



BROWNCROFT COMMUNITY CHURCH
candidate biographies

2023-24 LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES

ELDER BOARD

TERM: 3 YEARS OPEN POSITIONS: 5

CANDIDATES:

Adele Bovard

Mark Mathias*

Christina Neitz*

Steve Pelton

Keith Smith

AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE

TERM: 3 YEAR | OPEN POSITIONS: 2

CANDIDATES:

Daniel Ross* (2-year term)

William Ueland*

*Incumbent



ADELE BOVARD

ELDER CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: David

CHILDREN: Rachel, Amy, Jesse, and Samuel

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 2009

FAITH STORY:

I was raised in the Catholic Church until the oldest member of my seven siblings called my father and told him, "There is more to God than you know about." This conversation prompted a search for God that swept through my family beginning with my parents. They encountered a life-changing relationships with Jesus and became part of the full gospel movement in the seventies. One by one, each of their children had an encounter with God and surrendered to Him as Lord and Savior of their life. A local non-denominational Bible training center became our church family. I made the decision to be water baptized in a river adjacent to the training center.

As college approached, through much prayer and divine intervention, my parents sent me to Roberts Wesleyan College where I met and married a Presbyterian Minister's son David Bovard. We began our own family, had four children, and moved locations as we engaged in our careers. We attended churches where the love for God was evident. Our move to this area was prompted by my husband's assignment to Rochester and by my opportunity to serve as Superintendent of Webster Schools. During this time, we found Browncroft Community Church and have made this our church home. We have found over the years that our faith transcends any denomination. It is our way of life. Acts 17: "in Him we live and move and have our being."

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

Morning Devotion and Prayer have been part of my life since I accepted Christ as my Savior at age 10. My gifts include administration (I have held various leadership roles), mercy (I serve as a mentor to people as they consider their life path and faith, I engage with people when there has been harm and conflict, allow them to tell their story and bring them together when possible to resolve what has caused the conflict), teaching and speaking (I engage with schools and organizations to teach and engage them in the art of restorative practice and restorative justice).

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

Small group leader, Small group coordinator, Restorative Practice and Restorative Justice Practitioner and Educator (Micah 6:8 - This is what God desires for you. That you do justice. That you love kindness. That you walk humbly with your God.) Service Action: Seek Justice, Love Justice, Do Justice: I engage in practices that promote justice, kindness, peacemaking, empathy.

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Rooted Group Leader
Youth group leader

CAREER INFO

Stay-at-home mother when children were young
Public School Teacher
Building Principal of elementary and secondary buildings
Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Superintendent of Schools
Now retired and working and volunteering in restorative practices and restorative justice

ADELE BOVARD

(CONTINUED)

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

I see God at work in Browncroft Community Church. I am honored to be part of the ongoing work of the church, especially its impact on its members, the local community and the ministries it supports both nationally and internationally.

I have many years of engagement with boards as Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent of Schools. During that time, I appreciated board members who came to the work with a servant's heart and a desire to use the skills they possessed to support the ongoing work of the district. I am prepared to do that for Browncroft.

I currently serve on two boards for New York State organizations and know how important it is to have board members who support the vision and mission of the organization in thought and deed.



MARK MATHIAS

ELDER CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Laura

CHILDREN: Andrew, Jeremie, and Kevin

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 1998

FAITH STORY:

I was raised in a Lutheran family but was not a Christ-follower as I entered my teen years. After a few years of mild rebellion and searching, God softened my heart to the idea of following Jesus. Specifically, I reached a point of surrender to Jesus' guidance in my life in my first week at college, in part through the encouragement and example of my cousin. I actively participated in a college parachurch organization and in a solid campus church, where I was baptized and the foundation for my faith was laid. Laura, who I knew from high school, became a Christ-follower at the same time through independent means. We got married after we both graduated from college and have had the privilege of serving the Lord together for the last 41 years.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

I practice a regular "Time with God" in which I read through the Bible and briefly journal my understanding of what it means for my relationship with God. I also aim to invite God into my interactions real-time, seeking to draw on and display the power of God throughout each day.

I believe God has gifted me in the area of hospitality (reaching to those on fringes), teaching (most clearly in small group study), and wisdom (able to see issues from various perspectives and find a path forward).

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

I have served on the Elder Board since Oct. 2019, initially filling a one year term of an elder who stepped down with one year left in his tenure. I was then elected to a three year term in Oct. 2020. I have been a part of the Congregational Care Team to support Jay Sweiringa's work on BCC staff. I also served on a "Racial Reconciliation Task Team" that brought recommendations to the Elder Board for next steps BCC can take in response to displays of racism in our country. In 2022, I served on an elder task team that worked to clarify BCC leadership positions on issues of sexuality and identity. I was honored to be nominated and serve as the Chairman of the Elder Board from Oct. 2022 to the present.

