

Chapter 10. Our Church Today

(October 2003)

Our church is a congregation of more than 200 people. Pastor John Leffler is certainly the most visible person in church leadership.

But it takes far more people than the pastor to bring the church alive and meet the spiritual needs of a diverse population. A few of the folks who make the church work are paid staff. Far more people are volunteers who give of their time and expertise out of their commitment to God and doing the Lord's work.

Volunteers help with building and property maintenance, provide the music, teach Sunday school and Bible studies, organize social events, contemplate the many decisions of guiding the church, develop policies, manage the money, and serve the congregation in a variety of ways that change with the times and the needs of the people.

These volunteers include:

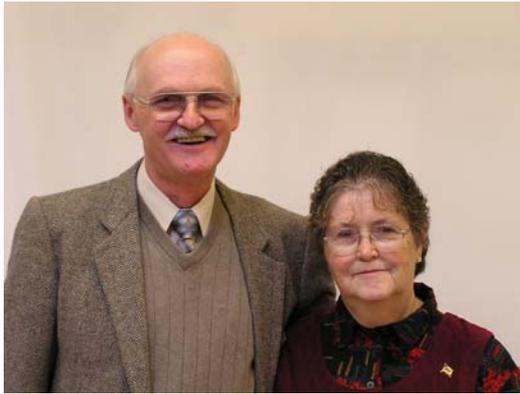
- Ⓐ Elders
- Ⓐ Deacons
- Ⓐ Chairman of the Congregation (This is a state requirement and is needed at only one meeting a year.)
- Ⓐ Church treasurer
- Ⓐ Missions committee members
- Ⓐ Choir director and choir and worship team members
- Ⓐ Sunday school superintendent and teachers
- Ⓐ Women's and Men's ministries
- Ⓐ Jail Ministry
- Ⓐ Daily Vacation Bible school
- Ⓐ Sonlight Club
- Ⓐ Newsletter editor
- Ⓐ Gardening and lawn maintenance
- Ⓐ Janitorial Team

This document focuses on the many people who serve our church today and the wealth and variety of talent, energy and time they contribute to making our church the vibrant, active organization it is.

Elders

Qualifications for elders are set out in I Tim. 3:1-7. Our elders are the leaders of the church. They have authority to correct any teaching or preaching that is not in accordance with scripture. They also have the authority to dismiss anyone from a position of leadership or teaching. The elders are responsible for the approval of teachers, teaching materials and all other educational aspects of the church. The elders have final approval in all church matters.

LES GREENE



Les and Virginia Greene



Les Greene, Barber

Les was born on September 28, 1934 in a house at Kirby and B Streets in Castle Rock. He has spent his entire life in the Castle Rock area with the exception of three years in Naselle, Washington where he operated his own barber shop. He moved to Kelso where he lived for a few years before returning to Castle Rock. He has barbered for more than 50 years and still enjoys his work as evidenced by the fact that although he is “retired” he continues to work on a limited basis.

Les has taught Sunday school since the early 1960’s. He has taught a men’s Sunday school class for about 24 years and leads a home Bible study that meets in the home of Pat Pohle. The home group is about 24 years old also.

Les was a tireless supporter of our 1965 building program during which he donated considerable time helping with the construction work. As an elder, Les faithfully helped guide the church through some difficult years while we waited to complete the new sanctuary.

Les became an elder in 1978 and has served in that capacity ever since. His assigned responsibilities are oversight of Sunday school, the home group Bible studies, elders’ representative to the missions committee and representing the elders to the scholarship committee.

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In addition, after being challenged by Dwight Kinman, Les began ministering to shut-ins in nursing homes and hospitals taking communion to them each Sunday. This quiet ministry has been a source of comfort and appreciation for many over the years.

Virginia has been a member of the Pauline Circle for more than 40 years and has served us in the children's nursery more than 38 years. She now has the joy of caring for many children whose parents were under her care years ago.

