

The Link



MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNCIL MODERATOR—JOHN MARQUARDT

Hello Friends, the 22nd of April was Earth Day and as I look out my window and see the raindrops, I can't help but think, what a wonderful world we live in. You might think I am crazy for having such a thought as we find ourselves in another wet spring and don't get me wrong, there are days I might look for a reprieve but on the whole, I feel like the rain is something to be appreciated. As the sayings go, "April Showers bring May flowers", "After rain comes sunshine" or one of my favorites, "No rain, no rainbows". The rain does serve a purpose and that is what I try to be mindful of, what purpose does it serve.

**“Some people feel the rain,
others just get wet.”**

From my perspective, the purpose of the rain is to give back to Mother Earth by providing life so I say, embrace the rain, cherish it while it is here, appreciate what it provides for us, and don't be afraid to be out in it. The artist Bob Marley once said, "Some people feel the rain, others just get wet". What that says to me is to be someone who is connected to the world you live in and celebrate every moment you can.

This pretty much goes along with one of my primary tenets in life which is to try to be an optimist. It's not always easy because of how much life can throw at you but I always try to look up instead of down, ahead instead of behind me. I will admit that sometimes the needle might dip a bit towards what I refer to as realism, which I see as the neutral or gray area between optimism and pessimism. When that happens, I focus on what is happening at that moment and what I need to do to get back to where I prefer to be. These are the moments where the rubber meets the road. I just try to remember to stay true to myself and to do what's right but more importantly, do it for the right reason. It may not always be the easy way but it almost always feels better when everything is back on track.

This all came into perspective when the uncertainty from the quick exit of our former pastor felt like a storm cloud rolling in and parking itself over the sanctuary for a while. To me, the past few months have felt a little bit like a wet day that was going on for way too long but with the impending arrival of our Intentional Interim Pastor, the Reverend Bret Myers, I feel like the sunshine is finally coming.

continued on next page...

Vancouver
United Church
of Christ



Sunday Worship: 10 am

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(360) 693-1476

The office is currently closed

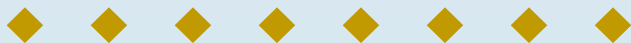
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The LINK is published the 1st week of each month. The **Due Date** for articles is the **4th Wed.** of the preceding month.

Submissions should have:

- Articles in WORD format or text in the body of an email.
- Pictures submitted as attached jpgs.
- Permission of the copyright holder for all copyrighted materials.
- Send articles to elizabeth@vanucc.org.

**MESSAGE FROM YOUR COUNCIL
MODERATOR CONTINUED**

There were moments during the process of searching for the interim when the optimism started to wane. It seemed like the progress was slow-going or we were losing traction but the team stuck with it and in the end, we feel like we have a great candidate.

Reverend Myers will begin his call with us in mid-May and is already thinking about some ways we can come together as a congregation and possibly re-attach some parts of us that may have become detached because we are stronger together rather than being fragmented. This to me is one of the many things that makes it all worthwhile and is part of the journey to finding our next permanent seated Pastor.

In the upcoming months, we will have more in-depth discussions about who we are as a congregation and where we are going. The idea is to know ourselves and find a permanent pastor who fits us, which is what Reverend Myers has helped other congregations in his past.



The storm clouds will pass but in the meantime, I leave you with this thought.
*Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass,
it's about learning how to dance in the rain.*



WELCOME OUR NEW PASTOR!

April 30, 2022

Dear members and friends of Vancouver United Church of Christ,

The Interim Search Team has hired a full-time interim pastor. His name is Reverend Bret Myers. He will start working with us Monday, May 16, with his first Sunday being May 22. Please join in welcoming him on May 22 with worship and a potluck lunch to follow.

Reverend Myers has served in many interim positions and comes to us from First Congregational UCC church in Waterloo, Iowa, where he was most recently an interim pastor. His wife, Caroline, is a professor at the University of Missouri. As you get to know Reverend Myers, we believe you will agree that he is the right person to lead this congregation in healing and improved communication, helping us to discern our path going forward as we seek a settled pastor. We look forward to seeing you on May 22.

