*The Circuit Rider*

Snoqualmie United Methodist Church

# january/february 2022

# this is us: Special edition

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| Save the Dates  Saturday, January 22 – Guatemala Planning meeting, 12 pm via Zoom  Thursday, January 27 – Panel: Parents of Transgender Children Share Their Stories , 7 pm via Zoom  Sunday, February 13 – Congregational conversation (follows worship) |
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Trail pickup with SUMC Youth Group

# A person smiling for the camera Description automatically generated with low confidenceMeet the interim pastor: Melissa bortnick

Greetings in the name of Christ, brothers and sisters! I’m excited to meet many of you and walk alongside you over these next weeks while Pastor Lee re-stores, re-news, and re-creates herself as God intends for God’s children. I offer prayer for her time away while she is studying Spanish and volunteering on a coffee farm near Antigua. During her leave I will be here to offer spiritual support and affirmation of the many wonderful ways God is working with and through all of you here in Snoqualmie and beyond. I’ll hope to keep worship as “normal” for you as I’m able, yet will be mindful of the health realities during these winter days which may necessitate creative ministry solutions. Keeping all of you, as well as me and my three children (Morgan 17, Chloe 15, Grant 12), healthy is a top priority!

As I step into this role as your part-time Interim Pastor during the months of January through March, I’m also beginning my next academic term at Seattle Pacific Seminary. Currently, I’m enrolled in two courses: 1)Psychopathology and Family Systems will allow me to study the concepts of psychopathology from a systems perspective with special attention paid to the role families play in the development and treatment of pathology and 2) Aging and Ministry to and with the Elderly which invites me to explore our rapidly aging population, and offers concentrated training in how clergy and other persons engaged in ministry or Christian service can provide faithful and effective pastoral care and spiritual guidance to senior citizens. I’m celebrating the near conclusion of my five year graduate program, having earned 101 credits of my 108 needed to graduate with my Master of Divinity in June!

Concurrently, I’m also finishing my time serving as a chaplain at Harborview Medical Center where I’ve been studying and practicing ministry as part of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program. I have worked there 32 hours a week on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sunday overnights since September and am looking forward to my program graduation on January 13 and my last overnight shift on January 16. As much as I feel called to chaplaincy I’m glad to be finishing these 16-hour shifts at the trauma center which will allow me more time to serve at SUMC.

Prior to my invitation to this pastoral role with all of you I served for five years on staff in Children’s, Youth, and Family Ministry at Faith United Methodist in Issaquah with General Conference Delegate Rev. Elizabeth Ingram Schindler. There I was able to plan and implement the weekly Sunday School classes for nursery, pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle school, and high school students. This involved coordinating with about 90 families and 15 volunteer teachers. I shared the Children’s Sermon, directed the Children’s Choir and Chime Choir and also participated as a soloist with our praise band. I enjoyed participating with all weekly staff meetings, Coordinating Team meetings, and serving as the staff liaison to the Nominations and Leadership Development Team. I planned and directed all aspects of the 100+ student Vacation Bible School programs, including curriculum development, adult and youth “crew” volunteer recruitment and training, parent and student “camper” community publications and promotions, event registration, safety supervision, and of course set decoration and crew appreciation. I started the first Mom’s Group at FUMC which grew to about 45 members, meeting twice monthly for dinner, Bible study, and fellowship. My role extended beyond the church walls with my leadership of multiple Mission Trips and Youth Camp excursions as well as coordinating annual All-Church Camp experiences. Programming of seasonal mid-week classes, special worship events, community service projects, memorial services, and any unexpected extra priority projects the Lead Pastor didn’t have time to address also added to my list of tasks. I was invited to preach and preside in worship as was helpful to our pastor’s schedule. Visiting parishioner’s homes and conducting one-on-one prayer and conversation, though was by far the most life-giving part of my service. My dedicated employment, which spanned the on-boarding and off-loading of eight other staff members, ended abruptly with the Covid pandemic.

