

# FORMER PASTORS: A VIGOROUS PANEL DISCUSSION

As part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Green Lake Church there will be a panel discussion with five former Pastors on Friday evening, November 11, 2022. The discussion will start at 7:00 p.m. PST. It will be online only and will be moderated by Ken Walters, a former newsman at Radio KUJ in Walla Walla and at KSCO AM and FM in Santa Cruz, California.

The Pastors, an articulate and erudite group, represent different eras of our history starting nearly 50 years ago. They will share their favorite memories of Green Lake during their periods of service, memories of special people at Green Lake, and how the congregation influenced them. Contemporary issues in the denomination and in the broader Christian community will also be probed. What does the future hold for urban churches? Based on their unique experiences and insights, what strategies will be effective for the next 75 years?

Brief Bios of each Pastor are included below. The link to the discussion will be available on the church website.

Don't miss this unique and informative event!

## **Arthur R. (Rudy) Torres**

At Green Lake Church from 1974-1980

Arthur R. (Rudy) Torres was born and raised in New Mexico and is a graduate of La Sierra University and Andrews University. He served in the U.S. Army before becoming an Associate Pastor at the Sligo Church. He came to the Green Lake Church in 1974 from Staunton, Virginia. The Torres initially stayed at the Lyle and Mildred Jensen House, which now is known as the site for Green Lake's Housing Ministry.

He is remembered especially for the consistently high quality of his sermons which were printed out and distributed each week.

In 1980, Pastor Torres left Seattle to become the Senior Pastor at the Sligo Church, and later served as the Senior Pastor at the Glendale City Church in Glendale, California. He remains Pastor Emeritus following his retirement at Glendale.

## **Larry Downing**

At Green Lake Church from 1980-1986

Larry Downing, his wife Arleen, and their three children moved from Philadelphia where he was pastor of the Chestnut Hill Adventist congregation.

In 1986 Larry accepted the invitation to pastor the Anaheim church and in 1997 was invited to be the senior pastor of the Los Angeles White Memorial

Church, located on the campus of the Ellen White Memorial Hospital where he also served as a member of the Executive Board. Following his 2007 retirement the White Memorial Hospital CEO invited him to join the White Memorial Hospital staff as a consultant. Upon his resignation, Arleen also retired from her position as Medical Director for the Orange County Regional Center, a position she held for 20 years.

Larry and Arleen live in San Luis Obispo where his parents moved in 1943. They live in the home Larry's parents built in 1962.

The Downings value the years they were associated with the Green Lake congregation. What made Green Lake a high point of their pastoral experience is the people who make up the Green Lake congregation. They note: "Each person made a contribution to the establishment and perpetuity of what is an example of a vibrant, creative and living force that exemplifies the power that lies within the center of our Christian faith."

## **Mark Weir**

At Green Lake Church from 1989-1992

Mark and Judy Weir came to the Green Lake Church after serving in Minnesota. Their oldest daughter was not quite one year of age when they arrived, and two other children were born in Seattle. Pastor Weir states: "We have many wonderful memories of the church family and the caring people." After leaving Green Lake he became the pastor in Bellingham,

Washington, and then at the Tacoma Central Church. In 2000 he transitioned to serving as the Campus Chaplain/Sophomore Bible teacher at Auburn Academy where he served for 10 years. "One of the highlights of my time at Auburn," he states, "was taking students around the globe annually on mission projects to build schools." In 2010, he returned to pastoring at the Spokane Valley Church. In 2015 he became the Ministerial Director of the Upper Columbia Conference, and in 2019 the Vice-President/Educational Superintendent for the Dakota Conference. In 2020 was asked to serve as the Dakota Conference President. Pastor Weir states: "At every stage along this ministry journey the best part has always been the interaction with people and the opportunity to serve and share wherever God has led."

## David Wood

*At Green Lake Church from 1998-2012*

Pastor David Wood remarks: "It seems like yesterday when my ex-wife, Amy, accepted a doctoral program offer from the University of Washington in 1998. The next morning, Pastor Joe Battistone beckoned me to join him at Green Lake! What could we do but hurtle North from Glendale City, both of us awestruck and humbled by outrageous serendipity? Joe's affable soul and quiet wisdom prepped me in servant-leadership until his sad retirement in 2001."

Over his fourteen years at Green Lake, ending in 2012, he relished witnessing a string of ministries powered by and for the people, such as upgrading the roof and organ, installing an elevator, launching the 501(c)(4) foundation, acquiring properties, hosting film nights, jazz nights, the improv program, launching young adult groups, the orchestra, His Kids, and nurturing precocious associates Tim Dunston, Will & Tina Frei, Bryan Cafferky, and Jennifer Scott, to name but a few.

Pastor Wood concludes: "These quintessential Green Lake triumphs linger in my heart as an ode to your inimitable collective spirit. These days, I thank Don & Shirley Mehrer for developing a different kind of ministry, one in which I've helped sustain their trademark approach to property management, namely, that of cultivating community among satisfied tenants. It will be a delight to see you all again soon!"

## Andreas Beccai

*At Green Lake Church from 2012-2014*

Andreas Beccai was born in Ghana and moved to Reading, United Kingdom, at age 7 with his family. He earned an undergraduate degree in law and business from Keele University in Staffordshire.

He applied for seminary studies at Andrews University in the U.S. where he earned his Master of Divinity degree. At Andrews, he met Cassandre Nonon in a church history class, and they married two years later.

The couple moved to the state of Washington in 2012 to work first at Auburn Adventist Academy, then in 2013 he became the Associate Pastor at Green Lake, serving with John McLarty through 2015 when he accepted a call to pastor at Volunteer Park Church. This service in Seattle led to his appointment as the Senior Pastor at the Walla Walla University Church.

Pastor Andreas sees his role as engaging in conversation and public communication at the intersection of faith and education. His formation in diverse cultural, racial, and socio-economic settings positively informs his work and practice.

Andreas, his wife Cassandre, and their daughter Eden enjoy traveling and learning about new cultures.

