



## Pastor's Message—Rev. Steve King



Beloveds,  
It seems like the year has only just begun, and yet Easter is fast approaching. Our modern life has us moving so fast, and in so many different

directions, that we often forget to look after ourselves. This is true of our physical and mental health, as well as our spiritual health. Creating space to care for ourselves is not something that comes easily for most of us, but it is absolutely essential. With the season of Lent being a time of reflection and renewal, it seems to be appropriate to use it as a catalyst for Christians to improve their whole selves.

In the fourth week of our Lenten devotional booklet, the Rev. Sarah Speed shares her poem "Open Hands," in which she acknowledges the fact that we get bound up in holding on so tightly to what we know that we forget to let go and just be present.



Here is an excerpt:

*"From the very beginning  
we've known how to hold tight.*

*So I pray:*

*open up my hands.*

*Uncurl my fingers*

*one by one.*

*Loosen the grip*

*that I hold unyielding."*

I pray that we, as a community, are able to use this time to step back and step into our faith just a little deeper, to let go of the things we cling so tightly to, and open our hearts to hear what God has to say to us.

Grace and Peace,

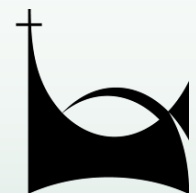
Pastor Steve

Pastor Steve's work week is typically Sunday through Thursday. You can easily schedule appointments with him by at his church office by using his Calendly profile

<https://calendly.com/pastorsteve-vucc>.

*The church office is open Tues & Thurs  
10 am to 2 pm.*

Vancouver  
United Church  
of Christ



*Sunday Worship: 10 am*  
1220 NE 68th St • Vancouver, WA 98665  
[www.vanucc.org](http://www.vanucc.org)—[info@vanucc.org](mailto:info@vanucc.org)  
(360) 693-1476

## Message From Your Moderator



Hello Friends,  
Things are chugging right along as we are just a few weeks away from Spring. As the weather continues to be a mixed bag of warm, cold, wet, dry, sunny, and cloudy days, we are seeing some

consistency in the life of the church. Things are all settling in for a good year. The committees are all busy with their different areas of focus, and changes that were discussed last year are being implemented. We are seeing some new faces in worship services and hope to keep that trend going.



## Council Updates

This week was the first time our Council had a chance to gather since our annual meeting last month. Besides the usual business of the church, some highlights from the meeting hearing about plans to replant the center island in the parking lot, events that are being planned for throughout the year by our Mission and Outreach, Christian Education and Membership teams, and efforts that are being put forth for the upcoming services for Easter. We also heard about a disruption with our website and how we will be looking for ways to update some outdated technologies currently being utilized. Lastly, we touched on goals for the upcoming year, which will include but will not be limited to stabilizing and

growing the membership, focusing on ways to implement more green energy measures, and updating key policies and procedures.



Setting goals is something I feel is important because, as the saying goes, if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. Goals give a person or an organization certain things to focus on getting done. As time goes by, life happens, and it's easy to get distracted. It's perfectly normal to divert one's attention every now and then to address matters at hand, but having goals helps ensure important things don't get lost in the shuffle. Goals can be shifted as reality changes and can extend beyond an expected period of time. Goals can be passed on to different people, and I especially think this is important as we will be transitioning out some members of the Council later this year. Having goals will help the new group keep the ball rolling without having to re-establish a focus for the rest of the year.

We are still looking for a few positions to be filled, so if you would like to be a part of reaching our goals for the year, please don't hesitate to reach out and ask how you can be a part of it.

Thanks for being a part of our community in whatever way you are able to contribute. May God be with you all, John Marquardt



## TREASURER'S REPORT—STEVE BLOODWORTH

As I write this, today is Leap Day, and with all of the activities going on here at Vancouver UCC, it's nice to have an extra day this year!

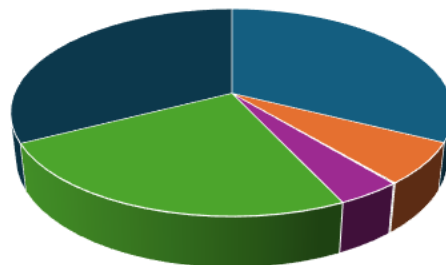
January started the year with a roar as we continue to get to know our new Pastor and his family. People are energized and things are happening, and as a result, we will see additional expenses that we have not had in the last couple of years.

As usual, we had a few people give their entire pledge for the year which may also affect the numbers in the coming months. That said, expenses for January were as expected and we ended the month with a surplus of \$13,803.