Your Interim Search Team: Steve Bloodworth, Jan Foulke, John Marquardt, Tom Renner, Pat Sutherland.

For questions about the potluck please contact Jan at 360-787-8832.



Prayer Shawl Group

The prayer shawl group has been meeting at the church now for quite a while. We have gained some new members which is very helpful to our supply of shawls. Most of the shawls are now at the church and Judy Walter (360-693-0393) also has a few shawls at her home. Baby blankets are also available. If you want to give a shawl to someone who needs some comfort or joy, please contact us.

We have a supply of needles, yarn, and other accessories available if needed. Our meetings are also open to others who might want to come to visit, have coffee and get to know one another better.

Please contact Leslie Chapman or Sandy Mathias to arrange the pickup of a shawl. Shawls can be picked up Sunday after worship, or a time can be arranged during the week.

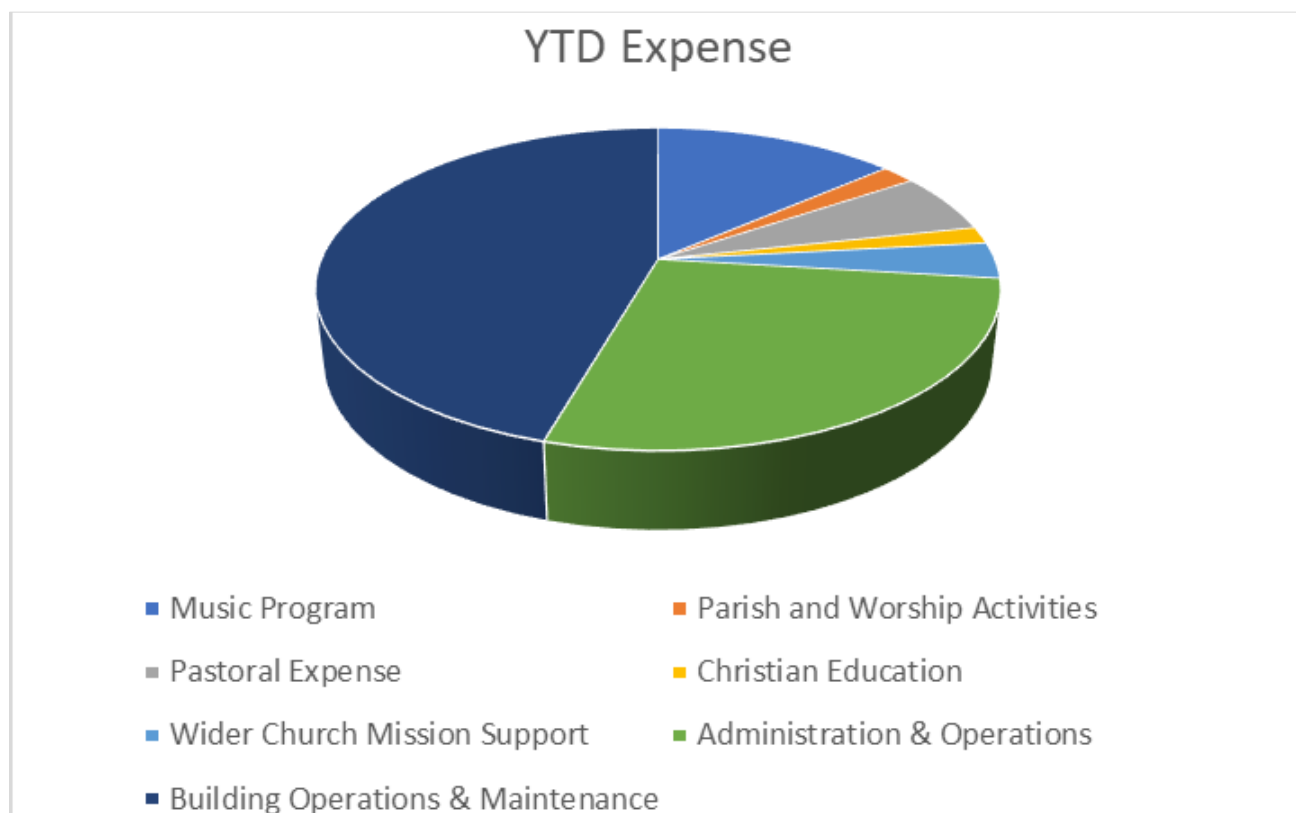
Blessings to all and thank you for supporting the prayer shawl ministry. Judy Walter and the Prayer Shawl group.

