

## Rev. Dr. Sharon G. Austin

Director of Connectional and Justice Ministries  
Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church



In her role as the Director of Connectional and Justice Ministries, Rev. Dr. Sharon G. Austin is responsible for serving as steward of the vision of The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church. In 1981 she made history as the first woman ordained in the 95-year history of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA., home church and former pastorate of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1984 she became the first woman to serve on the pastoral staff of that church with the late senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr. A day was named in her honor in Atlanta, GA, for her work with women and children.

She moved to FL and transferred her clergy orders to The United Methodist Church in 1997 where she has served as a pastor and District Superintendent prior to her current role. Austin was selected as the Florida

Conference Episcopal nominee in 2020 and was affirmed as the Florida Conference Episcopal nominee for the 2022 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference. When she decided to transfer to The United Methodist Church, she described the transfer of orders as a leading of the 'Holy Spirit.' Austin's lifetime of ecumenical exposure, including ordination in two denominations, serving in a denomination that represented a split primarily over social justice issues, ministry of care and healing in several chaplaincy settings, history of 'firsts,' continued advocacy and activism for justice and inclusion, saturation in and commitment to the United Methodist Church and abiding faith in the Kingdom work of inclusion uniquely position her as an influential voice in the American faith community.

Dr. Austin and her husband and are the proud parents of four adult children and the grandparents of one grandson. She is a teacher, preacher, and courageous leader.

## Sally Vonner

General Secretary/Chief Executive Officer  
United Women in Faith

Sally Vonner (she/her) is a woman of faith and purpose as a leader, mother, sister, and friend to many. She is a proud member of United Women in Faith. As the General Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of United Women in Faith, she oversees the implementation of the organization's vision, mission, and strategic plan to positively impact the lives of women, children, and youth



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around the world. She collaborates with United Women in Faith's senior executives from the Offices of the General Secretary, Connection, Finance and Asset Management, Operations, and Transformation on day-to-day operations. Prior to this role, Vonner served in multiple United Women in Faith positions and most recently in the role of Transformation Officer where she oversaw the recent name change and rebranding from United Methodist Women to United Women in Faith. She has also served in many areas of The United Methodist Church—as a Global Ministries missionary, a jurisdictional conference delegate or alternate for three quadrennia, a women's retreat leader, and in areas such as immigration assistance and reform, community development and dismantling racism initiatives at jurisdiction and conference levels. Sally also served as the Associate Director of Connectional Ministries for the North Texas Annual Conference until 2010.

Vonner is a graduate of Perkins School of Theology with an M.Div. and Women's Studies certification. She graduated from Texas A&M University—Commerce with a B.S. degree in Biology. She currently serves on the board of The Wesley Campus Ministry at Texas A&M University—Commerce and concluded seven years on the New York Immigration Law & Justice New York in December.

In her free time, Sally loves visiting family in Texas, reading and travelling to beaches in the U.S. and the Caribbean.

### **Charles E. L. Brown, MD, MBA, FACOG**



Charles E. L. Brown, MD, MBA, FACOG, is the Legislative Chair of District XI of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). He is a 1980 graduate of the Tulane University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency training in obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston in 1984. He followed that training with a Fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine (1984-1986) in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UT Southwestern.

In 1986, Dr. Brown joined the UT Southwestern OB/GYN Department's Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM).

While at UT Southwestern, he completed a Masters of Business Administration at the University of Texas Graduate School of Business (1991-1993). In 1994, he moved to Austin to become Medical Director of Perinatology at Seton/ Ascension Medical Center and Brackenridge Hospital. From 1999-2005 he was the Program Director for the Austin Medical Education Programs' Fellowship in Obstetrics for Family Medicine physicians. In 2004, he became the Program Director for UTMB's OB/GYN residency program in Austin. He was on the Board of Directors and served as Chief of Obstetrics at the Austin Women's Hospital, a teaching facility for the UTMB residency program.

After Hurricane Ike, the UTMB residency program was transferred to UT Southwestern in 2009; in 2014 it became affiliated with the new University of Texas Dell Medical School in Austin. In 2016, Dr. Brown returned to UT Southwestern and served as the Associate Program Director of the MFM Fellowship Program until April of 2022. He is currently a Clinical Professor in the Department of Medical Education at Texas A&M School of Medicine.

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Dr. Brown is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology and in maternal-fetal medicine. He is the Immediate Past Chair of ACOG District XI, and has served on the ACOG National Board of Directors during his Chair tenure.

