

GROWING IN

Grace

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

LOOK INSIDE FOR:

Words from our Pastor	p2
Worship News	p3
Ministries & Volunteer Schedule	p4
Fellowship & Study	p5
Jasmine Ray-Symms	p 6
Birthdays	p7
Bishop Shelly Message	p8
Church Business	p8,9

October 2023



COLD WEATHER SHELTER AT UNITED IN GRACE

We are happy to report that United in Grace has accepted the request of the Volunteers of America, on behalf of Snohomish County, who run the Monroe Cold Weather Shelter, to be the new location for the shelter beginning November 1st!

This is a fully managed and supported program, supplying their own insurance, staff, supplies and security, and manages and recruits their own volunteers. The shelter will be open any night that the temperature is predicted to drop to 34* or below.

We think it's a blessing to be given the opportunity to be part of a mission that is actually bringing some comfort as well as saving the lives of those who would otherwise spend the night out in the cold, and we truly feel the hand of the Holy Spirit is bringing this to us and hope you will all support this new mission.

Grace and peace,

The Joint Leadership Team

Pastor Malcolm

Nancy Franke

Jasmine Ray-Symms

Ric Hart

Tanya Hubbard

Kathleen Sallee

Kathi Cooley

Brian Johnson

Jill Sumpter



United in Grace- Becoming a new and Reforming Church

Beloved Co-workers in the Good News of Jesus Christ,

On Sunday October 29th we will celebrate what the Reformation means to both the Lutherans and Methodists, as reforming congregations in 2023, as we move to become a Union Congregation in 2024 that we will call *United in Grace*.

In 1896, six years before Monroe Washington was incorporated as a city of 325 in 1902, the first church is built in Monroe. That church was the Methodist-Episcopal Church, on South Lewis Street, known today as Monroe United Methodist Church. This year is the 126th Anniversary of Monroe United Methodist Church.

On November 13th, 1994, a group of people gathered to form a new community of believers, a family of faith, a mission outpost in Monroe, Washington. One year later, on Sunday November 5th, 1995 this church and its people of Morning Star Lutheran Church became a formal congregation. This year will be the 28th Anniversary of Morning Star Lutheran Church

Each congregation is rich in its heritage from each tradition and what it means to be Lutherans and Methodists in Monroe. You, as members of both congregations, have been good and faithful servants for many years without question. Today the work on becoming a Union Congregation called United in Grace is well under way.

We together are experiencing the work of adapting and transforming as we are understanding that in this work, in this place in 2023, we too must die to some of the old that we hold so dear and hold on to so tightly as we are called to be reborn and faithful servants and disciples in this new calling of the Holy Spirit to formally become one in the Body of Christ here in Monroe.

In this work we have finished the Letter of Agreement and will very soon be sending it off to each denomination for their approval. We now have a working Constitution Team who have begun the task of crafting and blending languages of both denomination in this new understanding of being “United in Grace”. Thank You Rob Williams, Perry Cole, Jasmone Ray-Symms and Jay Morgan!

I thank God when I think of you and our work together to become Disciples of Christ and that I have you to serve with as co-workers in our mission to follow God into our neighborhood, the community of Monroe and our world.

As we continue to listen to the nudging’s of the Holy Spirit and are in prayerful discernment of God’s preferred future for us, we will learn to adapt and transform to become new creations as faithful servants and disciples in and for today’s world in this time and in our place.

See you in church!

Grace, peace, and love,

Pastor Malcolm

***Happy Reformation
Sunday!***



***Remember to wear
RED!***

October 29, 2023



The mood of All Saints is one of celebration. Certainly, there is sadness in acknowledging loss, and there needs to be space for that grieving. Yet the overall experience is one of joy and hope. Therefore, we sing about the hope of eternity; we celebrate the cloud of witnesses; we pray for the sense of belonging together in community and the growth as disciples of Jesus Christ.

On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

During the 10:00am worship service on Sunday, November 5th, there will be special reading of the names of those who have died since All Saints' Sunday last year. If there is a name you want to include on this list, please contact Kathi in the church office either by email at office@unitedingrace.org or leave a voicemail at either of the church offices: 360-794-2111 or 360-794-8863.

