

**CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
OF PUNTA GORDA**
An Open and Affirming Congregation



**JANUARY 2021
SPECIAL BEACON EDITION**

**REFLECTIONS FROM OUTGOING
MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM**



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

A Word of Thanks

This edition of the Beacon is intended to be special for many reasons. We have had some long serving (can also be read as long suffering :) members of our Leadership Team. I have been your Pastor for five full years and two of our departing members have been on the LT since I came.

Linda Greenfield was in the position of Stewardship Rep to the LT. She was on the LT before I arrived. She agreed to stay on to help with the transition to a new Pastor and to provide institutional memory for the Team. I had no worries about her ability to be our memory once I saw Linda in action. If you ever need to learn how to take detailed and copious notes, just watch Linda G.! She seemed to have at the ready remembrances from every meeting she had been a part of since her LT involvement. If ever we had questions, we would listen to Linda as she began her comments with, "I looked at my notes...." Also, Linda has been a great voice in sorting out details and keeping us honest about listening to alternative viewpoints, even when they differed from hers. That is a strength I have

appreciated, one which I sometimes lack.

Just when Linda thought she was done with LT, we had a vacancy in the Discipleship chair. So, not only had Linda served beyond the allotted time in Stewardship, but she also now took on the role of CO-Chair with Linda Weaver of the Discipleship Team. Here I can include Linda W. As one of our departing members. I have to admit, we needed to be on our toes in the LT meetings because we had two Lindas! They made an awesome pair, both possessing similar qualities and strength for keeping details straight and accomplished. They had planned an entire year in advance for worship needs and had recruited (strong armed :) people in the role of Communion servers and Greeters. They kept a tight ship and always had a backup plan when needed. I will miss you both on the LT very much. Thank you, Linda G. For staying at the tiller for so long and helping to keep our church navigating so well. Thank you, Linda W. For teaming up and not considering any challenge too great! Both of you keep in mind that you only need be off the LT for a year before you can serve again ;)! Isaac will have large shoes to fill!

For the longest time, I thought Bill Ringelstein was a permanent member of the LT! Perhaps it felt like that to him too. Bill has been the member who wrangles the Endowment Team dealings and decisions. If there was ever a position I hold in high esteem, it's the folks that deal with investments. It is a dangerous spot to be in. Churches are especially cautious with their investments and rather possessive. After all, it is the one spot of ultimate trust, to take money people didn't NEED to give to the church but did anyway. Use of those funds is a large responsibility. To Bill's credit, he has had an eagle eye on the Financial Resolution which guides the use of ET monies. There have been times when he has winced at some suggestions for ET funds, and has been compassionate, yet diligent, at turning those suggestions away. He has been very faithful to keeping with the wishes of the church when the FR was established. Not all churches have a person who can say no and be thanked for that answer. Bill also had the dubious honor(?) Of serving on the Search Team that brought me here. That was a year-long process that probably felt much longer. Bill served as the Chaplain for the Search Team. I feel certain they needed one badly at times. So, Bill served in a dual capacity for over five years. When we discovered a few years back that the ET Chair was not "officially" on the LT, Bill didn't hesitate to agree to serve on the LT in that capacity. I mentioned to him that, under the revised Bylaws, he was allowed to serve for an extra six years, that the time he had spent on the LT was reset at his election as Chair. I have never heard Bill laugh so hard before. He just smiled and said, "We'll see!" Bill, I shall miss your reasoned and well thought out advice in our LT meetings. Well done, good and faithful servant of CUCC! Good luck to Bil Tucker if elected Chair of the ET. At least we don't have to change the name of who we call on for ET business for the LT ;) Bil T. Will have the blessing of Bill R. Who will continue to advise the ET and offer institutional memory, essential to the smooth operation of the ET!

Last, but not the least by any means, is Kathy Reed. I was so pleased to learn that Kathy has agreed to be our Assistant Moderator. Largely, it is a position of learning and waiting, attending the LT meeting each month, and stepping in when needed. Additionally, Kathy was an invaluable voice in all the matters we engaged. During her tenure, we have had some of the most difficult challenges any church can face, Racism and Covid-19. I counted on her voice being one of reason when we considered our functioning during the Pandemic. When we were ready to act, Kathy offered wise questions and helped us to slow down when we needed to. Kathy also has done double duty by

serving on the Capital Campaign Team. So, she got to come to TWO meetings every month until we commenced our projects and helped to guide the Team into decisions about priorities. We have been blessed to have Kathy and Denny as part of our church and I am eternally grateful that Kathy stepped forward into the essential role for our church. You both will be greatly missed. We offer our blessings and prayers as you connect with your family and enjoy a new life together. Be well my friends!