### Beaman Floyd



Beaman Floyd is a consultant and lobbyist with more than 30 years of experience in public affairs. He owns his own lobby firm, and has worked on behalf of a variety of clients, among them property and casualty insurance companies and trade associations, public education associations, parents' rights groups, local government subdivisions, higher education groups, and religious groups. His activities include legislative strategy and direct lobbying, media relations, grass roots strategy, and academic research.

Mr. Floyd has been highly involved in several major policy issues in Texas, including property and casualty insurance reform, catastrophe policy, workers' compensation reform, healthcare, public school finance, and higher education policy. He frequently represents clients in both the print and electronic media, both in Texas and nationally. He is also a regular guest lecturer to college faculty groups, in college classrooms, policy forums, and other political and educational settings. Mr. Floyd works with several organizations to advance the understanding of public affairs advocacy, and is currently working with international officials in emerging democracies to establish ethical lobbying practices. He is a Charter Member of the Professional Advocacy Association of Texas.

### Bee Moorhead, MPA

Executive Director, Texas Impact



Bee Moorhead has been Executive Director of Texas Impact and its sister organization, the Texas Impact Foundation, since 2000. Under Bee's leadership, Texas Impact and the Texas Impact Foundation are among the most respected interfaith networks in the country.

Bee's policy expertise includes a wide range of issues including health and human services, climate, migration, public budgets, and civic engagement. She has served on numerous state agency working groups and task forces on topics ranging from nursing homes to hurricane response. She is a credentialed observer to the United Nations climate policy negotiations process; in that capacity, she has attended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's annual Conference of the Parties every year since 2015. She is a registered lobbyist with the State of Texas. Her government experience includes 8 years as a senior fiscal policy analyst for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Bee holds a Bachelor of Arts in Costume Design from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Master of Public Affairs from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Since 2012, Bee has been an adjunct faculty member at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary where she co-leads a senior-level course in Faith and Public Policy, and she

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is an ordained ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She serves on the board of the United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund.

Bee is married to Robert Moorhead, a longtime staff member for the PBS series Austin City Limits, the longest-running music program in television history. The Moorheads have three grown children and one grandchild.

### **Joshua Houston**

Advocacy Director, Texas Impact



Josh is an attorney and registered lobbyist whose experience in state government spans three decades. His responsibilities include legislative strategy; legal and policy research; direct lobbying; media relations; and grassroots strategy. A policy generalist, Josh has specific expertise in the policy areas of electric and water utilities, consumer finance, criminal justice, and child welfare policy; as well as election, First Amendment, civil rights, administrative, and nonprofit law.

Before coming to Texas Impact in 2010, Josh worked for the Texas House of Representatives during the 81st legislative session, and as a legislative consultant for the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission during the 79th legislature. He also interned at the Travis County District Attorney's office.

He earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Texas School of Law in 2010, a Master of Theological Studies from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in 2007, and a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Philosophy from Texas A&M University in 2004.

A fourth-generation Texan, Josh enjoys standup paddle boarding, exploring Austin's greenbelts, and strategy games. He is an active member at the First Baptist Church of Austin.

### **Scott Atnip**

Engagement Director, Texas Impact



Scott rejoined the Texas Impact staff as Engagement Director in 2012 after a stint as a Texas Impact intern in 2002-2003. Scott connects Texans of faith with opportunities to engage in the policy process through Texas Impact programs like Weekly Witness, Rapid Response, Legislative Engagement Groups and Faith in Democracy. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Sam Houston State University and an M.A. of Public Affairs from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and is a Certified Lay Servant in the United Methodist Church.

In addition to his work with Texas Impact, Scott has spent a lifetime of service in the United Methodist Church. He was elected to the Texas Conference delegation to General Conference in 2012 and 2020 and served as a District Lay Leader and Associate District Lay Leader from 2008-2016. He has served as a Board Member for

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the General Board of Global Ministries and with U.M. ARMY and JUMMP and at the local church level as Outreach Committee Chair and has received recognitions from district and conference United Methodist Women groups.

Outside of church-work Scott has served as a Board Member for CASA of Walker County and the Walker County Community Development Corporation and previously served as the Executive Director of Huntsville's Promise, a youth community development non-profit organization.

Scott enjoys traveling the state of Texas for Advocacy Trainings for Texans of faith learning to effectively engage with their elected state representatives. Then he loves to come to spend time with his wife Shannon, a nurse, and his two public school aged children. In his free time, Scott coaches his daughter and son's youth soccer teams.