Following my lay-off from the Faith Church staff, I was invited to work with Seattle Pacific University serving as a Graduate Teaching Assistant alongside Professor Sègbégnon Gnonhossou for the University Foundations theology courses. These course titles included Christian Faith, which explores the lived experience of faith as expressed in formation, vocation, and reconciliation and Christian Theology, which reflects upon the relationship between God and humankind as expressed in the Scriptures and experienced in a life of faith. My employment responsibilities with this role included attending all Zoom classes with the professor and students, operating the chat for about 75 undergraduate students during class time, answering questions outside of class, preparing and facilitating course review sessions, and grading written exams and homework assignments. I was employed in this capacity for the fall and winter terms during the Covid pandemic.

Additionally, I was approached by the PNW Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, Rev. David Valera, in the fall of 2020 to serve as his personal Administrative Assistant. I accepted a six month employment commitment with the Office of Connectional Ministries spanning March through August 2021. During this time I was able to make connections with many pastors, superintendents, conference board leaders, and our bishop. Some of my responsibilities of this employment included attending Zoom meetings and recording minutes for multiple boards and agencies, providing clear communication between the members of the OCM, anticipating the professional needs of the Director, and problem solving during the unprecedented time of pandemic ministry. One task I particularly enjoying was helping to plan and facilitate the 2021 Pastor Transitions Retreat. The most rewarding task during this employment, though, was assisting with the myriad details required to host and successfully broadcast the Online 2021 GNW and PNW Annual Conference and Ordination Ceremony. The days spent preparing, coordinating, setting up, facilitating, and breaking down the equipment for the conference proved to be some of the most rewarding and spirit-filled times I’ve ever enjoyed with colleagues. Getting to carry the Bishop’s Banner for the Opening Worship Processional was an honor; a true highlight of my summer ministry employment which I will always remember.

# pastor lee on renewal leave january 6 – march 6

A blessing by Jan Richardson begins: "That you will let yourself be lost from time to time / in the labyrinth of the Word. That you may, for a while, empty yourself of all the words you know....." After another couple of lines the blessing concludes, "that (Christ) will write Himself anew across the pages of your life." I'd print the whole thing if not for copyright questions!

In any case, that's what I intend to be up to for these few weeks, while learning better Spanish and volunteering on an eco-friendly coffee farm in Antigua Guatemala. I'll take what I can carry in one small bag; all that really matters fits inside me. Thanks for your part in that! Meanwhile I'm excited for the congregation to get to know and grow with Pastor Melissa. Enjoy! God is good.

* Pastor Lee

# Worship Forecast

Currently, due to high COVID case numbers in the county, we are worshipping via Zoom only. Join us with **meeting ID # 801 896 850**. As case numbers drop, we will resume hybrid worship and continue to take COVID precautions while in the church building, including vaccine verification, mask-wearing and physical distancing between households. Thanks to ***Tech Deacons* Greg & Toddie Downs and Alma Gomez** for ongoing improvements to the online experience. Extra gratitude also for **Wendy Holloway's children's ministry on Sunday mornings!**

Worship details sometimes change. See our website for the latest information: **www.snoqualmieumc.org.**

Early in January we celebrate Epiphany, the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Magi, as we come to the end of the Season of Christmastide, full of the wonders of Christ’s birth and his incarnate presence among us who have anticipated the advent of our Lord. I look forward to receiving an Epiphany message from Ed Morrison who will preach the sermon on January 9. Then, for the next eight weeks, I’ll plan to follow the lectionary texts in an exploration of scripture focused primarily on the Book of Luke. I’ll preach while leaning on my experience of ministry in a medical context to enliven the proclamation of Jesus’ healing work. The themes of Jesus as a doctor, healer, provider, and servant to many groups of often underserved people will be included in our sermons.

We’ll work together to form questions about what we need to be physically, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and socially healthy. I hope these explorations of Luke will draw us closer to one another and help us perceive how we are invited to serve one another in community so that we can continually grow into our best versions of ourselves.