Les and Virginia Greene have four sons, Ron, Bill, Rick, and Tom, and one daughter, Lesley, who is in heaven. Ron and Rick are both pastors. There is more about them in the document "Our Timothys."

For hobbies, Les enjoyed playing tennis in his younger years and played into his late 40's before giving way to his favorite hobby of late—golf! He also enjoys doing woodworking.



Les Greene walking by faith

VERL LEE



Elder Verl Lee, grandson Jacob Lee, Marsha Lee

Verl Lee, owner of L & M Industrial Controls

Verl Lee was born in Rural Springs Hollow, Missouri in 1946. In 1948 his family moved to California. He was baptized at the Church of Christ at age 14 in Lodi, California. Verl and Marsha were married in 1968 in Bakersfield, California.

Verl was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel of Christ in Bakersfield, California in the Church of Christ.

Verl and Marsha moved to Castle Rock area in 1991. They joined Castle Rock Christian Church in 1992, and Verl became an elder that same year. He is a member of the choir and also sings in the men's group. His business involves repairing and maintaining computer controlled systems.

Marsha has been active in coordinating weddings and serving as funeral hostess. She also sings in the choir and assists the director.

Verl and Marsha have two sons, Jason, a member of the Christian Church in Bakersfield, California and Jarrod, who attended and was married in the Castle Rock Christian Church and now lives in Longview, Washington.

Within the eldership, Verl's areas of responsibilities are oversight of worship service, music, sound and multimedia, pulpit supply and the spiritual wellness of the body. His hobbies are fishing, softball and carpentry.

WILLIAM B. BANGS



Beverly Bangs, son Joseph, Elder Bill Bangs



Bill Bangs at work

Bill and Beverly Bangs were married in the Castle Rock Christian Church on May 9, 1969 by Pastor Martin Lee.

After a 21-year career in the U.S. Army, Bill and his family settled in Los Angeles, California where he took a job with the U.S. government. He joined Quartz Hill Christian Church and soon was elected to the board of elders where he served several years as chairman. He also served as the church treasurer during this time.

About 10 years later the Banks family moved to Castle Rock and joined the Castle Rock Christian Church in October of 2000. Bill is employed as the chief administrative officer for Chuck's Boat and Drive. In October of 2002 Bill submitted his name for consideration for eldership and became the church's third elder. His assigned responsibilities are "Men's Ministry," the annual church picnic and some oversight responsibilities of financial matters.

Beverly is the church's newsletter editor and works in the Sunday school and preschool as a teacher.

Bill enjoys spectator sports and fishing as hobbies. Bill and Beverly have two sons, Seth who has just graduated from college and Joseph who is still in high school.

Deacons

Qualifications for deacons are in I Tim. 3:8-13. The deacons cooperate with the elders in promoting the growth and welfare of the church. They are responsible for the greeting and ushering of worshippers, serving the Lord's Supper, ministering to the needy, assisting in the baptismal services, screening applicants for the position of deacon, providing transportation for those having need of it, care of all buildings and grounds (including all repairs, fixtures and improvements), finances, missions, the fatherless, widows and any other duties as assigned by the elders.

GARY HORSLEY

Gary was born in Sheridan, Wyoming and moved to Castle Rock in 1940. He joined the church in 1983 and married Deanna Smith on March 23, 1985. He became a deacon in 1987 and has served in that capacity ever since. He has been the deacons' representative to the Missions Committee since its inception.

Gary has owned and operated his own heavy construction company for many years. His main hobby is travel. He has the gift of encouragement and uses it often.



Gary Horsley owns his own construction company.

HAROLD ERDELBROCK



Harold Erdelbrock, operator at Interlox, a chemical company

Harold Erdelbrock has been a deacon since 1993. Some of his responsibilities include Chairman of the Deacons and oversight of Children's Ministries. Harold was involved in hiring Doug Kennedy to the church staff, complete re-roofing of the entire church facility, in fully paying off the new sanctuary loans, startup and oversight of the daycare program, startup and oversight of the Sonlight program, and negotiation and design of the new shared parking lot with the Castle Rock School District. In addition, Harold is an enthusiastic member of the worship team.