### **David Vassallo**

Digital Communications Manager, Texas Impact

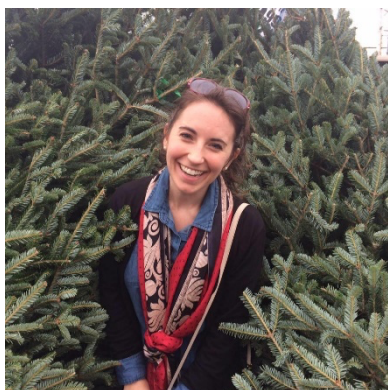


David joined Texas Impact full time in January 2022 after having worked alongside the team during live events for years. David heads up digital communications including, but not limited to, Texas Impact's social media pages and YouTube channels. Prior to working with Texas Impact, David managed live event production for several companies in and around the Austin area. Now he brings his production prowess and passion for policy to the table in service of expanding the reach of Texas Impact's works.

David is a long-time Austin resident and father of three. Both he and his wife, Colleen, are active in their community and participate in organizing for social justice and mutual aid. David is a musician and producer with a deep passion for experimental composition and synthesizers.

### **Katherine Karbach**

Network Development Manager, Texas Impact



Katherine (Kat) Karbach is Texas Impact's Network Development Manager. She comes to us from Virginia, where she spent eight years in development and marketing with a nonprofit focused on domestic violence and human trafficking. As Network Development Manager, Kat is the first contact for Texas Impact members. She manages all aspects of development and member relationships, as well as assisting in the organization's core operations.

Kat lives in Austin with her husband, Dan, an engineer at Tesla. She is an avid reader and an accomplished baker.

### **Bobby Watson**

Human Rights and Civic Engagement Fellow, Texas Impact



Bobby graduated from Trinity University 2021 Cum Laude with a BA in Political Science and minors in Spanish and Russian. He was a recipient of the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholar award for his Russian studies in 2019.

Bobby has over 5 years of work experience with non-profits, such as Vamos Ya, a nonprofit that works to provide educational and recreational resources to underserved youth in inner-city, west-side San Antonio, Texas. He is currently working as the Human Rights Fellow at Texas Impact, focusing on policy related to gun violence and immigration.

### **Fabiola Olvera Benitez**

Immigration Education and Advocacy Manager, Texas Impact

Fabiola Olvera Benitez is a formerly undocumented daughter of immigrants and law school graduate with experience in immigration law. Fabiola earned a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law and a B.A. from Rhode Island College. Fabiola's passion for immigration advocacy stems from having both first-hand and professional experience with the immigration legal system.

Fabiola is currently based in the Rio Grande Valley but grew up in Rhode Island and has lived and worked in NYC and Los Angeles. Fabiola is excited about being the new Courts & Ports manager and is ready to continue empowering others to advocate for humane immigration policies.



### **Becca Edwards**

Climate Action Fellow, Texas Impact



Becca Edwards joins Texas Impact after completing a Master of Divinity at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She is chair of the Mercy and Justice committee at First United Methodist Church of Austin and is a certified deacon candidate in the Capital District of the Rio Texas Annual Conference.

Becca earned a PhD in Wind Science and Engineering at Texas Tech University in 2009. Her research led her to set up wind instruments ahead of landfalling hurricanes along the Gulf coast. She served as a visiting assistant professor of physics at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas for ten years, teaching climate science, earth science, and engineering courses and conducting research in the areas of hydroclimate extremes and air quality.

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Her current interests include liberation theology, climate justice, hydroclimate extremes, interfaith understanding, and worship. Becca lives in Round Rock with her husband and four children and is always searching for the best day hike/taco combo in Austin. So far it's hard to beat the Taco Deli at the Spyglass trailhead of the Barton Creek Greenbelt.

### **Kyle Riley**

Civic Engagement Fellow, Texas Impact

Kyle joined Texas Impact in May of 2023 as the Civic Engagement and UCC Fellow. He works to equip and mobilize congregations in the Houston area as part of our Houston Faith Votes campaign. Kyle is a graduate of the University of Texas with a B.A. in History.

Kyle is in his third and final year of the Master of Divinity program at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He is a Member in Discernment with the Heart of Texas Association (South Central Conference, UCC) at Friends Congregational Church in College Station, and will be ordained in the United Church of Christ next January. Kyle was very active in our Reproductive Rights legislative action group for the duration of the 88th Texas Legislative Session. He currently leads the group and has organized several events related to the issue in addition to his role as our Civic Engagement Fellow. Kyle frequently preaches across the region at congregations of various denominations.



### **Heather Malkawi**

Unitarian Universalist Justice Fellowship, Texas Impact

Heather Malkawi has recently joined Texas Impact in 2021 as an intern from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She is dual degree student working on both her Master of Divinity and in the process of applying to The University of Texas for her Master of Science in Social Work.

Heather graduated from the University of Michigan – Flint with a B.A. in Sociology. Before coming to Austin, I spent a few years as a social worker before finding her passion in insurance.

In her free time, Heather is the parent of two teenagers.