Laura and I have together led small groups at BCC since we began attending 25 years ago. We most recently led a small group that started in Oct. 2018 and wrapped up in June 2022.

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

We moved to Michigan from 2013 to 2018 and were fortunate to attend a great church there where Laura and I led Alpha groups, which are designed for folks taking early steps in seriously considering if and how to follow Jesus. We also led a small group that met for three years.

I served as a site co-leader in Flower City Work Camp in 2019 and 2021 and at Alpha as a Table Host (with Laura) in March-May 2019.

I led Starting Point groups at BCC between approximately 2010 and 2013, when that was the means being used to help folks take early steps in their faith.

I served on the Small Group Leadership Team at BCC between approximately 2003-2010, encouraging group growth and helping people get connected to groups.

MARK MATHIAS

(CONTINUED)

CAREER INFO

I am trained as a Chemical Engineer and most recently worked for GM for 20 years on fuel cell and battery technology development. I had about six years of executive leadership experience there before wrapping up in mid-2018 and moving back to Rochester.

I am now an engineering consultant and teaching a course each fall semester as an Adjunct Professor at the Univ. of Rochester.

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

I see tremendous potential for God to use BCC to impact the lives of staff, congregation, and the broader community given the people and financial resources he has entrusted to us. I have sensed God's work in and through me in my four-years of service on the elder board and perceive that I have gifts and perspectives that complement those of other board members. I also am enthused to see some of the younger leaders on the elder board, and I am eager to serve with them and support them in their service.



CHRISTINA NEITZ

ELDER CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Chris

CHILDREN: Gianna, Jeremiah, and Eli

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 2008

FAITH STORY:

I grew up in a rural Ohio town filled with corn fields and 4-wheelers, with not too much to do to keep kids busy. Coming from a non-Christian home, we didn't have many ties to our little community other than school (which was a 15-minute car drive away) and my mom working at the local convenience shop. My first introduction to Jesus was at the Methodist church in our little farm town, at age 9, when my parents sent me there to make friends with kids more central to our own home. There I learned about the love of God, The Lord's Prayer, and the miracles of Jesus. Around age 12 I stopped going to that church because I was too involved with other school activities and just ran out of time.

Around age 16 I was invited by a high school friend to her church's youth group. I love to meet new people, go to gatherings, and have fun, so I was game! I joined her and felt like I fit right in. I was home. I loved the people, their lifestyle, and their love for honoring God with their thoughts, actions, and lives. As time went on and I became more connected to the church family, I learned about salvation, about having a committed relationship with God, and that Christ was the only way to those wonderful things. I learned how to pray, what healthy relationships should look like, was encouraged to serve, and spent time in the Word. God began the life-long transformative process in my life: I went from working hard to find my value in academics/sports/relationships, to the joy that comes from knowing I am valuable simply because I'm a daughter of the King, the One True God, and He loves me.

Gratefully, God has been faithful to continue to pursue me in every stage of my life since that very young age, and has not given up on me, not forgotten me. There is evidence of His continued salvation all throughout my college years, my professional years, and now my time as a homeschooling mom of 3 kids. 24 years later He continues to transform my life, graciously showing me my sinfulness, His godliness, softening my heart, and showing me I am more valued by Him than I ever imagined.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

Pulling from the list of spiritual gifts Paul outlines in both Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12, the Lord has given me the gifts of encouragement, giving, showing mercy, and giving wise advice through the Spirit. While I think He has grown me in other areas over time with some practice, these are certainly the strongest.

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

Currently I primarily serve in our interpreting ministry as an American Sign Language interpreter, and as an elder on our Elder Board. I also have a heart for prayer, and love to serve as a prayer minister when opportunity allows. And finally, I have done the fun work of coming up with ideas to create a warm atmosphere for our church during holidays and events.

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Since I was drawn to Browncroft because of our ministry of interpreting for folks who are Deaf, I've always been an Interpreter here. In the past I spent a lot of time in Family Ministry, substituting as the needs arise.

CHRISTINA NEITZ

(CONTINUED)

CAREER INFO

My degree is a Bachelor of Science in American Sign Language Interpreting. I worked as a full time interpreter at RIT until I had my daughter 12 years ago. I moved into the role of stay-at-home mom, but still worked part time as an interpreter. A couple of years ago I felt the Lord telling me to focus my effort and time on just one career, and, together with my husband, I chose staying home to homeschool our children. We just began our 9th year!

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the board for the last 3 years. There have been many ups and downs as I have learned to serve at this level of leadership, but I would never trade them. The Lord has stretched me beyond what I could have imagined, and my trust in Him has grown tremendously since first saying “yes” 3 years ago. Hearing from the Holy Spirit is an incredible experience, and serving here draws me to my knees each day, asking for His influence. He never fails to present himself to me. I am so, so grateful for that.