He and his family moved here from Tacoma in 1989 and started attending CRCC in 1990. He has served on the board of Longview Christian School since 2001 and was on the Castle Rock Fair board for 10 years. He relaxes working on equipment at his dad's Toutle farm, and enjoys motorcycle riding.

His wife, April, is one of the church secretaries and serves on the women's ministries committee. Harold feels blessed to have been allowed to serve Castle Rock Christian Church and looks forward, prayerfully, to many more years of service in the kingdom in whatever capacity Christ our Lord places him.

SCOTT SPENCER

Scott and his wife, Diane, began attending Castle Rock Christian Church in August 1995. Scott became a deacon in 1998. His special assignment is assisting junior high and high school youth programs.

Besides his many duties at church, Scott leads a very active life involved with his family at school. He has been head boys' basketball coach at the Castle Rock Middle School for 16 years and the head girls' coach for basketball for 15 years, as well as a youth soccer coach for the past 15 years. Scott's family's main recreation besides sports is family campouts.

His wife, Diane, has faithfully served as Sunday school superintendent since 1995 and in 1998 took up a new challenge and started the Sonlight Club.



Scott Spencer at work at the Longview Water Treatment plant.

Chairman of the Congregation

ROBERT BICKNELL



Bob Bicknell

Bob started working for the Department of Fish and Wildlife in 1984 and held various assignments before he was transferred to the Toutle area in 1988. He and his family began attending Castle Rock Christian Church in 1995. Bob became congregational chairman in 1997 and has served in that capacity since. He gives the announcements on Sunday morning. He has also been very involved in the men's ministry, especially the breakfast that meets at the 49er every other Friday morning. One of Bob's greatest joys is being a part of the church's men's singing group that performs on special occasions.

Church Treasurer

VIC HOLCOMB

Vic Holcomb is church treasurer. His contributions extend far beyond that and are covered in Chapter 13, People in Service of the Lord.

JOYCE LARSON

Joyce Larson is the great great granddaughter of William Huntington and the daughter of Vic and Dollie Holcomb. Joyce is a life-long member of the church, serves as assistant treasurer, a member of the Missions Committee and, taking after her mother, does much of the cooking for the congregation's annual dinners.



Joyce Larson

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee keeps us aware of the latest happenings and needs of each missionary. The committee was formed in 1994. The committee members have an appropriate display board that designates a missionary of the month.

Members of the Missions Committee are:

Lenard Hovde, Chairman
Lindarae Hovde
Janie Damschen
Joyce Larson
Dorothy Adams

Elder Les Greene
Charlotte Hickman
Deacon Gary Horsley
Pastor John Leffler

Music Ministry

LINDARAE HOVDE, CHOIR DIRECTOR



Lindarae Hovde

Lindarae Hovde has directed the church choir for more than 30 years. She followed Marian (Robinson) Russell who was the director when the new building was built. For many years the choir sang for worship services, performed cantatas and other productions for special services and even sang for other churches. As church music has evolved to broader scopes, the church now has a worship team that leads the worship. The choir now sings only on special occasions.

The choir's longest-term members are Wilma Brazier and Estafaye Stephenson who have been with the choir for almost 50 years. Estafaye's mother, Edith (Vernice) Jensen, and Lucille (Janisch) Rogers combined to give the choir their current robes, replacing the 40-year-old robes that the Adams family gave.

The choir made church history in using digital multimedia for the first time with "Experiencing God," a worship musical used for Easter, 2002. Original slides, a video, and live camera scenes were used to enhance the music and message of this hour-long presentation.

Limited historical information could be found concerning the choir. Pastor Osgood's diary has numerous entries about the choir, and Lucille made some reference in her report about the 100 year celebration of the church.

