

GROWING IN

Grace

The Monthly Newsletter of Morning † Star Lutheran and Monroe United Methodist Churches

July 2023

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Thoughts from Pr. Malcolm

July 2023

Part 2- Part 1 was in June's Growing in Grace Newsletter

I invite you this summer to make room in your busy schedule for some “Abiding time or Sabbath rest”, with God, with family and friends. Find time to intentionally rest and abide with God, listening to His voice comforting you and giving you rest and peace. This could be as part of vacation time that is used in part for rest and renewal or a part of each week. Listen for God’s voice in the thin silences of your days; see God’s abundance and beauty in all that is around you. Know that God is all of creation and in all the people who intersect with you this summer from the grocery clerk, to the child playing in the park, from families taking a walk together to the person on the street whom you struggle to look into their eyes.

Find Joy and Bliss a lot this summer to celebrate the gift of time with our family, friends and the loves of our lives as we strengthen and go deeper into our relationships. Have fun; share meals together, wonder like a child a lot, enjoy the sun when we have it and laugh, laugh a lot with others. Hold each other in the stuff of life that gets us down and hold each other as the sun sets each day, because tomorrow the sun will rise and the promise of a new day and new life have been given to us by God through the continued resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Know that all of this is of God and God is waiting and longing for His time with you.

The gift of time and presence you spend with your loved ones are seeds that will last a lifetime and will change your life and the lives of those you touch. The seeds will grow and beauty of the blooms of love and grace will be abundant and will leave a permanent mark long after we are gone.

I leave you with these words by Seattle playwright Stephen Dietz:

"What do we affect during our lifetime? What ultimately, is our legacy?" I believe, in most cases, our legacy is our friends (loves). We write our history onto them, and they walk with us through our days like time capsules, filled with our mutual past, the fragments of our hearts and minds. Our friends get our uncensored questions, and our yet to be reasoned opinions. Our friends (loves) grant us the change to make our grand, embarrassing, contradictory pronouncements about the world. They get the very best, and are stuck with the absolute worst, we have to offer. Our friends (loves) get our rough drafts. Over time, they both open our eyes and break our hearts...

May God’s abundant grace and love bring you wonder and awe and may the gift of family and friends bring you love and grace in these summer months!

Pr Malcolm

WILD CHURCH

What is “Wild Church”? Wild Church is an emerging movement around the world to recognize and participate in the similarities of all beings, elements, and places. Wild churches don’t just meet outside; they gather to connect with nature as a community, to care for creation and deepen their faith in the Creator.



Wild Church gatherings offer opportunities for contemplation, meditation, solo wandering and wondering, and building relationships through shared meals and time spent together in nature. It’s a way to encounter God in the wilderness and create beloved community as you reconnect with creation.

There are many stories in the bible where people went out into the wild for periods of contemplation and renewal; to reprioritize and reorganize. Returning to nature helps us reconnect to our origin stories, both personally and collectively. God did not create us separate from the rest of nature. We were called to be God’s stewards of all Creation. As a world recovering from a pandemic, facing the consequences of hundreds of years of seeing the natural world simply as a “resource,” and a people becoming more divided, now is the time for us to pause, breathe, and recall the interconnectedness and sacredness of all living things.

Our first Wild Church gathering is Saturday, July 15th, beginning at 10:00am. Kathleen Sallee has graciously offered her property, which has well marked trails from 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile long. There are places to sit along the trail and at the beginning if you’d rather not wander far. (11210 Bollenbaugh Hill Rd., Monroe. Parking is limited so carpooling is suggested.)

Future Wild Church gatherings are planned for Al Borlin Park and Sky Valley Park. The plan at this time to offer Wild Church once per month.

Wild Church is open to all: believers and non-believers, those with questions, and those who want to learn a new way to connect with the Creator. People of all ages are welcome.

(sentences in this article are taken from the St. Andrew Lutheran Wild Church website)

JULY SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE



There are A LOT of **open** spots again this month. Please email the office and let me know where you would like to serve. No experience necessary—on the job training is provided! You’ll find this form, as well as **August**, in the church narthex under “*Sign Up To Serve*”