As I said before, and still believe today: Scripture says the Body of Christ functions at its best when all of its parts are present, intact, and working together (1 Corinthians 12). God has given our church a wonderful Board of Elders with many gifts; all of whom I trust and am so grateful to have caring for and representing our members. Since considering praying over joining the team for a second term, I’ve recognized that God has also given me gifts that, I hope, will continue to help this Board of Elders (body) function at an even greater level than before.

“But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it... this makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other.... All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12:18, 25, 27



STEVE PELTON

ELDER CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Jen

CHILDREN: Sophie and Stevie

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 1977

FAITH STORY:

I was blessed to have grown up in a Browncroft-attending family and to have had my faith influenced by so many people in this wonderful church. I became a follower of Jesus at a very early age, and growing up in a Christian family, my faith grew. In college though, my faith really became mine. Back then, we had a college Sunday school class (where I eventually met my wife) in which I was able to see my interest in the Bible and theology flourish, ultimately leading me to attend seminary. Now my wife and I are thankful to be able to lean on Browncroft as we seek to raise our own children in a healthy and Christ-centered household.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

I've taken the spiritual gifts survey provided to BCC a few times, and it's shown me that teaching is probably my strongest spiritual gift. Others that emerged near the top are shepherding and exhortation, and even mercy-giving (which honestly, I didn't expect!). But I've long had a passion for studying Scripture and theology, which is what prompted me to go to seminary in my mid-twenties.

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

- Digital host and pastor for the Sunday morning live stream.
- Family Ministry: Check-in team for Wednesday youth group and member of the new parental committee for family ministries.
- Sunday Evening Fellowship: Fill-in teacher/pastor (a few times a year).

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

I've had many great opportunities to serve at BCC over the years. I've acted as a teacher in various areas of adult ministry and have sat on many different committees too, I give sermons to the Sunday Evening Fellowship group from time to time, I've been on hiring committees, and have even served in children's ministries (although not for some time).

CAREER INFO

I'm a member of the full-time faculty at Bryant & Stratton College.

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

Browncroft has had a major impact on my spiritual development, as I've been blessed through it in so many ways. So I think it's important to give back to the church that has given me so much. I've seen BCC evolve a lot over my life, and I want to be a part of setting its direction going forward.



KEITH SMITH

ELDER CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Kathleen

CHILDREN: Nathan and Erin

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 2001

FAITH STORY:

Grew up in a Roman Catholic culture (Easter/Christmas mass attenders as well as sacrament CDD attenders) in Chili so I was exposed to Christian worldview and Catholic culture but it was not personal. I tried to find fulfillment in a lot of places like academic achievement, running, stoicism and drinking over my college and early career years. None provided the relationship & satisfaction I was looking for. When I was stationed in California while in the Air Force, I became interested in discovering God after forming a friendship with a Christian. I read the Bible and discussed it with my friends. After reading John's gospel on Palm Sunday in 1998, I accepted Christ at a non-denominational church in California. After this I was plugged into a small group Bible Study with other Air Force officers who became my best friends. Over the next few years, I grew in the understanding of God and his role in our lives as I served in local outreach ministries to the homeless, short-term international missions and as a men's small group bible study leader. I met my wife while serving as a small group leader and we were married in 1993. Marriage was a growing process of learning how to serve each other while following God's principles. We became parents in 1995 and 1998 which further stretched our love for and understanding of God.

In 2000, the house we were renting was sold so with God's guidance we left California and moved to Rochester without a job. God provided the right job in Rochester for a 20-year career and provided financial stability for our family. We started to attend Browncroft in 2001 as the church had a statement of faith we agreed with and the closest culture to the church we were attending in California. Since we started attending, I have gotten involved in a men's small group and continue to grow via this group. I was also involved in Stockade and junior high school ministry as my son grew through those age groups. I have also used the financial skills I have developed over the years to lead the finance committee at the school my children attended, the Charles Finney School. Over the past few years, I have enjoyed studying history and how God has shaped our and other cultures throughout the ages.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

Helps, Mercy, Knowledge & Wisdom/Understanding

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

Men's Small Group Leader; Hospitality – Sunday morning Usher; Browncroft Kids' Leader (Sub)

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Youth – Stockade Leader; Jr. High Sundry School Teacher; Finance & Facilities Committee Member

CAREER INFO

1986 – 1993 AF Officer - Systems Engineer; 1993-1997 Cost Engineer/Team Leader, NCR Federal Systems; 1997-2000 Valuation Associate/Manager PriceWaterhouse Coopers; Valuation Manager/Managing Director Empire Valuation Consultants; 2000-2017.