Regular choir members are: Ken Lee, Verl Lee, Marsha Lee, Joyce Larson, JoAnn Cole, Estafaye Stephenson, Wilma Brazier, Leon Kessler, Rick Lowe, John Leffler, Ruth Leffler, Debi Cameron, Wayne Lowder, Jeanne Smith, Curtis Dorcheus, Mike Eklund, Cathy Moore, Lindarae Hovde and Harold Erdelbrock.

Sunday School

The Sunday school thrives under the able leadership of Diane Spencer as superintendent. Teachers helping her in the childrens' classes are Virginia Greene in the nursery, Beth Bishop teaching 2-4 year olds, Ruth Leffler teaching pre-K and kindergarten, Julie Johnson with the first and second graders, Beverly Bangs and Carol Borgaard with the third and fourth grades, and Kevin and Jayne Kahler teach the fifth and sixth graders.

In the youth department, Tina Campbell teaches seventh and eighth grades, and Tami Bjorhus teaches the high school class.

The adult department has five classes. Dorothy Adams teaches the senior women, Les Greene has the men's class, Russ Tevis teaches on the gospel of Mark, Bill Bangs teaches a class on marriage and Diane King holds a class for the worship team.

Women's Ministries



Ladies Leadership Team-Left to right: April Erdelbrock, Diane King, Ruth Leffler and Janie Damschen

The present-day Women's Ministries was organized in 1993. It involves many women in several types of ministries.

Under the new bylaws adopted in March of 2003, the office of deaconess was replaced with Women's Ministries. Ministering women continue in the same dynamic as in the past, just with a different title and structure. Their supporting role shows how a church ministers in harmony in all areas and functions in the body concept as taught in scripture.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES ACTIVITIES

Janie Damschen writes, "In 1994 Women's Ministries began with the vision of providing fellowship and encouraging women to use their gifts and talents for God. They oversee the many women of the church who are active in ministry.

"Bible studies are held, retreats are planned, there is a weekly card ministry and flowers are sent to those in the hospital or who are ill. The prayer chain is maintained. Food is arranged for those who have needs, including funeral dinners and fellowship dinners. A "Ladies Night Out" features a fun activity once a month. Holiday activities include decorating the building and sponsoring the Christmas dinner. For weddings a consultant is offered, a coordinator is supplied, and an entire reception can be planned for the couple. Teas are held once or twice a year and outside conferences are available."

LADIES NIGHT OUT

Under the auspices of the Women's Ministry, Judy Watenpaugh is in charge of "Ladies Night Out."

She organizes special outings and activities such as bowling, shopping trips game nights and fellowship dinners. She has been in charge of this ministry for three years.



Judy Watenpaugh

Men's Ministries



Howard Edwards has headed this ministry for the last three years, organizing the men to help members with home maintenance, help church members move, started the men's breakfast held every other Friday morning at Peper's 49rs Restaurant, and schedules a men's retreat once a year.

Howard Edwards

Daily Vacation Bible School

Tanya Lile has been director of Daily Vacation Bible School for the past five years. It has been an important ministry within the church for many years, and no one can remember when it was started.

Back in the 1960's the church owned a school bus that would pick up kids all over the Castle Rock area. In earlier days, Daily Vacation Bible School would run for two and sometimes three weeks each summer and would not just be a morning activity but would go well into the afternoon. It was not uncommon to exceed 200 kids each day.



Tanya Lile

Today even with so many more activities competing for kids' attention, we still have a very strong Vacation Bible School. The many activities remain the same, with exciting singing, including hand motion action songs led by Diane King. These are so popular that kids often request cassettes of the music to take home to play for their enjoyment. Bible teaching done with visual aids in Bible classes, and humorous skits done with teenagers are used to teach Christian truths that are not soon forgotten.