	JULY 2	JULY 9	JULY 16	JULY 23	JULY 30
Worship Asst.	Nancy Franke	Missy Maxson	Nancy Franke	Nancy Franke	Nancy Franke
Greeter	Denny & Diane Coates	Velma Smith	Valerie & Perry Cole	OPEN	Velma Smith
Ushers	OPEN	OPEN	Valerie & Perry Cole	OPEN	OPEN
Acolyte	OPEN	OPEN	Valerie Cole	OPEN	OPEN
Communion Prep.	Harriet Barr	OPEN	Charlie Brown	OPEN	Charlie Brown
Serve Communion need 2	John & Tanya Hubbard	OPEN	Charlie Brown OPEN	OPEN OPEN	Charlie Brown OPEN
Coffee Hour	Kathleen Sallee	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Altar Flowers	Tanya Hubbard	OPEN	OPEN	Jill Sumpter	OPEN
Soundboard	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley

GOOD NEWS

Granted Sign of Grace

In May, MSLC applied for a grant from the NWWA Synod Grace Grant Committee and has been granted \$1,300!! These funds were applied for to allow the MSLC congregation to contribute to, and have ownership in, the new electronic sign, along with the MUMC, that is the a very visible part of our new combined congregation of United in Grace. It is now "our" symbol of what we share together. It is the hope of our leadership team that this will help to bring us all a little closer to truly thinking of ourselves as one congregation, not just Lutherans or Methodists.

Brown Bag Brigade is still here!

The Brown Bag Brigade continues to meet every Wednesday at 9am in the parish hall of Monroe Congregational Church. We prepare 50 snack bags for the Monroe Boys and Girls Club, 20 lunches and 20 snack bags for Take the Next Step, and 10 lunches for the Monroe Gospel Women's Shelter. We rely solely on financial donations to purchase supplies. Your contributions are very welcome!

Members of our small crew really enjoy working together. If you'd like to join us (and you're welcome to!), drop in any Wednesday. Also, if you would like to make cookies for the lunches, contact Kathleen.



Hazel's Little Free Pantry

With the summer heat upon us, water is essential for our friends without housing. Cases of water are fairly inexpensive and would be greatly appreciated. You can drop these by the office anytime, just let Kathi know so she can come to the office to bring them inside. Text her at 425-293-8694. You can also bring them with you on Sunday mornings.

If you're out and about and happen to think about it, stop by the store and pick up a bag of ice for the cooler on the office front deck. Go ahead and drop it in, even if there is already ice inside. It melts fast! Thank you!



The Second Sunday of the Month is now **Brown Bag Sunday** and the Last Sunday of the Month is **Hazel's Little Free Pantry Sunday!**

Specially marked envelopes for both ministries can be found in the backs of the pews.

Your offering can also be mailed to the church office in you're unable to attend.

412 S. Lewis St., Monroe WA 98272

Thank you for your continued support of these United in Grace Ministries!

congregational CARE

Bettie Louise Dean passed away on May 14 peacefully in her bed.

In a world adorned with memories sweet, where love's embrace and laughter meet, a cherished soul has taken flight, on the Mother's Day, bathed in light. With grace and strength, she walked her path, leaving footprints that forever last.

A potluck Celebration of Life will be held at "the farm" on August 12th at 1:00 p.m.



The Esqueda's are Having a Yard Sale! Saturday, July 15th, 10am -3pm

In preparation for their move to Pennsylvania to be with their children and grandchildren, Judie and Jerry are having a yard sale. Here's a preview of a few of the great things they're offering:

- An abundance of Pampered Chef products at bargain prices
- Crochet items, dolls, animals
- Household goods, new sheets, etc.

The sale starts at 10:00am sharp!

Congregational Care Team

The Care Team met in June to appraise the needs of the congregation and consider the best way that support can be provided. Service to others is an important and rewarding part of Christian life. Here at United in Grace, there are many ways to become involved.

A "Care Team Service Opportunity" form that lists all of the ways that you can become involved in the care and service of our members is located in the narthex. Please add your name to become part of any or all of these areas of service.



Gluten Free Wafers

Gluten-free communion wafers are available upon request. Let Pr. Malcolm know when you come forward for the meal if you would prefer one, and he will provide it.



July Birthdays & Anniversaries *

Happy Birthday and Congratulations!

- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Shelly Nagy |
| 5 | Kathleen Sallee |
| 7 | Dan & Sharon Wegenast * |
| 20 | Bryce Cooley |
| 24 | Nannette Missel |
| 25 | Dorothy Ames |

Lose Your Life

I like Pastor Malcolm’s sermons. They make me think. They act as a launchpad for what I think God may be trying to tell me. Today’s sermon was **Matthew 10:39** “If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”

I think a lot of us get caught up in our plans. We make plans for our time as something we control. We choose where, when, and how to work. We make plans for our free time whether it be a staycation or a vacation. We choose how we serve, frequently choosing activities that are easy as opposed to actually being something we’re spiritually gifted at. Our focus is what we want, what we think. We forget to bring God into the mix.