The Prayer Shawl Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 10 am in Nettie Fries. The next meeting is May 12 and all knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us. Please contact Judy Walter for more info.

TREASURER'S REPORT

We had another strong month and a strong finish to the First Quarter. Our expenses for the month of March totaled \$16,487.47 with \$44,175.35 for the quarter. We had a few quarterly expenses as well as the annual Per Capita Dues payment to the Conference during the month. If you have any questions, please send me an email at Steve@vanucc.org. Thanks for your continued financial support!

	YTD	Budget
Music Program	6,031	25,423
Parish and Worship Activities	859	5,430
Pastoral Expense	2,655	88,504
Christian Education	745	4,550
Wider Church Mission Support	1596	11,132
Administration & Operations	12,187	47,184
Building Operations & Maintenance	20,103	75,848
Total Expense	44,175	25,8071





Ukrainians have been trickling into the US from Mexico since early February. They are entering using Humanitarian Parole.

Once in the US they will be able to seek asylum. Lutheran Community Services Northwest is not clear yet as to what needs to be done to support these people as the US government has not contracted with any local organizations so far.

Unlike Afghans, Ukrainian refugees coming to the US must have relatives here so, initially, they can stay with family. Once LCSNW understands what benefits and services Ukrainians are eligible for then I will let you know how volunteers can help.

During the week of April 10 an average of 1058 Ukrainian refugees were on our southern border each day. They are waiting two to four days for US officials to admit them on humanitarian parole.



There are a number of ways you can help now. LCSNW needs donations to pay staff and support all the programs they run and will run for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. Please click on this link to make a donation.

[**You Directly Impact Your Community**](#)

If you would like to volunteer please click on this link to view the "How to Help" section.

[**Refugee Resettlement – Washington**](#)

Please contact me at mmartinyak@yahoo.com so that I can put you in contact with the coordinator of volunteers at LCSNW. Thanks so much. Marilyn Martinyak

UKRAINE: LCS NORTHWEST READY TO HELP, NEEDS FEDERAL RESOURCES

A statement from President and CEO David Duea—April 21, 2022

The [announcement](#) today by President Biden offering a lifeline to war-weary Ukrainians is a positive development. It begins to give structure to his pledge last month to admit up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees into the United States.

At LCS Northwest, we stand with all displaced people, including Ukrainians and others who are fleeing imminent threats to their families, leading many of them to mass at the U.S.-Mexico border. By granting two-year humanitarian parole status to Ukrainians, the White House has opened a pathway for us to serve some of the world's desperate people, similar to our work resettling more than 700 Afghans in Washington and Oregon over the past six months.

However, there are many crucial details left up in the air, particularly with regard to funding. Calling on extended families and nonprofit groups to sponsor Ukrainian refugees will only go so far. The cost of housing, transportation and health care—in addition to mental health, legal aid and other specialized services provided by resettlement agencies like ours—is significant.

If U.S. officials want to welcome Ukrainians with the same resolve as they did the Afghan people, it will also require a government financial commitment.

We look forward to getting more clarity from national leaders in the coming days. Having resettled more than 2,000 Ukrainians in Washington and Oregon over the past five years, LCS Northwest is well equipped for the task at hand. We have recently hired Ukrainian case managers. We are rebuilding our resettlement infrastructure. And we are determined to help meet this moment.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR MAY TRIPLE POINT YOUTH PROGRAM



For the last several years, our church has supported the wonderful Triple Point program. This is a support program through The Children's Home Society for LGBTQ+ youth in our community, your gifts to this program can literally save lives.

