



# February *The Link*



**2023 CHURCH OFFICERS**

Moderator, John Marquardt  
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Moderator Elect, Rod Kissinger  
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Past Moderator, Brenda Houchen  
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Treasurer, Steve Bloodworth  
treasurer@vanucc.org

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Clerk, Leslie Chapman  
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**2023 MINISTRY CHAIRS**

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Personnel, Ken Rowe  
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Membership, Pat Sutherland  
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- Feb 6 . . . . . Jay Palmer
- Feb 12 . . . . . Carole Greenauer
- Feb 15 . . . . . Lucie Murchison
- Feb 16 . . . . . Cynthia Haverkate
- Feb 21 . . . . . Brian Fick
- Feb 21. . . . . Michelle Holden
- Feb 21 . . . . . Simon Melton
- Feb 25 . . . . . Marilyn New
- Feb 26 . . . . . Karen Summers
- Feb 28 . . . . . Brenda Gaston

Vancouver  
United Church  
of Christ



*Sunday Worship: 10 am*  
1220 NE 68th St • Vancouver, WA 98665  
www.vanucc.org—info@vanucc.org  
(360) 693-1476  
*The office is open Tues. & Thurs. 10 am–2 pm*

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



### **We would like to introduce you to our friends Rod Kissinger and Kevin Irvin.**

Rod and Kevin moved to the Vancouver area settling in Camas from Las Vegas in late 2021 when Kevin accepted a job promotion. They visited our church for the first time on the first Sunday of Advent in November of 2021.

Rod and Kevin have been together for over 23 years and they were married on April 12, 2022, in our church. The service was performed by Rev. Tom Yates and Michele Holden and I had the privilege to serve as their Groom's Women.

Rod was born in Illinois but raised in Pennsylvania. He is a retired school principal. He attended UNLV and Stanford University and has his doctorate in Education Administration with an emphasis on Statistics and Accountability. Before going into education, however, he worked for three years in Washington DC for the FBI.

Rod and Kevin are both animal lovers. They have two dogs (a Great Dane named Celeste who I feel thinks she is a human and Beau) and a beautiful horse named Katie.

The two of them have been drawn into the life of our church very quickly. They participate in the wine group and sing in the choir. Rod has

been featured as a soloist in our choir and has a beautiful tenor voice. He also plays the piano, has volunteered to help with cooking and Rod has even agreed to serve on the council as our Moderator Elect. I want to welcome you both into the membership of our congregation.

*Leslie Chapman*

I would like to introduce you to Kevin Irvin. Kevin is a California native. He worked in the hospitality industry in Las Vegas. He traveled the world helping to open new hotels. He traveled to Cairo Egypt, Sharmel el-Sheikh Egypt, London, Paris, and many more places. He worked for The Four Seasons and Golden Nugget hotels in Las Vegas. His promotion relocated him to Vancouver and he now works for the corporate office of Hawthorn Senior Living and handles procurement for 87 properties across the US and Canada.

Kevin is a great musician. He sings in the choir and last summer he showed off his organ skills when he filled in for Christopher. Rod and Kevin actually have a grand piano and not one but two organs in their home.

Please get acquainted with these two fabulous men.

*Lucie Murchinson*



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### Meet ilana Levinson.

ilana and her ex-wife have two sons Eli and Zeke. ilana has two dogs named Daily and Manny and two cats named Nimbus and Mooshoo. ilana's profession is as a Veterinarian. She loves where she works.

ilana's claim to fame here at First Congregational United Church of Christ: wrote and directed our Children's Christmas program adaptation. She did a great job.

A little about ilana's faith Journey: She grew up Jewish, went to Sunday school, Hebrew school, and became Bat Mitzvah. Her parents were Sunday school teachers, Youth group leaders but when ilana was in high school they left the synagogue. They found that it was too much to afford synagogue membership, high holiday services, etc, and that the members were too focused on what each person's career was and not on the community. They joined a non-denominational church where they are very involved.

When ilana was in college she was part of a Hillel and tried synagogues out of school but none seemed to fit the sense of a spiritual family. One night Ilana was at a motel at a veterinary convention and out of curiosity started reading the new bible as this was forbidden in her religion.

Then ilana's ex-wife brought her to her Presbyterian church. Soon she was baptized by immersion which both boys who were toddlers at the time still remember to this day. However, even that church wasn't too excepting of their family and made it known to them.

They belonged to a great church in Eugene where the boys played with the pastor's kids

and had sleep-over's with them and ran around the church and everyone knew them.

Then her divorce happened in 2018. ilana tried going back to the synagogue again but couldn't afford Sunday school and membership dues and never really felt a community bond there. They would never be okay knowing that ilana was baptized or her belief in Jesus as the Messiah. This would make her Christian and no longer Jewish. ilana wasn't okay with giving up her Jewish roots and considers herself a messianic Jew who believes in Christ as the Messiah.

ilana tried a messianic church her in town mostly made up of Christians who wanted to worship as Jews with only the rabbi and one or two others who were Jewish. They didn't accept their family and they had to leave during a homophobic sermon while the boys were still wearing their yamakas.

Then ilana tried a nondenominational church here in Vancouver and enjoyed the weekly bible study and small groups where they would meet at people's homes to go over that week's sermon. Until the sermon that month was about homosexuality in the bible and how that was a sin and obviously, that didn't fly so ilana left that church. Even though there were some nice people there.

ilana was trying to find a church family like they had in Eugene. She found it [HERE!](#) ilana will never forget Pastor Jennifer giving her some animal ears for the service that day telling her "this was a spontaneous pageant so here you go and welcome" everyone was very welcoming and made her want to come back in the following weeks to get to know them more.

Now she feels like "I've truly found my mosh-book-ah" which in Hebrew means family.

Welcome ilana!