Matthew 10:39 speaks to the backwards nature of the Christian Life. Frequently, what we want and what God wants are different. The interesting part is that if we cling to our life, we lose it. If we cling to what we want, what we think we need, what we do with our time, it loses the meaning and blessing that comes from God. But if we give up our life for Christ, we are blessed beyond measure!

So, how do we do this? We give up our own ideas as to how we want to live our life and rely on God to determine how our lives will go and turn to Him. Prayerfully, we turn over our time to Him to use as He sees fit. We fear turning over control, but by doing that He blesses us more abundantly than we can imagine. We find meaning and purpose in following His will. We find our life.

Jasmine Ray Symms

www.jasmineraysymms.com

Photo by [Roman Melnychuk](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Books, TV, & Movies!



July 18, 6:30pm

All are welcome at the next BTM on Tuesday, July 18th, at 6:30pm. Our host is Allene Zanger. You’ll find Allene’s address in the directory or you can call her at 703-298-6825.

Hope to see you there!

Rainbow Bingo Team Meeting: July 5, 4:00pm

Another Rainbow Bingo is in the works for this fall! The Bingo team is meeting this Wednesday, July 5th at 4:00pm in the office. If anyone is interested in helping you are welcome to join.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

JUNE 2023

In Person: 30 Online: 15



From the Spirit, July and August 2023

From the NWWA ELCA Bishop:

As I write this, I am still re-living a beautiful experience that I had last weekend. Five of my friends and I drove to the Gorge Amphitheatre and we saw Joni Mitchell in concert.

For some of you, this might be interesting, for others, you might not even know who Joni Mitchell is. For me, the time was filled with joy, laughter, tears, friendship, and community ... not to mention amazing music and storytelling.

But this isn't about Joni Mitchell ... at least not entirely. For what struck me as I sat on the grass with 26,000 other people, was the church-like feeling that was there. Or perhaps I should say the "Jesus" feeling that was there. Or maybe the Holy Spirit in action feeling. And this came from the crowd itself.

As we all sat crowded together on blankets and chairs, people told stories, shared food and drink, sang songs, helped those who were having difficulty navigating the hillside, and together we became community. The little children sitting to the right of me danced, the young girls sitting to the left of me accepted blankets from my friend, and the man in front of me told me that he had traveled from North Carolina to see Joni. He told me that he was surprised to discover the Gorge was not located in Seattle!

There was one point in the concert, after it had gotten dark, when Joni was singing and people – one by one – started shining the flashlight from their cellphones towards the stage. Throughout the crowd, little points of light lit up the darkness. Now, if you have been to a concert in the last ten years, this is a common occurrence. Cell phone lights have taken the place of lighters being raised. However, because Joni has not performed in over twenty years, she was bemused by the lights. She turned to the person next to her on stage and said, "It looks like a fallen constellation. Where did they get all those lights?"

I thought her words and her surprise were charming. But as I looked around me, at the people sharing blankets, at those with arms around each other swaying to the music, at the cozy darkness around us and the lights looking like fallen stars, it was more than charming. It was holy.

For a moment, we were a cathedral. For a moment, we were community. For a moment, we were one.

At our best, this is what it means to be church. To be the Body of Christ. To practice hospitality and generosity, and grace. To see Christ in one another. To accept others' limitations and to be accepting of our own.

I confess that all was not perfect at the Gorge. There was a person close to me who insisted on singing every word to every song. While her voice was fine, I was not there to hear her but to hear Joni. There were people who cut in line after we had been waiting two hours to get inside. There was a driver who bullied his way into the front of the very long line of vehicles as we were leaving.

Perhaps this is like church, too. At least church as a human construction. Those of us who have been part of a church for a while, we know that church is not always sharing blankets and food, singing and joy. Sometimes, as humans, we hoard our stuff. We take offense at others. We refuse to listen. We bully. We push. Our voices sometimes drown out other voices.

And yet ... I pray that the moments of grace we receive this summer – from music at the Gorge to singing lustily in church, from sharing food on a hillside to receiving the body and blood of Christ – may we be church together. May we know and make it known that all are fully loved by God – in the times when we are like fallen constellations and in the times we are not.

May your summer be filled with holy moments.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org



Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Opening Worship Sermon

June 13, 2023 – During the opening worship service at the 2023 Pacific Northwest Annual Conference, Bishop Cedrick continued a series of messages he has been offering to the conferences of the Greater Northwest Area. This sermon focused on Lay Ministry enhancement.