Thank you for your continued financial support of your church! The numbers for the month are below. Please let me know if you have any questions. Respectfully submitted, Steve Bloodworth, Treasurer

	YTD	Budget
Pastoral Expense	5,328	107,141
Music Program	1,061	26,541
Parish and Worship Activities	21	3,400
Wider Church Mission Support	0	6,300
Christian Education	657	8,050
Administration & Operations	4,000	42,921
Building Operations & Maintenance	5,351	102,041
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>16,418</b>	<b>296,394</b>

YTD Expense



- Pastoral Expense
- Music Program
- Parish and Worship Activities
- Wider Church Mission Support
- Christian Education
- Administration & Operations
- Building Operations & Maintenance



### Why Do We Have A Mortgage

After our January congregational meeting, I was asked, "Why do we have a mortgage? I thought our insurance paid for most of the rebuilding after the fire and were paid the small portion not covered by the insurance." It is correct. Our insurance paid for most of the rebuilding after the fire, and the church paid a small portion to complete the project. The mortgage we have today is from a 2008 project to repair the roof of the sanctuary. The roof at that time had glass at the top spine, and the glass was leaking. This was approximately a one-million-dollar project. Our current mortgage balance for the project is \$170,000. We pay \$1500 monthly (\$18,000 annually) on this mortgage.

Chuck Foulke, Property & Finance Chair

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Earth Day Recognition event to educate and inspire to be held here at Van UCC in April.

More information coming soon!

Contact Wendy Wright or Pastor Steve King for info.



Do you have a talent, craft, or skill you can share with our youth grades K-12? We are bringing back "Ask the Experts" for our summer youth program during our church services on Sunday mornings. The commitment would be for one Sunday during our church service in the summer. Please let Gina Marquardt know what dates might work for you and your idea by sending an email to [CE@vanucc.org](mailto:CE@vanucc.org).

Examples from past offerings are popsicle stick bridge making, dance and movement, music, how to make slime, cooking, outdoor sports day, etc. The summer program starts on May 26 and runs until our kick-off of the new school year on September 8. Contact Gina Marquardt, Christian Ed at [CE@vanucc.org](mailto:CE@vanucc.org).

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### **A Reminder**

Please reserve all handicapped parking spots for those with disabled parking permits. If you are able-bodied, always park in one of the non-handicap parking spaces. Thank you!



### Welcoming Guests

When I first came to this church, Ed Frank invited me to sit with him every week for about four weeks while I got acquainted. That experience made all the difference for me! I truly felt welcome.

Our current newcomers need to have something of the same experience, especially the hesitant or shy ones. Many who come through our doors have no experience with churches or have been hurt by them in the past. Recently, one visitor stated that no one asked her name or introduced themselves while she was here. As a congregation that prides itself on radical inclusivity and welcome, we need to put that talk into action.

Please look for new people and reach out. Introduce yourself and find out their name(s) and something about themselves. Invite them to sit with you. Help them feel **welcome!**

I had a wonderful experience this last Sunday sitting next to a young man who was sitting alone in a row. I heard some of his story about why he came. He will be returning next week. I even remember his name, a miracle for me.

Seek the experience of welcoming our newcomers. You very well could be the reason they stay and become part of our family. In doing so, you will also be blessed.

Pat Sutherland, Membership



- March 2 . . . . . Cory Saum-Blystone
- March 4 . . . . . Eric Pykonen
- March 4 . . . . . Patricia Yates
- March 6 . . . . . Cameron Pykonen
- March 8 . . . . . Christi Brittain
- March 15 . . . . . Emma Schnabel
- March 16 . . . . . Steve Bloodworth
- March 18 . . . . . Amelia Murchison
- March 21 . . . . . Alice Rowe
- March 30 . . . . . Chris King

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](mailto:elizabeth@vanucc.org).

## Exploring the UCC: Our History, Our Beliefs, Our Identity



Southern New England Conference  
United Church of Christ  
*Living the Love & Justice of Jesus*

Saturday, March 23, 2024  
8:30AM - 12:30PM EST via Zoom



Faith Formation  
Leadership  
Program

**Exploring the UCC  
Our History, Our Beliefs,  
Our Identity**



Instructor:  
Dr. Jill Baker, Adjunct Professor of  
Eden Theological Seminary

The Southern New England Conference has invited all across the denomination to participate in this upcoming leadership program! It would be a wonderful introduction for members of our congregations to the wider church and could even be a fun and useful reminder for those who have "been UCC" a long time, both clergy and laity alike!

It will be held online Saturday, March 23, 2024

You can register for the event here:

<https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/17524717?month=3&year=2024&day=1&display=m>



Please join us directly after church service on March 31 for an Easter egg hunt. All kids are welcome to participate.