*Gina Marquardt*

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



**Welcome Pam Evans!** I knew her growing up as Pam Byerly from Byerly's store. She was born in Arlington, Washington.

Her dad was working for Boeing at the time of her birth but when her Grandfather became ill they moved to Spudderville or Ridgefield, just north of here, so her parents could run the family store. That is where I grew up.

Pam was just 18 months old at the time. So even though she is a bit older than me, we know a bunch of the same folks from back in the day that lived in Ridgefield. Like one of her best friend's sister is my sister-in-law. It is always fun to talk about the people we know from those times.

Pam attended Clark for one year and then graduated from Linfield with a major in Journalism and a minor in Literature. After working on the college paper at Linfield she realized journalism was not for her so she ended up in the insurance industry for most of her life starting in 1970.

She lived in the Portland area from 1970-2015. She lived in Eastern Washington in 2015 until she moved back to Clark County a year ago. She has a son and two grandchildren that live

in Idaho. Widowed twice. Joined a UCC church in Eastern Washington, looked for UCC in Vancouver and that's how she ended up here with us.

I think it was through Michele that Pam made the connection with me cause the Renner name was well known back in the old days in Ridgefield and the BYERLY store was known by all of us Spudders. She asked about volunteer opportunities right away and that is when Michele and I told her about Martha's Pantry. Which is a great fit since she grew up in a grocery store. The three of us make a great team doing our part on Tuesday evenings at the Pantry.

Pam enjoys traveling, cooking, reading, gardening, and reuniting with old Spudders from Ridgefield. I think she is an awesome lady and you will think so too when you get to know her. Tom Renner is one old Spudder that is just a little younger than Pam. *Tom Renner*



The LINK is published the 1st week of each month. The **Due Date** for articles is the **4th Monday** 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.
- Email info to [Elizabeth@vanucc.org](mailto:Elizabeth@vanucc.org)



## CONGREGATIONAL NEWS



**Taizé Group** – A simple Taizé Group will begin on Monday, February 6, at 7 pm. The service will last less than one hour and will be held weekly at the church, in Clawson's Corner. Taizé services consist of scripture or other inspirational readings, prayer, simple music, and silence. Please join us if you can. If you have questions, contact Wendy Wright or Sandy Mathis. You may also join via Zoom at this link: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

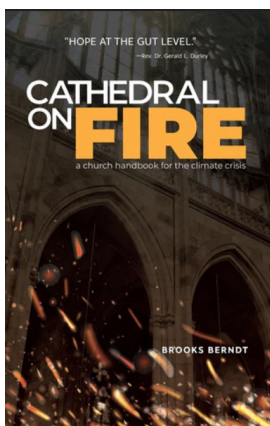


**The Prayer Shawl Group** meets on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting is February 9 at 10 am and all knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us. Please contact Judy Walter for more info.



**On March 19** we ask that the kids bring change to church for One Great Hour of Sharing. This year OGHS is supporting disaster relief. Take a look at the link below for more information. <https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/one-great-hour-of-sharing/>

Do you have a jar of spare change at home? Or have change hanging around in the couch cushions or in the car? Maybe your grandparents have a bowl of change they wouldn't mind donating?



### Coming in April for Earth Day

We will be reading and discussing the book *Cathedral on Fire* by Rev. Brooks Berndt. More information will follow soon.

Here is a link to the book:

<https://www.uccresources.com/products/copy-of-cathedral-on-fire-a-church-handbook-for-the-climate-crisis?variant=39321738346559>

# Say **NO** to Plastic!

Vecteezy.com

## CARE FOR OUR EARTH BE THE POLLUTION SOLUTION

We all realize our next generation will be faced with critical environmental issues – climate change, plastic pollution, species extinction – **created by our actions**. They will have no idea how to solve these crises in the time frame we've given them unless we arm them with the information they need to make better decisions than we did. So, let's start by learning about plastic

Plastic is made of oil and chemical additives.

At every point of the plastic-making process, pollution is created through oil extraction, transportation, oil refining, the petrochemical plant, and the plastics factory.

Oil is NOT a renewable resource at the rate we use it, so eventually, we're going to run out.

Chemicals and additives are not bound to the plastic structure, so when subjected to time, wear & tear, heat, or edible acids, the bond disappears and the chemicals and additives are set free in the environment, or in YOU.

Many of the chemicals in plastic are hormone disruptors which can harm every organ in your body

PLASTIC IS **NOT** BIODEGRADABLE OR COMPOSTABLE AND IS ONLY RECYCLED ON A SMALL SCALE.

PLASTIC NEVER GOES AWAY! It degrades or breaks down into tiny pieces called microplastics. Microplastics attract free-floating toxins already in our environment, making them even **MORE** toxic.

Scientists have found plastic literally everywhere...on land, in our ocean, rivers, and streams, in our air, in our sea animals, in our food and drinking water, and in **OUR HUMAN BODIES**.

You and I can not fix this by ourselves but if each of us makes a few changes, together we can make a Great Difference.

### **TIP FOR TODAY: ON THE GO PLASTICS.**

Stop using plastic cups, straws, utensils, bags, and masks. Substitute with your own coffee cup or water bottle (even bring it to church), bamboo or stainless steel straws, bamboo utensils, your own to-go containers, canvas or recycled bags, and cotton masks if appropriate.

I carry a stainless steel straw and a Titanium spork (which weighs almost nothing) in my purse at all times. I am working on my memory which needs help in remembering to carry a to-go box when I go out to eat. Half my meal is usually lunch the next day.

Please stop drinking water from plastic bottles sold by the billions at every store. Not only is the bottle a huge problem, but the plastic also leaches into the water and then into your body. A very small percentage of bottles are recycled.

Check in next month for more thoughts and ideas! Pat Sutherland.