I would be remiss if I didn't add that two of our members have relinquished the reins in one area and picked them up in others. We are very pleased to have Melissa Brown take on the responsibilities of Moderator (if the election goes well) after having served four years as our Treasurer. We had to drag her kicking and screaming from that position, reminding her that our Bylaws specify only four years in a row as Treasurer, lol. Melissa truly loved that post, as one must in dealing with the day-to-day finances of the church. Thank you, Melissa, for doing such a wonderful job as our Treasurer. In case you weren't aware, Melissa also took on the task of updating our Insurance policies. She did months of research and paperwork with the UCC Insurance Board. She actually enjoyed that too!

Bill Colson has been our church Moderator for the past two years. It is by and large a thankless and stressful position. (We had two Bills on the LT while we had two Lindas) Bill has done an amazing job at herding cats and steering us through difficult decisions. He even has become adept at letting the Pastor know when he is about to violate boundaries ;) We have been very busy as a congregation during Bill's time as Moderator. We've had interactions with the City Council about taxes for the Buckley Pass issue. We've considered and passed a policy for adopting an Anti-Racism. We have navigated installing a Hearing Loop system. We have upgraded our technology several times. We have added the Social Justice Ministry Team to our church. The largest challenge has been adjusting to the world of Covid-19 and how that effects everything we do. Bill is not done though. He has agreed to take on the responsibility of Assistant Clerk. So, his institutional memory will remain on the LT too.

I have had a wonderful Leadership Team ever since I arrived. It has been a joy and relief to have so many gifted leaders take our church through its life. It is certainly a new experience for me :)

In case you are wondering:

:) Is a smile

;) Is a wink

lol means laugh out loud



MODERATOR – Bill Colson

Over the past year the Leadership Team has gone from meeting in person, where we gathered around the large table in the Library, to meetings from our homes (mostly), held virtually via the Zoom teleconferencing app. Pre-Zoom, if we could not attend the meeting in person, most times we were able to arrange a phone call to someone at the meeting, and participate by a phone call. The current situation that society finds itself in, regarding the pandemic likely will continue for the foreseeable future. So, we have to cooperate with others to achieve results.

Now I want to acknowledge the cooperation of, and to thank those who served with me on the Leadership Team. Nearly all the LT are leaving their serving positions, either by completing a limiting term on the LT, or seeking to take a 'long vacation' after many years of serving in varied capacities. All the currently serving members of the Leadership Team are greatly valued for their contributions to this congregation and the LT. They have my "Thanks", and I am deeply grateful for their participation on the Leadership Team.

I will finish serving two years having served a Moderator of the Congregation and am not eligible for additional terms. Kathy Reed was Vice-Moderator and is moving to Texas to be closer to family. Melissa Brown is finishing a four-year term as Treasurer and is not eligible for an additional term. Dick Michael served this year as Assistant Treasurer and is eligible to return for three additional years. Kathy Frantish is serving the remainder of an unexpired term as Clerk, having served previously as Assistant Clerk. The Assistant Clerk position is currently vacant. Bill Ringelstein is completing two 3-year terms as Endowment Chair and is not eligible for an additional term. Our Leadership Team members that serve as Members at Large have positions on the Discipleship, Fellowship, and Stewardship teams. Linda Weaver and Linda Greenfield, have served as co-chairs of the Discipleship team for at least two years, and have decided to enjoy a vacation from serving on the LT. The Fellowship team position is currently vacant. The Stewardship position is served by Elden Wick, and he is eligible to continue for another year.

Let me say again how proud I am to serve with the members of the Leadership Team, and how appreciative I am of their service. To each and every one - "Well Done".

ASSISTANT MODERATOR – Kathy Reed

I was so honored to be on the Leadership Team this year. I love our church and the congregation. Thanks to all who supported me. The Leadership Team is made up of some of the finest people I know. They are dedicated to the well-being of the church and its members. Each person worked hard during these difficult times to keep our church running smoothly. Difficult decisions were made about many items. Especially with regards to COVID and church services.

I thank my fellow members and all the congregation for the opportunity to serve. Denny and I will miss our wonderful church and the many folks we were privileged to know. Our prayers for a safe 2021 are with you as we start our new adventure in Texas and Arizona.

May God Bless us all with a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Kathy Reed



ENDOWMENT TEAM – Bill Ringelstein, Chair

It was certainly my pleasure to have been part of our Leadership Team as Endowment Team Chair. Experiences, such as those of the past six years, are now mine to remember and in that remembrance, I will always be grateful for the opportunity. I am so proud to have been a part of your Church's Leadership.

Your Endowment Fund will continue to provide outstanding support for both local community and church-wide needs with Bil Tucker as Chair.

My personal thanks to our Team of Pat Baran, Dick Michael, Don Nagel, Kathy Rivadeneira and Dick Sommerfield. The Sommerfield's are moving back north and Olin Lyons will be taking his place.

We trod a guided path, often we cannot clearly see the course we are to follow, but God's guidance is there to point the way. In that regard, I'm glad to know I was not in this alone.