I invite you to be thinking about how we might worship together for Ash Wednesday and what you might like to see happening around SUMC as we get closer to the Season of Lent. From my first introduction with all of you I can feel the dynamic Spirit-filled presence at this church. It will be my joy to share with you and learn from all of you as we journey in faith this season.

- Pastor Melissa

- For worship updates and occasional revisions

please visit the worship page on our website: www.snoqualmieumc.org . –

# this is us

When we at SUMC are asked what we like about our church, many of us answer, “The people.”  This column focuses on the individuals that make up "the people."

## Linda Boord

Linda Boord, born in Tacoma and adopted at six months, grew-up in Richland before moving to Spokane, where she graduated from Shadle Park High School, class of 78. Linda joined the Washington Army National Guard a short time after graduation because a friend had joined and she didn't want to go to basic training alone. It was in the Guard that Linda met Tom, and they were married in 1981, and moved to Seattle. A few years later, they moved to North Bend, and haven't left. She and Tom began attending services at SUMC in 1999, with their two young daughters. Her friends would describe her as loyal, a good listener, funny, laid back, and sometimes cautious.

Linda’s dad is her hero, as he stressed the importance of her finding and being her true self. Linda did just that when she became a member of Toastmasters in 1993, where she recently earned the title of Distinguished Toastmaster. And, at 53, though she’d hated school when she was younger, she went to college and earned her B.S. in Business Management with a 4.0 GPA.

JRR Tolkien and the *Lord of the Rings* is Linda’s favorite read, and she re-reads it every 18 months or so. Tom makes her laugh, as does her daughter Molly when she tells personal stories and does dramatic readings out of catalogs.

Linda was nourished by and misses singing in the choir and the comradery, laughter, and music the choir shared. She was also nourished by the friendships formed through Companions In Christ, a small group study, and those formed at the women’s retreats held at Rainbow Lodge. These days she is getting nourished singing for us now in church service. Nature feeds her soul and she loves walks by the river and standing in the silence listening to the river’s music.

## Rudy Edwards

Rudy Edwards was born and grew up in Laurel, Mississippi, where he attended the Methodist Church along with congregant Leontyne Price. He belonged to what was then called “the Colored Boy Scouts,” who held meetings in his neighborhood Baptist Church.

After Rudy married Connie, his high school sweetheart, they attended Jackson State University and then joined the Peace Corps, traveling to several African countries.

Rudy was inspired by his grandfather, who fought in WW I and brought Nazi prisoners to Camp Shelby in Mississippi. His father, who fought in Iwo Jima, impressed upon him that, though white people might view him as inferior to them, he absolutely was not; this spurred Rudy to attend Tuskegee University, where he got a master’s degree in Forestry Soils. He and Connie then moved to Roseberg, Oregon, where Rudy worked at the Forest Service as a Forestry Soil Scientist and where daughters Melanie and Natalie were born. He was promoted to Manager of Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest, where he worked for twenty-five years until he retired.

Rudy has been a member of SUMC for thirty-two years, active in Youth Education and Pastor Parish. He often prays in the chapel upstairs. Rudy’s friends would describe him as a wise person combined with a know-it-all. He prefers to read nonfiction--his latest read is *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan. As a supporter of space travel and research, he enjoys watching science fiction movies. Three days a week, he feeds and nurtures folks at Mt. Si Senior Center, which also feeds his soul.

# hopelink transportation congregational conversation february 13

Following worship on Sunday, February 13, there will be a congregational conversation with Salwa Raphael, the Snoqualmie Valley Mobility coordinator with Hopelink.

Transportation is a crucial link to all community resources, and the Snoqualmie Valley is a unique setting for mass transportation. How does one travel from North Bend to Monroe? How does one leave the car in the Valley and travel to a sporting event or musical event?

Salwa Raphael, the Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coordinator on the Hopelink Mobility Management team, will be present to share transportation information and resources available to residents and answer questions.

