters, two sons-in-law, and four grandchildren. I served on council several times, volunteered for numerous committees over the years, and participated on church softball and basketball teams back in the day. I enjoy working on the church grounds and am currently part of a new grounds team. I have been FELC financial secretary the last four years. I manage an insurance statistical gathering organization, TICO, which is part of an insurance trade association, Insurance Council of Texas. Merrily and I are looking forward to being synod assembly voting members."