Crafts have always been a popular feature as the boys and girls enjoy working on a project each day. The children choose a missionary project to support, and the kids respond enthusiastically, taking daily offerings that are given to a different mission each year. This missionary project has taken on the buzz word of "Kids helping Kids".

Each day the kids are treated to cookies and a beverage. Even though this sounds like a minimal treat it is a huge hit. Often new families become involved with their kids and soon decide to attend Sunday school and church on Sundays also.

Sonlight Club

In 1998 Diane Spencer took up a new challenge and started one of the most successful programs to reach children that this church has seen in many years. It is called the Sonlight Club and 60 to 75 enthusiastic kids participate each Sunday night. Diane has served as Commander in this endeavor for six years.



Diane Spencer

Connections Newsletter

When Pastor John came, he saw the need for a church newsletter. Bev Bangs stepped up to the task and has produced *Connections* monthly ever since. It is mailed to all church members and recent attendees. Its purposes are to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ, document the life of the church and inform the congregation of events and ministries that are available to them.



Beverly Bangs

Gardening and Lawn Maintenance



Glee and Jim Pomeroy

Jim Pomeroy reports that his grandmother, Augusta Sievers, was very involved in the church for many years and always encouraged him and his brother, Jack, to attend church and Sunday school. After both men were in their late 20's they accepted the Lord, Jack in 1958 and Jim in 1961.

Both men and their families became active in church, and Jim and Jack were a very important part of the effort that brought the congregation to decide to build our new building. They both were heavily involved in both the 1965 building program and the new sanctuary project that was started in 1982.

Jim has served as a deacon and chairman of the deacons. Currently Jim has volunteered to keep the outside lawns mowed and cares for the shrubbery.

Jim and Glee were members of the pastoral search committee and while visiting the Burns Christian Church they were impressed with their Friendship Bread ministry where each new visitor was given a small loaf of homemade bread as a unique gift. After John Leffler was hired at Castle Rock, Glee and Rachel King began this ministry, and it is very popular today. Glee also has been very involved caring for room decorations in the library.

Janitorial Service



Mike Shannon

Mike Shannon serves the church as janitor. He is a life-long resident of Castle Rock. Mike accepted the Lord and was baptized by Dick Hugoniot on October 11, 1981. The church hired him as Janitor October 30, 2002. Mike's vocational rehab coach Pat Perrin, who is also a church member, negotiated Mike's employment with deacon Harold Erdelbrock.

Little Christian Day Care



Tami Bjorhus

The Little Christian Day Care has been an important part of our church's ministry and outreach to the Castle Rock community. Below is Director Tami Bjorhus' testimony of how this all started and how God has worked in people's lives.

The day care began for me in 1984. I took a test on spiritual gifts at a women's retreat. After I had taken the test, the gift of teaching was the very last one on my list. I told Judy Miller, "Praise God I won't ever have to teach." She told me, "Don't say that because it's just like God to use our weaknesses to fulfill his glory."

What do you know? It wasn't two weeks later when I was asked to teach a 3-4 year old Sunday school class. Then about a month later I was asked to fill in one day a week to teach a preschool class. I loved it. I shortly became a preschool teacher full time. I became the director of the preschool program in 1987 I think.

In 1993 we had no more funds available, so we had to close. I went to our pastor who was Ed Miller at that time and asked if we could open a day care center. He said NO! I decided to go to college and get my degree and see what happened. Well I did it in two years.

I decided to get a job starting in September of 1995. I picked up a paper out of a stack and called some places. Marlene, the director of First United Learning Center, asked me if I could come in tomorrow for an interview. I did let her know I wasn't really looking for a job until school started. She asked me how I found out about this job. I told her I just picked up a paper from a pile that had accumulated from vacation. She said that was amazing because she had only advertised in one paper and that it was Tuesday two weeks ago.

Well I worked at First United Learning Center for two years, and then Ed Miller came to me and asked me if I was still interested in opening a day care center. Of course I was, and we started Little Christian Day Care in August 1997. We were in the red for about four months, and since then the Lord has kept us in the black.