Stephen Herndon, Program Facilitator, explains: What if your community support outside of your family stopped overnight? What if you were a young person and your family did not accept you for being LGBTQ? What if you identified as LGBTQ and your family didn't know? Triple Point provides support groups for LGBTQ+ youth 11-18 years old and has been going strong since 1996. Triple Point weathered the Pandemic and now we are back to in person services in Downtown Vancouver. This incredible program has supported hundreds of LGBTQ+ youth over the years and continues to do that through weekly support groups. We all know the importance of community and Triple Point has been here for our youth.

Triple Point works directly in our schools providing support to not only our youth but to

the educators and staff for a better understanding of what it means to identify as LGBTQ+. Children's Home Society of Washington also provides child and family counseling to our youth that are interested. We also work with our local PFLAG chapter that supports the families of our youth for a more well rounded service. We appreciate the UCC Church over the years for supporting us not only financially but with love and acceptance. Thank you all! With love ~ Stephen

To support this incredible organization, make out your check or online donation to our church and note "Triple Point" in the memo line.

Labyrinth Temporarily Closed

Due to our recent snowstorm, we have a number of trees and limbs down on the church property. Because of limbs blocking the path to the labyrinth and broken limbs still hanging from the trees above, the labyrinth is temporarily closed until we can get a tree service to remove the overhead limbs and get a team of people to cut and remove the downed trees and limbs.



CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

UPDATED POLICIES

Council wants to make you aware of two recently adopted written policies. You may request copies from Elizabeth Spanring, Office Administrator or view the pdfs on the main page of the email.

Non-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

This addresses the prohibition of unlawful discrimination or harassment in church activities. Most businesses and organizations have a similar written policy. It addresses prevention, reporting, investigation, remedial action, prohibition against retaliation, and training. Employees, Council, and volunteers who regularly interact with vendors/outside organizations or serve in volunteer leadership roles will be required to receive training.

Code of Conduct: Interaction with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This sets standards for interactions and establishes requirements for those working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Those regularly interacting with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to complete an application and disclosure form for review and approval; and then successfully complete a background check. Training is required for Council and employees and volunteers who regularly interact with children.

Required Training: Training will consist of reviewing the policies and, in addition, online training in a group or individual setting. Specific curriculum (video, etc.) is being identified for use and will begin after mid-May.



A GROUNDED FAITH

This Lenten season about a dozen of us chose to not just give up chocolate. Instead, we studied together about a way to look at scripture and our faith more from the perspective of what we've done in the name of Christianity to our planet, spiritual people we've ignored because they were theologically different than us, and how we might learn to be better stewards of our planet.

Our guidebook for this Lenten faith journey was the daily devotional guide "A Grounded Faith". It featured a different author for each of the Lenten seven weeks, giving richness and diversity to these subjects. For instance, we learned about efforts to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, reflected about our own intergenerational and origin stories and thought about various forms of sabbath, the connection between the planet and what we eat, and the connection between 'progress' and eco-system destruction.

We deepened what we had learned in weekly meetings which also added some fun to the exercise. But you're not too late to experience something similar. If you're looking for a new way to focus your own daily devotional discipline, we'd love to help you get started.

Sandy Mathis, Gary Roberts

MEET PASTOR BRET!



The Rev. Bret S. Myers is the new interim minister at Vancouver UCC and will be joining us on May 16, 2022. He is looking forward to serving in our church with its commitments to progressive Christianity, LGBTQIA+ affirmation, JustPeace emphases, and that is immigrant welcoming. He seeks to enhance these commitments, and bring an inclusive, values-based worship that is welcoming to outsiders, as well as insiders, of faith and that builds a camaraderie of character development where our actions matter more than our beliefs. Rev. Myers has served in various ministries across the country since 1985. He enjoys preaching and teaching from a progressive and pluralistic perspective, having eclectically found truth from many religious and philosophical

sources. Challenging people to creatively think outside their conceptual frameworks, and to help people extend their compassion to all creation, are important to his ministerial vocation.

