

Chelsea First United Methodist Church Leadership Board profiles

Class of 2026



Kasie Cousino

Age: 45

A little about me: I am a Washtenaw County lifer and continue to enjoy the ever evolving nature of Chelsea, Dexter, Ann Arbor and the surrounding towns. My husband Ryan and I have been married for 15 years and have two children, Avery (13) and Jake (11). I enjoy spending time with family and friends and being active or outside, walking on the trails, yoga and on the lake.

My church life: Chelsea First has been the church that I grew up in, from age 6 when my parents switched from Dexter UMC. Since returning to the church as an adult, I've enjoyed working on the children's ministry and missions groups, serving on the finance team and am hopeful to serve the congregation as a whole with the Leadership Board.

My work life: It took me a while to figure out what I wanted to do with my degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan. After time working as a bartender, eighth grade math teacher, and mortgage broker, I settled in the fascinating world of insurance. I was incredibly blessed to find a company willing to invest in me where I could love the work I do, as dry as insurance company management may seem.



Todd Hubbard

Age: 64

A little about me: I grew up in Royal Oak and graduated from Kettering University and the University of Michigan. I married a wonderful woman in 1989 and we raised three wonderful children – Gwen (and Ben) live in Chelsea, Marty lives in West Hollywood, and Kirby lives in Houghton. I enjoy camping, hiking, and building stuff.

My church life: Deb and I started attending Chelsea First when we moved to the area in 1992. We have both served on various leadership committees over the years.

My work life: I was a healthcare product manager for most of my career. After retiring, I worked 3+ years for a local company building theatrical sets for amusement parks around the country. It was great fun!



Mike Vanderspool

Age: 60

A little about me: I grew up in Indiana, graduating from Purdue University (Boiler Up!). Allison and I married in 1997 and have 2 children. Drew graduated from U-M and is now in San Francisco, and Kate is graduating from Michigan State this spring. I enjoy being outdoors when I can, travelling to places new and familiar, and brewing an occasional batch of homebrew.

My church life: We've been attending Chelsea First since about 2000 after moving back to Allison's home state from Kansas City. It's been very rewarding to be involved in several church teams and committees over the years, as well as sporadically finding myself learning from the youth in various ways. I'm currently honored to be serving on our church's first Leadership Board.

My work life: It's bittersweet (more sweet than bitter) to say that my professional work life as I've known it for almost 40 years is coming to an end in March 2025. I've held various operations and project management roles in several industries in 3 states. While I've worked for some great companies, the best memories are the friends I've made along the way. I look forward to the opportunities this "third third" of life has in store!

Class of 2027



Rick Fitzgerald

Age: 72

A little about me: We've lived in the Dexter-Chelsea area since 1989 and our two adult children are Dexter High graduates. We enjoy family time (four grandchildren), traveling and being outside. I'm an avid trail runner who is still transitioning to retirement after a year of not working full time.

My church life: I often refer to myself as one of the Dexter UMC refugees and we are thankful to have found a welcoming new church home at Chelsea First. We've participated in the adult education classes with a social justice focus and traveled to serve at Midwest Mission. Previously Cathy and I have been youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, coffee hour coordinators and volunteers at Red Bird Mission. We have deep roots in the UMC: Cathy's grandfather was a UMC pastor; Cathy and I met at First UMC in Saginaw.

My work life: I retired from the University of Michigan in January 2024 after working in communications and serving as the primary public spokesperson for 15 years. Before that I had a long career as a reporter and editor in the news business, most of it at The Ann Arbor News. Cathy also is retired from U-M, as a registered dietitian.



Heather Hay

Age: 51

A little about me: Mike and I have been married for 28 years. We have two children, Briana and Colin, who both graduated from Chelsea High School and are currently at Ohio State and Michigan State. I love to spend time with family, read, crochet, exercise, bird watch, and travel.

My church life: We have attended Chelsea First for 20 years. I feel so blessed that my children were able to begin their faith journey in this church. Over the years I've been involved in children's ministry activities, various small groups, SPRC, Congregational Care Team, Ad Council, and now feel privileged to be serving on the Leadership Board.

My work life: I am an elementary educator. I have been teaching for 23 years in various grades including preschool, young fives, kindergarten, first, and third grades. I am currently a first grade teacher at North Creek Elementary.



Nolan Peterson

Age: 28

A little about me: I grew up in Chelsea. I went to Eastern Michigan University and majored in elementary education. I moved back in with my parents after graduating. I enjoy spending time with my parents, Mark and Tammy, and my younger brother, Connor. In my freetime, I enjoy listening to music, watching movies and spending time with friends.

My church life: I have attended Chelsea First since I was in preschool. I have been involved in many ministries throughout my years. Currently I am involved with the Rezound Handbell Ensemble, Messy Church, Sunday Fundays, and I run the projector during Sunday services. I was previously a member of the Administrative Council. I am excited to be a part of this new leadership structure.

My work life: I am an elementary educator. I have been working in this field for 5 years. I currently teach second grade at Manchester Community Schools.