We started with four children that first day and now we have 74 students registered. We will be expanding in the near future. God takes wonderful care of all the staff and children. We had two staff members on day one, and now we have 12. He supplies every need we have with only a prayer.

Since August 1997 we have had more than 800 children come through the door as students. We have five families that have joined our body and many more families that now attend other churches.

We thank God for all He's done for us here at the day care and this church. God has provided a new heating system, tables, chairs, toys, curriculum, and staff needs. He provides for all of us every day. Thank you. Tami Bjorhus, Director.

Jail Ministry



Russ Tevis

Russ Tevis, Dave Cameron and Mark Wilson (not pictured) serve in a volunteer ministry at Cowlitz County Jail and Shelton prison. Russ has been involved in this ministry for more than 10 years. Dave joined Russ in this effort three years ago. Mark has been involved for two years.

They visit the Cowlitz County Jail three times a month. They visit the Shelton prison each Thursday. They each teach a different Bible Study each hour, and this goes on for six to seven hours. They also deliver a Bible to each person who requests one.

Often, it might be said that a certain prisoner “got jail house religion” meaning the person is attending prison church services to gain some kind of favor within the prison or to avoid work. But this is not true where these men visit the prisons. Each inmate sacrifices his one hour of free time that normally would be spent in the yard or gymnasium in order to attend Bible studies, where they hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation and relationship. These men are hard core addicts, destitute and are under extreme bondage to their sinful nature and the enemy. However, they learn of their worth in God's eyes according to His love for them.



Dave Cameron

Mark, Dave and Russ all have reported experiences of meeting some of these men by chance in a store or on the street when a former inmate comes up and thanks them for their ministry to them while they were in prison and confirms the fact that they were still walking with the Lord. Many times they credit their experience in those short one-hour meetings held at the prison as the reason for their ongoing and lasting relationship with the Lord.

Worship Team

The worship team is a group of volunteers who sing and play instruments for the worship services and other social functions of the church. Kevin Olds is the director of this group and plays bass guitar. Jo Ann Cole plays the organ, Lindarae Hovde is on piano, Debi Cameron and LuAnn Jones play guitar, Eddie Mize is on the drums, Diane King sings and does rhythm, Ken Lee, Lisa Porter, Wilma Brazier, and Amanda Leffler are on vocals. The song leading is shared with Harold Erdelbrock and Ben Campbell. David Ashley, Larry Shelton and Verl Lee share the sound board operations. Most of the group practices one night a week, and all of them practice again before Sunday school.



*From left to right, Front row: JoAnn Cole, Diane King, Lisa Porter, Wilma Brazier. Second row: Ken Lee, Debi Cameron, Lindarae Hovde, Amanda Leffler
Back row: LuAnn Jones, Eddie Mize, Kevin Olds, Harold Erdelbrock*

Church Secretaries

JoAnn Cole and April Erdelbrock serve as church secretaries.

JoAnn is a member of the worship team and plays the organ for church services. She also has recorded our history since the passing of Lucille (Janisch) Rogers.



JoAnn Cole and April Erdelbrock

Photography and Friendship Bread



Rachel and Dean King

Dean King does all of the videoing of our morning worship service. He also takes digital pictures of most church activities.

Rachel King shares the Friendship Bread ministry with Glee Pomeroy. Each Sunday a loaf of homemade bread is given to guests who are visiting the church for the first time.

Both Dean and Rachel are very involved in the mission work of Heart To Heart ministries in Honduras. Both have made several trips to Honduras to serve in that ministry.

Multi-Media System

Jackie Lyons serves the pastor and worship team by operating the multi-media projection and sound system. She creates slides of the sermons and choruses and helps those that have special presentations. This involves her efforts through the week as well as the services on Sunday.

When Jackie cannot run the system, Tami Bjorhus helps out.



Jackie Lyons