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

I would like to use my financial skills and spiritual gifts in service to facilitate the vision and mission of Browncroft Community Church.



DANIEL ROSS

AUDIT & FINANCE TEAM CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Carol

CHILDREN: Kristen, Sandra, and Stephen

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 1999

FAITH STORY:

I consider myself fortunate that Christianity has always been present in my life. Having parents and grandparents that were strong believers certainly had an influence on me. Yet we all know that Christianity is not inherited. It is something you need to adopt for yourself. For me I accepted Christ in my later teen years even though I didn't fully comprehend it. I just trusted Christ. Over the years I took steps toward maturing that faith in Christ. Even during difficult times in my life when others might have suggested that I had every reason to walk away from Christ, that's when my strength in Him grew. Today, while I might consider myself a mature Christian, I am by no means done in my growth. .

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

I believe God has given me the spiritual gift of administration which allows me to think logically, plan, organize, and follow through on matters of importance. This gift provides me the opportunity to work with others to ensure the success of a project or vision.

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

Currently serving on the Finance and Facility Committee .

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Past service has been on the Personnel Committee, Finance and Facility Committee, Tree Climbers as a co-leader for various age groups, a co-leader for junior high boy's young group and Sunday school as a guitarist.

CAREER INFO

Currently and over the past 11 years I have held the position of Corporate Controller and Compliance Officer for Heritage Christian Services. In this role I oversee accounting and finance, payroll and benefits, risk management and compliance functions. I sit on the Audit & Finance Committee, IT Steering Committee, and The IT Security Committee and am a Trustee to the company pension fund. I have been in accounting and finance roles for more than 35 years. I hold both a Bachelor's of Science and a Master's degree in Business Administration.

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

As a member of the church, participation in the life of the church is important to me and I have participated in various ways in the past. At this particular point in time, an opportunity to serve in a meaningful way that aligns with my expertise, gifts and desire to serve seems like a calling.



WILLIAM UELAND

AUDIT & FINANCE TEAM CANDIDATE

SPOUSE: Cynthia

CHILDREN: Annika, Greta , and Asa

AT BROWNCROFT SINCE: 2007

FAITH STORY:

As a self-proclaimed atheist in high school, I started to read the Bible to fully appreciate what I did not believe in. By the end of Genesis, I was agnostic. By the end of Exodus, the Word changed me into a seeker of His Truth and forgiveness. Through a summer of prayer, I opened my heart to Him and received His forgiveness on August 6, 1998. Since then, I have continually been challenged to deepen my understanding of His will for my life and how I can be a better ambassador of His teachings.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/ GIFTS

In my Christian walk, my primary spiritual gifts are administration, giving, encouragement, and teaching. I have been able to share in my administration gift as a team member of the Finance and Facilities team over the past 7 years, in which we improved internal controls over the financial reporting functions and budgeting of expenses. I have exhibited my gifts of encouragement and teaching as a small group leader within Browncroft over the past 14 years.

AREAS OF CURRENT SERVICE

- Finance and Facilities Committee 2014 – current (Chair 2015 - 2021)
- Small Group Leader 2020 – current (intermittent with COVID)

PAST SERVICE EXPERIENCE

- Treasurer 2020-2021
- Rooted Pilot 2019
- Counting House 2014-2020
- Fusion 2012-2015
- Café 2010-2011
- Small Group Steering Committee 2009-2011
- Graduates and Professionals (G.A.P.) 2008-2011 – Community Service Coordinator, Small Group Leader

CAREER INFO

Experience

- Tax Director 05/19 – present
Paychex, Inc., Rochester NY
- Tax Director (last position held) 05/11 – 05/19
Carestream Health, Inc., Rochester NY
- Tax Manager (last position held) 09/04 – 05/11
PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, Rochester NY
- Cost of Access (COA) Auditor 05/03 – 09/04
Global Crossing, Pittsford NY

Certifications

- New York State Certified Public Accountant - License #097084
- Completed the Chartered Financial Analyst Level I Exam

Education

- **Masters of Business Administration**, Rochester Institute of Technology (AACSB) February 2003
Accounting Concentration (CPA Track) with a Focus in Finance
- **Bachelors of Science, Business Administration**, Alfred University (AACSB) May 2001
Marketing Major, Communication Studies Minor, Alfred University Scholar
Summa Cum Laude

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OF BROWNCROFT

As a part of Browncroft over the past 14 years, I have sought opportunities to use my talents to further His kingdom within this community. With a background in finance, I have been able to use this gift as the Chair of the Finance and Facilities team. This experience, in tandem with my past experiences across various programs within the church, I believe that I can ensure the church's investment and spending are aligned with its ultimate mission to invite others into a life-changing relationship with Jesus.