Follow the link to watch the full 30 minute video:

<https://vimeo.com/835990643>

JULY 2023 - MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Happy July, Everyone!

It a sunny day, the flowers are blooming and after over 20 years I have finally attracted a pair of Goldfinches to my bird feeder on a daily basis! A long time goal of mine is bringing me such joy (yep, I'm pretty easy to please!). With summer in full swing now, the seasonal maintenance projects at the church are in full swing with more mowing and weeding and barking and general plant -tending needed during this season of growth. Many thanks to Alan Barr and his son, for getting both the riding mower and the power mower up and running again after sitting for so long. This will make mowing of the church property so much faster and more efficient! While Jerry has been doing this job with his own battery powered mower all these years, church volunteers will be taking over the mowing now, with the exception of the parsonage that Jerry will still do). This will give the Esqueda's time to concentrate on packing for their move at the end of July back to Pennsylvania where their children and grandchildren are, and we wish them the best. Until a new caretaker for the grounds is able to move in to the parsonage, it would be very helpful if volunteers from our combined congregation would step up to mow every other week or so, to keep the grounds looking its best! Feel free to schedule with Kathi to come any time or any day that you might have some time to do this and know how appreciated it is! Also the Prayer Garden is in some need of a little weeding and pruning, and since this was such an important place to Peggy Ray (who headed up the project of clearing out the seldom-used, weed -infested brick labyrinth, and replaces the center with bark that is now ready for a picnic table or chairs) , please consider helping to maintain this space in her honor, if you have any extra time and feel so inclined. Come any time that works for you and commune with nature in God's Garden , remember Peggy and all who have given their time and talent in the past (like Don and Chris Hoerner) and help make this space a lovely place of rest and contemplation for all, once again. Thanks also, to Ric Hart, our trustee chairman, for the donation of black mulch and his time to spread it in the planting areas around the annex, as well as replacing the non-skid strips on the ramp. It is the season to be out in the sunshine with hands in the warm soil and give our gratefulness to God for his gifts to us with the pleasure that come with helping this grow and thrive.

May Treasurers report from Tanya

TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 5,165.34
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 8,258.92
SHORT	-\$ 3,093.58

Unfortunately, giving is slowly trending down with the loss of long time members and financial situations of families that effect this. We continue to be grateful for everyone's giving of their time, their talents, their financial contributions and their prayers, as this makes the church run, and remain faithful that God will provide as we continue working towards the goal of combining both churches and their finances into one as United In Grace.

Happy 4th to you all and see you in church!


Nancy Franke
MUMC Financial Secretary

<u>2023 MUMC LAY LEADERSHIP</u>	
Board of Trustees Chairman	Ric Hart 360-794-7772
Treasurer	Tanya Hubbard 360-793-8959
Financial Secretary	Nancy Franke 360-794-6954
Staff-Parish Relations Committee	Judie Esqueda 951-201-0061
Membership Secretary	Kathi Cooley 425-293-8694
Lay Leader to Annual Conference	vacant
UMW President	Jasmine Ray-Symms 425-223-9866
Recording Secretary	vacant

JULY 2023 - MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

<u>2023 NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES</u>			
	2023 Budget	April Actual	May Actual
Offerings	\$ 8,917	\$ 5,759	\$ 7,950
Expenses	\$10,384	\$11,177	\$11,480
Surplus/deficit		- \$ 5,418	- \$ 3,530

<u>2023 MSLC COUNCIL</u>		
Administrative Dir.:	Missy Maxson	206-437-2535
Ministry Director:	Kathleen Sallee	425-387-2638
Treasurer:	Brian Johnson	425-503-8352
Community Relations:	Jill Sumpter	360-348-7231
Worship:	Kathi Cooley	425-293-8694
Facilities:	vacant	
Secretary:	vacant	

 Morning Star Lutheran Church

 Monroe United Methodist Church

412 South Lewis Street
Monroe, WA 98272-4149



July 2: FIFTH PENTECOST ~ COMMUNION ~ Scripture: Gospel: Matthew 10:40-42 *Pulpit: Pr. Kristy Daniels*
July 9: SIXTH PENTECOST ~ COMMUNION ~ Scripture: Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
July 16: SEVENTH PENTECOST ~ COMMUNION Scripture: Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
July 23: EIGHTH PENTECOST ~ COMMUNION Scripture: Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
July 30: NINTH PENTECOST ~ COMMUNION ~ Scripture: Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 42-52

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MORNING STAR LUTHERAN

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10:00 SUNDAY MORNINGS IN-PERSON
AND LIVE STREAMED ON YOUTUBE



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