TREASURER – Melissa Brown

I joined the CUCC-PG in September 2016. In November of that year, Marsha Rutherford, a very sweet-talking southern woman, approached me and asked me in her best Southern drawl if I would be willing to serve on the 2017 Leadership Team as treasurer. I was flattered but also a bit surprised. I had only been a member for a couple months! Surely a long-time member of the church would want to serve in this capacity. Despite my reservations (Why me?), I agreed to serve. Little did I know that getting someone to serve on the Leadership Team was a daunting task.

Four years later, as I move from treasurer to moderator, I have to say I am thrilled that Marsha approached me. I have LOVED being treasurer, but I also enjoyed being on the Leadership Team, and I am looking forward to my new role. Evidently finding someone to serve on the leadership team is still difficult. 😊 I am so proud of our church, and I like being able to contribute to the ongoing operations of the church. It's a part of stewardship that is often overlooked but *is essential* to a vibrant congregation. Being a part of the Leadership Team is one of many ways to support our staff and the missions of our church.

Serving on the Team isn't onerous. The monthly meeting runs between 60 to 90 minutes. Because of COVID, we're doing it on Zoom, which can be a bit cumbersome. There can sometimes be a flurry of emails among the Team as some business is handled outside of the regular meeting time. Right now, we have two openings on the proposed team for 2021.

- 1) The assistant moderator position is an excellent role to step into if you want to get a taste for what the Leadership Team is all about. After two years, it is hoped the assistant moderator will assume the role of moderator, but until then, the responsibilities are simple: attend meetings and fill in if and when the moderator is unable to lead a meeting or is temporarily unable to fulfill the duties of the moderator.
- 2) The Fellowship Lead is probably the busiest position, but right now, since we aren't having fellowship, it's also an easy task. Now would be an excellent time to start as the Fellowship Lead and build a Fellowship Team that can share the duties. If two individuals want to share the role of Fellowship Lead, we can handle that. Linda Greenfield and Linda Weaver shared the role of Discipleship Team Lead, and it worked well.

If you might have an interest in serving in one of these positions, feel free to approach a member of the Nominating Committee (Joanne Arvid, Bill Colson, Judy Minier).

I want to particularly thank Bill Colson and Dick Michael who both served as assistant treasurers; to Mary Tulip in her role as financial assistant; and to our offering counters over the last four years: Elaine Erickson, Kathy Frantish, Susann Luckenbach, Jean Ringelstein, Cindy Trudeau and Mary Tulip. I couldn't have done it without you, and I wouldn't have wanted to do it without you.

I am so happy to have Mike Robinson as our new treasurer. As a former pastor, he brings additional skill sets to the position, and I know he has some areas of interest that are "calling his name."

I have no doubt that my time as moderator of the Leadership Team will be challenging, enjoyable, sometimes exhausting, fulfilling, inspiring, reaffirming, trying but, also, wonderful.



DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM – Linda Greenfield and Linda Weaver, Chairs

Linda Greenfield and I would like to thank both the other members of the Leadership Team and the members of our congregation for your prayers, support and encouragement over the last 2 years of our tenures as Discipleship co-leaders. We want to give special thanks to our Worship Committee: Pastor Mike, Susann, Isaac and Kevin for all your input and creative ideas! Thank you also to Kathy, Lucia and Ana Rivadeneira for doing a spectacular job in helping each week in our call to worship, lighting the altar candles and sharing your gifts of song and dance for special services! Special thanks to Sandy James-Nogaj, Judy Minier and Linda Greenfield with the help of collecting, sorting and taking our short sets to Baker Street School each year. Bunches of thanks to Neoma Remiger and her committees of Caring Friends and the pandemic Caring Circles! At this Christmas time, thank you to Emily Klossner for collecting our gift cards for students at Charlotte HS. last, but certainly not least, love and thanks to Mary Tulip, whose graciousness and patience in waiting for Beacon articles goes above and beyond the call of duty! For all of you, our dear church family, we thank God for the opportunity to serve this church.



BIRTHDAYS

Jan.	3	Jane Provencher
Jan.	3	Marjorie Bruns
Jan.	11	Clifford Trudeau
Jan.	12	Polly Engebrecht
Jan.	17	Judy Minier
Jan.	19	Grace March
Jan.	23	Tim Schenk
Jan.	27	Lucille Begin
Jan.	28	Mary Barnt
Jan.	29	Lynn Stayner

ANNIVERSARIES

Jan.	3	Herb Henry & Joanne Stoughton
Jan.	8	Brian Rowlands & Armondo Mascarenaz
Jan.	19	Charles & Carol Salisbury
Jan.	22	Dick & Mary Tulip
Jan.	24	Bill & Jean Ringelstein

Did we miss a birthday or anniversary? Please email the office, and we will try to make sure it does not happen again: office@puntagorda-ucc.com