LIVING WATER ASSOCIATION OHIO NORTHEAST, UCC

Biographical Information for 2026 Nominees

Rev. Jen Bertoni was ordained and installed as the pastor of The Church in Silver Lake in September 2025. She has previously served churches in many other roles, including Youth Director, Faith Formation Director, Music Director and Organist, and Church secretary. Jen is a convert to the UCC: she was raised in the Roman Catholic church and found the UCC in her forties because of her desire to be a part of a church that welcomed all to an open table, including divorced and LGBTQ+ people. Jen's call to pastoral ministry did not involve a traditional seminary; she is a product of Living Water's own Northeast Ohio School of Ministry and took additional classes in the Northwest Association's Lay School Program. She is happy to be part of a denomination that recognizes multiple paths to ministry and supports locally grown pastors! In her previous career, Jen was a singing instructor and theater director. These days, she enjoys singing in community choirs and participating in community theater productions. She is a proud mama bear to three children; Nicole, Marcus, and Brandon.

Rev. Connor Filkins has been a part of the Living Water Association for nearly five years now, all of which have been spent serving First Congregational Church of Hudson as their Associate Minister of Youth Ministries. Connor is a transplant from Connecticut, growing up at First Congregational Church of Wallingford. He and his wife Kassi, an Ohio native and Kent grad, are enjoying a busy life with their baby boy Clarke.

Rev. Emily Howard I have served as the settled pastor of Grace United Church of Christ in Uniontown, Ohio (near the Akron-Canton airport!) since December 1, 2023. I have also served as Associate Pastor of Trinity UCC in Wooster, and Seminary Intern for First UCC and United Church Homes in Marion. I am a bona fide cat lady, and I like riding my bike on the towpath trail.

Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon serves as the senior pastor of United Church of Christ Congregational in Medina, Ohio. Prior to coming to Medina in April 2017, he was the associate pastor at Sylvania UCC in northwest Ohio. Luke earned his Doctor of Ministry through the Methodist Theological School in Ohio with an emphasis on transformational leadership in 2022. His thesis was on adaptive leadership and ecclesiology. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and his bachelor's degree in journalism from Ohio University. Before seminary, Luke worked as a tool and fastener sales representative and store manager for Capitol Building Supply in Washington, D.C. Luke and his wife, Kate, have two children. Luke grew up in Dennison, Ohio, and enjoys sports, music, and Dungeons and Dragons. He is a member of the UCC Next Generation Leadership Initiative.

Carrie Petersen is a member of First Congregational Church of Akron, where she has served on the membership board, as chair of the most recent senior pastor search committee, and as church treasurer. She holds a Bachelor of General Studies degree from Kent State University and a J.D. from the University of Akron School of Law, and works from home as a legal editor. After 14 years in Rochester, New York, she returned to the Akron area in 2019 and currently lives in Fairlawn. In her free time, Carrie volunteers with an after-school program for immigrant and refugee children and enjoys reading, knitting, vegan cooking, and serving as "biscuit dough" for her cat, Macushla.

Rev. Mindy Quellhorst grew up as a PK, that is preacher's kid and teacher's kid. She is UCC from her very beginnings; baptized, confirmed, and ordained. Rev. Mindy served 5 churches: Vermilion United Church of Christ Congregational in Vermilion, Ohio; Barneveld Congregational UCC in Barneveld, Wisconsin, St. Paul's UCC outside of Van Wert, Ohio, Mt. Olivet UCC in North Lima, Ohio, and Grace UCC in Lancaster, Ohio before becoming pastor at Dover Congregational Church in Westlake. She has been the Moderator of the Ohio Conference and served in other volunteer leadership positions. Mindy has a pastor's heart and lives that in all she does. She stands for justice and following Christ's call to love one another. With her spouse, Jeff Davis,

they have adult children, AJ and Andy/Miranda Lacefield, and Rebekah/Jesse Wissler. The new joys of her life are grandchildren, Charlotte, DJ, Phoebe and Emmett. Rev. Quellhorst attended and graduated from Heidelberg University with a Bachelor of Arts and Eden Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity.

Brandon Rohrer is an award-winning museum operations and accessibility leader serving as Director of Museum Operations at the Massillon Museum. He has played an instrumental role in advancing institutional operations, visitor experience, accessibility, technology, and facilities management. A dedicated advocate for accessibility and inclusion, Brandon co-founded and chairs the Massillon Museum Accessibility Committee, leading initiatives that address physical, sensory, digital, and socioeconomic barriers. He also serves on the Accessibility Committee of the Ohio Museums Association and has presented at statewide conferences and the national Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD) Conference hosted by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Brandon is actively involved in nonprofit leadership and community service throughout Stark County. At St. John's UCC in Massillon, he holds several leadership positions, including Elder, Secretary of the Spiritual Council, Director of Technology, Head of Building and Grounds, and member of the Consistory and its Executive Committee. He also leads the church's Community Meal ministry, helping address food insecurity and strengthen connections among neighbors through service and hospitality.

Rev. Dillon Shipman (he/him/his) has served Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights as Associate Minister since February 2023. Originally from Painesville, Ohio, Dillon studied at Cleveland State University for his undergrad, and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (Evanston, Illinois) for his Master of Divinity. While on his journey towards ordination, he served two congregations as Director of Music and Associate for Pastoral Care. Dillon is passionate about liturgy and music, queer spirituality, interfaith dialogue, and intergenerational ministry. He is thrilled to work alongside all members of the Living Waters Association to share God's radical, boundless love to the greater community, both within and beyond the church walls. His fiancé Cody is a hospitality director and world traveler, and Dillon enjoys all the trips they take together. You'll often find him at the piano bench, lost in a good book, or sharing a delicious meal with loved ones!