### Pastoral Relations Committee

At the council meeting on January 7, 2024, the Church council approved the formation of a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) to work with Pastor Stephen King.

The purpose of the PRC is to support and maintain open communication between the pastor and the congregation. The PRC serves as a sounding board for the pastor and a support group for his leadership.

The PRC will meet with Pastor Steve at least once a month over the next year, plus additional times as circumstances dictate. We encourage the congregation to contact one or more members of the PRC to express your hopes, concerns, suggestions and questions for and about Pastor Steve's and our combined ministry. Communications to/from and within the PRC will be handled confidentially.

You are free to speak to one or all of the PRC, whatever is most comfortable. The PRC includes the following:

Tom Renner, John Fite, co-chairs  
Sue Benson  
Carole Greenauer  
Lauren Hubbell  
Kaye Kipp  
Jessica Murchison  
Tom Yates

## Scheduling Meetings and Activities

Please note that all meetings and building usage must be scheduled in advance. While we are delighted to see activities increase we have noticed some mishaps with meetings and activities that were not previously scheduled.

Leslie Chapman, Building Coordinator, maintains the [Web Calendar](#) which displays the schedule of current events and activities. Also the calendar includes maintenance updates, such as parking lot resurfacing, tree trimming, and planned power or internet outages, that may affect the building's use.

### Regarding building usage:

- When you enter the church during office hours, please check in at the office so that we are aware you are in the building.
- To ensure the safety of our staff and to allow for proper scheduling, please email Leslie at [leslie@vanucc.org](mailto:leslie@vanucc.org) at least 24 hours in advance if you need to be in the building outside of any reserved meeting times.
- Outside of office hours please be mindful of those who may also be in the building such as meetings in Bradford Hall, Martha's Pantry, the Music/Finance Office, or the janitorial service.
- Note that the alarm has been set while others are in the building in error, so please be cautious when you are setting the alarm and do not arm the building unless you are certain everyone is out.
- Additionally, please be respectful to our members and renters who may be using the space and avoid interrupting them.

### To reserve a room:

- First, check the [Web Calendar](#) to confirm availability. (No meetings/activities can take place without a prior reservation or notification to the Building Coordinator.)

- Fill out a pink reservation form and return to Leslie or to the wall pocket outside the office door. (Forms can be found in the wall pocket outside the office door and on the hallway table.)

We always look forward to seeing you, so please don't hesitate to let us know you're coming!

## Our Flower Cross Returns this Easter



We invite you to bring any cut flowers or greenery on March 31 to celebrate Easter Sunday. Please bring your contribution to the church by 9 am so that the cross can be decorated in time for the 10 am service. If you have any questions, please contact Claudia Martin or Pat Sutherland. Thank you so much!

## Special Offering for April



# March Events

- March 2 – Patti Jones Memorial Service ▪ 1 pm: Sanctuary
- March 6 – Lenten Soup & Book Discussion ▪ 6-7:30 pm: Nettie Fries
- March 7 – Choir Practice ▪ 7-8:30 pm: Sanctuary
- March 10 – Daylight Savings Time Begins ▪ 2 am
- March 10 – New Member Brunch ▪ 11:30 am-1 pm: Bradford Hall
- March 11 – Safety Committee ▪ 6-7 pm: Zoom
- March 12 – Personnel Meeting ▪ 12-1 pm: Clawson Corner
- March 13 – Lenten Soup & Book Discussion ▪ 6-7:30 pm: Nettie Fries
- March 14 – Prayer Shawl Meeting ▪ 10-11 am: Clawson Corner  
All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us. Please contact Judy Walter for more info
- March 14 – Choir Practice ▪ 7-8:30 pm: Sanctuary
- March 20 – Property & Finance ▪ 5:30-7:30 pm: Clawson Corner
- March 20 – Lenten Soup & Book Discussion ▪ 6-7:30 pm: Nettie Fries
- March 21 – Mission & Outreach Meeting ▪ 11:30 am-1:30 pm: Sanctuary
- March 21 – Choir Practice ▪ 7-8:30 pm: Sanctuary
- March 24– Palm Sunday Service ▪ 10 am: Sanctuary
- March 26 – Council Meeting ▪ 7-9 pm: Nettie Fries
- March 27 – Lenten Soup & Book Discussion ▪ 6-7:30 pm: Nettie Fries
- March 28 – Choir Practice ▪ 7-8:30 pm: Sanctuary
- March 29 – Good Friday Service ▪ 6-6:45 pm: Sanctuary
- March 31– Easter Sunday Service ▪ 10 am: Sanctuary
- March 31– Easter Egg Hunt ▪ after worship