Class of 2028



Andrea Alford

Age: 53

A little about me: My husband Jim and I have two boys who graduated from Chelsea High School. We enjoy playing board games, watching movies, hiking, reading, cooking and listening to music together.

My church life: Jim grew up in Chelsea First and we joined together in 2005 when we moved to Chelsea from North Carolina. I help with Connect children's ministry on Sunday mornings, I play in the Rezound Handbell Ensemble and, this past year, I began participating in Monday Night Bible Study.

My work life: I am a cell biologist, and I work as an associate research scientist in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Michigan. The Alford lab studies skeletal stem and progenitor cells in the context of bone healing. We also study bone tissue quality.



Curtis Collins

Age: 49

A little about me: My wife, Emily, and I live in the Dexter area with our two daughters and our 13-year-old golden retriever. In my free time, I enjoy keeping up with the girls, squeezing in the occasional round of golf (usually a humbling one) and riding my bike on the local trails.

My church life: I'm a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church and grew up in the church in my home state of Iowa. Our family is grateful to find a home at Chelsea First and to get to know so many warm and welcoming people. It's an honor to serve on the board and support the ministry of this congregation.

My work life: I'm a pharmacist specializing in infectious diseases, working with care teams at local hospitals. If you ever have general questions about antibiotics (and why using them wisely matters), I'm always happy to talk.



David Shaw

Age: 66

A little about me: I grew up in New Jersey in a small town not far from New York City. I went to college in Pennsylvania, then found a job in Michigan in 1981. I moved to Jackson where my wife, Kathy, and I met, married, and raised our two sons. We moved to Chelsea in 2021 to be closer to our sons who at that time lived in Chelsea and Saline. Kathy died in 2022 of posterior cortical atrophy. I have been enjoying getting to know Chelsea and becoming part of this great community. You can find me around town walking with my

dog, Fergus, or riding my bicycle.

My church life: I grew up in a United Church of Christ congregation in New Jersey. When I moved to Jackson I joined the First Congregational Church there. When Kathy and I married, it was at Calvary United Methodist in Jackson, where her family had been members for four generations. We served in several areas there for many years. We then joined Jackson First Church of the Nazarene and served in several ministries until moving to Chelsea. I have been at Chelsea First since 2022.

My work life: I worked in several areas of mechanical engineering involved with buildings, including HVAC systems design, troubleshooting, operations and maintenance supervision, investigations and energy management. I worked at several consulting firms, Dart Container, Consumers Energy, EFI Global, and the University of Michigan. I retired in 2017.

Non-voting Members



Jeff Melvin, lay leader

Age: 66

A little about me: I was raised on a farrow-to-finish hog and grain farm in Bloomingdale, Michigan. I have degrees from Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Grand Valley State and Western Michigan University in the field of education. Tammy and I have been married 37 years, have three children and three grandchildren. I buy and sell antiques and vintage items and play golf.

My church life: I grew up attending the United Methodist Church in Bloomingdale and then the Townline UMC which was less than a half mile from our farm. Tammy and I were members of Simpson UMC in Bangor from 1987 until we moved. I served on many committees at Simpson and was also the Lay Leader. Tammy served as a part-time secretary there.

My work life: I worked on the farm until my Dad retired in 2004. I was a public educator for 32.7 years - not that I'm counting. I taught elementary physical education for three years, served as an athletic director, assistant principal and principal in Bloomingdale and then as a principal in Bangor (seven at the middle school, 17 at the high school) until I retired Oct. 31, 2014. I then worked four years as the volunteer coordinator at Bronson South Haven hospital and now work two days a week at Chelsea Hospital as a customer service assistant at the Cancer Center. I also do some contract work for Portage Public Schools,



Joy Barrett, pastor

Age: 66

A little about me: I was born in western Massachusetts; as a young child we lived in Orlando, Florida (pre-Disney World), then moved to Bay City, MI when I was 8 years old. Michigan has been home ever since. I have three siblings: two sisters and one brother; I am the oldest of the bunch. I am a graduate of Michigan State University (B.A) and Boston University School of Theology (M.Div.). Rob and I met in graduate school in Boston in 1980; we were married in 1984. I enjoy walks in the woods and cooking for relaxation.

My church life: Christian faith and active engagement in a local church have been part of my life since the very beginning. We found our way to the United Methodist Church when I was in middle school. I was active in Sunday School, worship and the youth group and was privileged to have leadership roles in our church even as a teenager. Church camp and mission trips were formative experiences for me, along with amazing mentors and role models in our local church.

My work life: I graduated from seminary in 1983, and have been serving as a United Methodist pastor ever since. My appointments have been: Gordonville, in Midland; Sterling Heights; Saginaw State Street; Ann Arbor District superintendent; Chelsea First. I feel so deeply blessed and humbled through my calling to pastoral ministry. I continue to rejoice in the learning and inspiration that comes to me from the gifted, wise, and faithful people among whom I serve. All of us are works in progress and I thank you for continuing to teach me.