

I have been attending University Presbyterian Church since September 14, 1980.
(My wife has attended UPC since birth.)

I am currently already serving in the following ministry areas:

As the patriarch of a large extended family in Bellevue, Covington, and Auburn, plus a surrogate family in Lake Stevens, including eleven grandchildren under seven years of age, I am a servant to this growing clan.

“And it is most certain that those works which are done by parents in true faith by way of domestic duties and the management of their households are in God’s sight holy and truly good works. They are no less pleasing to God than prayers, fasting and almsgiving.” From THE SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION, 5.250

Since 2012, I have been an invited Bible teacher at the large Emerald Heights Retirement Community in Redmond, WA. I have taught through *Matthew, Acts, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Galatians*, and am scheduled to teach through the Book of Job beginning in January 2025. (I am an Ordained Independent Minister of the Gospel by the 36,000-member National Association of Christian Ministers.)

I was a volunteer this past summer at UPC Day Camp and intend to continue this annual service.

Are you currently part of a small group at UPC? No

If not, are you interested in joining one? Not at present. I led a large weekly Saturday morning men’s Bible study at Bellevue Presbyterian Church for seventeen years. Were I to join one, it would be one on the Eastside.

Please describe your spiritual journey, including your conversion experience and current relationship with Jesus.

My earliest memories of church are as a child at the Gatewood Baptist Church Sunday School in West Seattle. As a teenager with my family, I attended Fautleroy Church (UCC) in West Seattle. I was baptized there on Maundy Thursday, April 8, 1971, and joined that congregation. While I could perhaps have quoted the entire lyrics of the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, I was ignorant of much of the Bible and the knowledge, assent, and trust that marked true saving faith.

Because I was neither catechized nor disciplined at the Fautleroy Church, my infant faith languished. While I might find myself praying the Sinners Prayer when convicted, I was

only proving the Parable of the Sower true as the gospel seeds fell on poor soil. As a Boy Scout summer camp staff leader in college, I would admit to being a Christian, but my life choices and ignorance of Scripture proved my claim false.

Fast forward, to May 18, 1980, the day Mt. Saint Helens erupted. Since January 1978, I'd been teaching as a faculty member in the University of Washington College of Engineering. At home that Sunday evening, I wanted to watch something on TV about the mountain. The only program that was talking about the eruption was Pat Robertson's *700 Club*. (Later, this experience reminded me that "...God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; 1 Cor 1:27). Normally I would have quickly switched it off. They were even running a fund raiser, but they were also discussing the eruption, and periodically encouraging viewers to accept Jesus. I knelt in my U-District apartment and prayed along with Pat Robertson and Ben Kinchlow. And this time the gospel seed took root and bore fruit.

I immediately became an avid Bible reader and a listener to Christian radio. In September 1980, I looked up a Christian friend from high school seven years earlier. I knew that UPC had always been her church and that her parents were both Elders there, and it was just five blocks south of my apartment on 15th Avenue NE. I asked her to invite me to UPC. Immediately, she began discipling me. (Oh, and three weeks after looking her up, she became my fiancé. Rev. Steve Hayner, our College Pastor, married us in 1981 at UPC.)

I joined UPC before our wedding and our first apartment was kitty-corner northeast of UPC. We were active with the Inn, the college group at UPC. I later assisted the Campus Crusade for Christ staff at the University of Washington in my capacity as a Christian faculty member.

At some point, I moved my membership to the First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue (now just Bellevue Presbyterian Church), it being just five blocks north of our home in West Bellevue. However, my wife didn't change her membership away from UPC. We worshiped with both congregations.

By 1982, I was debating pursuing an M.Div. or a Ph.D. Since I was already on the UW faculty, I chose the Ph.D. route, but before those studies could begin in Autumn 1983, I took three courses from Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary (now part of Cornerstone University): *Christian Life*, *Church History*, and *Christian Education*.

I completed my UW Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies in 1989, and that same year left the UW and moved three miles west down the Lake Washington Ship Canal to Seattle Pacific University, a Free Methodist affiliated school.