# Get Involved – The Stark Trumbull Area REALTORS®pledging with purpose 2022

Twenty seven people have expressed interest in participating in various forms of ministry in 2022 through the recent Pledging with Purpose campaign. Thank you for participating! One surprise this year is the number of people who want to help our church "connect with and engage in actions that promote justice and resist evil." That resonated with ten of us, which was the second highest cluster of responses. Most popular? Participating in weekly worship. Music ministries, important committee work, Bible study/learning circle, neighborhood ministries, congregational care, and special events also had ample support among those who responded to the pledge form. May the Holy Spirit guide our vision, focus, and actions in the months ahead. It only takes a spark to get a fire going...

The Finance Team will be in touch soon with a summary of financial pledges and related budget for 2022.

# Guatemala "mission" trip, June 25 - July 3

A group of people sitting at a table

Description automatically generated with medium confidencePlanning Meeting Saturday January 22, 12 pm via Zoom

Hopefully COVID won't cancel our plans to volunteer with Salud y Paz in Camanchaj, Guatemala (near Lake Atitlán) in late June. We'll prepare as best we can, and adjust if necessary. Our anticipated adventure includes construction work on the new health clinic wing, and toy-making with children at the Susanna Wesley school. Estimated cost is $1,025 plus airfare. We have until March to confirm our group participant list of up to 10 people. Here is the Zoom link for January 22: https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/3393073836 (Zoom meeting ID # 339 307 3836 ).

Pastor Lee anticipates hosting the meeting from Antigua, Guatemala. ¡Hasta luego!

Photo: Rachel Holloway supports kids making the "ziggy zaggy" toy at el Colegio Susana Wesley, part of the Salud y Paz campus in Camanchaj, Guatemala.

# A group of people in a room Description automatically generated with medium confidenceready to join the tech team?

Special thanks to Greg and Toddie Downs, Alma and Ekaterina Gomez, and Alex Holloway for their work toward a smoother online worship. Rev. David Valera, Director of Connectional Ministries has been a key resource. This is a great time to learn the ropes and get involved. Let Greg, Toddie, or Alma know if interested.

# inclusion committee: Parents of transgender children share their stories

The Inclusion Committee at Snoqualmie United Methodist Church is hosting an online panel, featuring parents of transgender children sharing their experience. Join us on Thursday, January 27, at 7 p.m. as we listen to and learn from retired pastor Al Gephart and recently retired nurse, Betsy Gephart, in Tempe, AZ, and former pastor and active author, Mike Rumley-Wells, and his wife Kim, a fifth-grade teacher, in Wenatchee, WA.

Everyone is welcome to join this Zoom event. A link will be sent out a week before the panel. A recording will be made and available after the event.

For more information, contact Carol Morrison at emilooh@comcast.net.

# news of the congregation

## Two people posing for a photo Description automatically generatedWoodworths Move to Renton

Rev. Melvin and Candice Woodworth joined Snoqualmie UMC about three years ago. They recently moved to Renton, and will be participating now with Renton UMC. We'll miss them, but also celebrate this next stage in their lives.

Thank you Melvin and Candice for your presence at community dinners, in worship, and prayer...for participating with reconciling fellowship and the finance team...for imposing Ashes in the parking lot on Ash Wednesday (smile) ...for your generous and intentional giving...and more.

Since we can't pass a card around the sanctuary these days, folks can send Candice and Melvin a note to 1741 Jones Drive SE, Renton, WA 98055-3603, or via email: [Candice.woodworth.cw@gmail.com](mailto:Candice.woodworth.cw@gmail.com) and <melvinrwoodworth@aol.com> .

## A group of people in the water Description automatically generatedHow Did YOU Start the New Year?

"A band of crazy people" in West Bath, Maine, have a long-standing tradition called The New Year's Dip. Cyndy Carney is among them! Compared to the time they had to chop ice to submerge themselves, "it wasn't even cold this year," she said.

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Text

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Submitted by Marcia Bennett-Reinert

# comments and questions

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If you have any suggestions or ideas for me for future issues, please let me know!

Thanks, Toddie Downs (toddiedowns@yahoo.com)