Seeing himself as a learner and educator of human purpose and meaning, Bret loves to write pieces that spark the mind, edify the soul, encourage the spirit, and inspire the heart. Writing is one of his creative outlets and life passions—whether it be verse or prose. Preaching, teaching, and writing help him to deepen and broaden his own faith, with the hopes that others will see themselves crossing the same pathways of thought and feeling which help nurture collective wisdom and build communities of trust and sustenance.

Pastor Bret cherishes facilitating spiritual growth in small groups or book studies, and in counseling individuals, couples, and families. A conscientious listener and suggestive advisor, Bret encourages people to discover their talents and loves of life, to develop them at their own pace, and to generously share their gifts with others. He seeks to nourish collaborative relationships and virtue enhancement with those devoted to joining in a mutual spiritual journey—seeking, learning, understanding, and caring in the midst of joys and sorrows, doubts and insights, and every other condition of our mutual earthly existence.

Rev. Myers has served churches of all sizes and seeks to create faith families that are committed to love, peace, justice, and equality, are welcoming and loving of all persons in practice and attitude, and want to increase their spiritual understanding of other religions and cultures in mutual efforts of making a better world. He has led workshops or classes on peace and nonviolence, environmental ethics and religious stewardship, attitudinal



and spirit-based communications, envisioning, behavioral covenanting, forgiveness, the world religions, and a variety of other subjects that have sought to create healthier and more loving and peaceful relationships in the church, in workplaces, and in society.

Alongside pastoral ministry, Bret has served as a lecturer of philosophy, campus minister, hospice chaplain, TV interviewer & reporter of religious news, environmental educator, family service counselor, direct support provider, and other positions that have informed and extended his ministry. He is committed to social, environmental, economic, political, and spiritual justice and is a proponent of an egalitarian worldview as Jesus envisioned. A favorite quote of his is from Cornel West: “Justice is what love looks like in public.”

Bret is an avid outdoorsman and



environmentalist. He loves sports and outdoor adventures of all sorts and has traveled widely. Hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, tennis, skiing, and camping are among his favorite activities. He loves to explore the beauties of nature, nurture respect and reverence for all living things, and share the joys and solaces of sacred places with others.

He also enjoys photography as a creative and memory-creating endeavor. He especially enjoys the performing and visual arts,

museums, and events that promote cross-cultural understanding. Humor and laughter are spiritual disciplines Bret seeks to cultivate with us, and he hopes you will share your stories of cheer in helping to get to know you and your family.

Bret’s wife, Dr. Caroline Brock is a professor



of sociology at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Among her courses are the Sociology of Food, the interplay of Science and Technology with Society, Ecological Economics and Global Sustainability, and perhaps the world’s largest class on learning about the lives of the Amish. She, too, loves the outdoors—especially through hiking and biking. They have been married since 2014, and look forward to exploring adventures in Washington when she visits during her breaks in the school year.

In summing up himself, Bret says: *“I am a personable pastor with the mind of a philosopher, the heart of an artist, the spirit of a visionary, and the soul of a friend who believes that life should be met with the courage of peacefulness, loveliness, and beauty in all circumstances, and that spiritual integrity and ethical character are the habits of living responsibly in the Spirit by grace through faith. It is my calling and mission to live such a life, and to nurture and inspire others to go and do the same—with honor, dignity, conviction, humor, playfulness, and joy.”*

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Ken Kerr, Pastor
MCC of the Gentle Shepherd

Nathan Klump
Lynn Chan's nephew

The family of Ruth Odren
Mother of Linda Wear

*Peace in places torn by war
and disruption.*

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, May 8—Mother's Day

Sunday, May 22—Welcome Potluck

Monday, May 30—Memorial Day

HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



- May 1 Kristin Martindale
May 5 Isaac Martin
May 6 Janet Melton
May 7 Alona Steinke
May 13 Stephanie Pykonen
May 17 Todd Murchison
May 21 Laela Brittain
May 24 Jessica Murchison
May 25 Ruby Frank
May 29 Zeke Levinson
May 29 Kathy Woolley
May 30 Beverly Crossman
May 30 Jean Beary Stolle
May 31 Boean Marquardt