My Christian service lagged during the years our children were young. They were born in 1987, 1989, and 1992. But in 1993, my service at Bellevue Presbyterian Church began to increase after a sermon from John 5 got me moving.

I became active in that church's Men's Ministry, including chairing their annual retreat in 1997. I served on the Adult Education committee. I taught children's Sunday School, and eventually became a teacher in their adult education program. I became the regular back-up Bible teacher filling in for their Pastor of Adult Education, Rev. Randy Working. Eventually, I led their large weekly men's Bible study for seventeen years.

A member of that men's group suggested me to the folks at the large Emerald Heights Retirement Community in Redmond, WA as a prospective Bible teacher. I've been teaching there each year since 2012 with a two-year break for the "stay home, stay healthy" COVID years. For much of that time, I was the only layman that they would invite in as a Bible teacher. But when they began to publish that "Reverend Richard Sleight," emeritus faculty member from SPU, was returning to offer another lecture series on a book of the Bible, I went through the process to be vetted as an Ordained Independent Minister of the Gospel by the National Association of Christian Ministers.

By my experience and by the witness of others, I believe my principal spiritual gift is "teaching." I retired as an emeritus faculty member at SPU in 2021. Like my 44 years of college teaching at the UW and SPU, my well-researched Bible lectures are typically 50-55 minutes long backed up by effective PowerPoint graphics. I am careful to conform my teaching to the standards of the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. I am well aware of Presbyterian beliefs and history. While active at Bellevue Presbyterian Church, I taught an eight-week series on our Book of Confessions on three separate occasions.

And my current relationship with Jesus? It is the same as the author of *Amazing Grace*.

"My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things, that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." -- John Newton, age 82

Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Philip P. Bliss, published 1875

"Man of Sorrows!" what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;
"It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in Heav'n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew His song we'll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

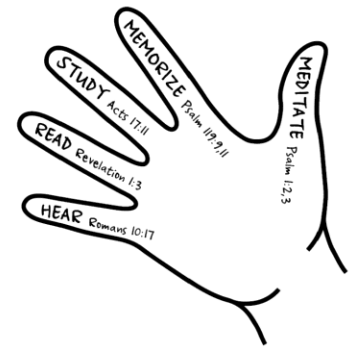


The Navigator's Wheel® illustration is an effective way to measure one's current relationship with Jesus. The four responsibilities/opportunities of prayer, Scripture, witnessing, and fellowship are the spiritual disciplines we can consider.

Prayer: I realize I treat prayer like I do my wallet and cell phone. They are always near me, and I make use of them whenever it's appropriate. Paul's admonishment to, "pray without ceasing" ^{1 Thess 5:17} is closer to "never get to the point

where you cease to rely on God's resources through prayer," than it is to, "be every waking moment in an attitude of prayer."

The Word: Again, a Navigator's illustration helps me think about how I interact with Scripture. I love to just listen to the Bible as it is read by Sir David Suchet. As a "gifted" Bible teacher, I read, study, and meditate on God's Word daily. In a sense, Bible reading and research with a view toward teaching others is my spiritual day job. However, I have not actively been involved with Scripture memory for many years. Having ready electronic access to digital Bible tools is a modern substitute for this.



Witnessing: I have been very open about my faith (knowledge, assent, and trust) in Jesus since my new birth in 1980. I am well prepared and delighted when asked to "...make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." ^{1 Peter 3:15 NASB}

Fellowship: While I confess to being an introvert, I have attended UPC and/or Bellevue Presbyterian on a weekly basis since 1980. I have served on committees, taught Sunday School, and led Bible studies for decades. I am approaching 70-years-of-age, and most of my closest Christian friends on the Eastside have graduated to glory. Many of my friends from SPU attend UPC. I also enjoy fellowshiping in the Body of Christ with the SPU emeriti faculty, my fellow ministers in the National Association of Christian Ministers (NACM), and with the senior saints at the Emerald Heights Retirement Community. Outside the Church I serve the West Seattle High School Alumni Association and the West Seattle Monogram Club. As an "on-call grandpa" with eleven grandchildren under age seven, I am careful to budget my time to be fully available to my extended family.