Please have the information to Kathi by November 1st.

Wild Church has a new name:
Grace in the Wild!

We thought it fit nicely with United in Grace! We apologize for the unfortunate last minute cancellation of last month's gathering, especially to those that traveled a long distance to get there. With this in mind, we're going to try to keep the gatherings in Monroe, and on the last Saturday of the month. October's Grace in the Wild is on the 29th, at 10am at the Lewis Street Park. We will be walking on the Al Borlin Trails. There is a restroom available at the top of the trail.

The concepts of Grace in the Wild resonate with Celtic worship and sacred stories of Native American peoples. They both acknowledge the importance of being grounded in the world we live.

Jewell Praying Wolf James, a member of the Lummi Nation whose Lummi name is Se-Sealth, recently remarked that if every Christian gathering began with the refrain, "God created everything, keep it sacred," that within a generation our children would view the earth in a very different way.

We hope to see you on the 29th for *Grace in the Wild*.



Ministries

SOCKTOBER
October 1–31

Small socks.
Big socks.
Even in between socks.
Orange socks.
Red socks.
As long as they are
New socks.

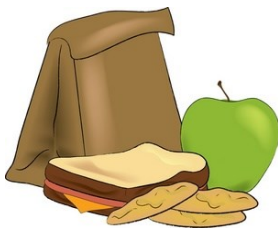


Socktober, formerly known as Toevember, kicks off on October 1st. Our annual sock drive benefitting the guests of the Little Free Pantry, is a month long event where new socks are collected. Studies have shown that socks are the most needed but least donated item of clothing.

Bring your donations to church with you on Sunday's or to the office on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 11 and 5. Warm, adult size socks are best, but any new sock you'd like to donate will be given to someone that needs it.

Brown Bag Brigade

The Second Sunday of every month is Brown Bag Sunday. Specially marked envelopes are found in the backs of the pews and on the Greeters desk on Sunday morning. You may also mail your offering at any time to the church office.



Hazel's Little Free Pantry

Hazel's Pantry has more than one purpose: It has given our neighbors hope. A Blakely Street neighbor and regular supporter of the pantry said as he was dropping off food, "This gives me hope and encouragement, that there are people in the world who still care".



A very full pantry after a donation from a neighbor

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

OCTOBER SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Thank you for serving. You are an indispensable part of the body of Christ and we thank you.

	OCTOBER 1	OCTOBER 8	OCTOBER 15	OCTOBER 22	OCTOBER 29
Worship Asst.	Missy Maxson	Gwen Paietta	Christine Coco	Missy Maxson	
Greeter	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Pat Holtz	Denny & Diana Coates	Kathi Cooley	Joel & JoLynn Garrison
Ushers	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Christine Coco & Kids	Denny & Diana Coates	Kathi Cooley	YOU?
Acolyte	Ric Hart	YOU?	Ben Ault	YOU?	YOU?
Reader	Joel Garrison	Ric Hart	Kaitlyn Ault	Missy Maxson	Kathleen Sallee
Comm. Prep.	Harriet Barr	YOU?	JoLynn Garrison	Kathleen Sallee	Charlie Brown
Serve Comm.	John & Tanya Hubbard	John & Tanya Hubbard	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Kathleen Sallee & ???	Joel & JoLynn Garrison
Coffee Hour	Missy Maxson	YOU?	YOU?	Christine Coco & Kids	Kathleen Sallee
Altar Flowers	John & Tanya Hubbard	Pat Holtz	Susanne Olson	Velma Smith & Jill Sumpter	Velma Smith & Jill Sumpter
Soundboard	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley

GET CONNECTED – FELLOWSHIP AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

United Women in Faith Fall Kickoff!



YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!

Ok ladies! We took the summer off but we're back! United Women in Faith will resume meetings October 7th, 10:30am in the fellowship hall. Join us and have a wonderful time with other women while we celebrate our risen Lord! Come and bring a friend! Questions? Ask Jasmine or Jill.

**October's Books - TV - Movies!
Tuesday the 17th at 6:30pm
Host - Missy Maxson**



After taking a few month's off to rest and re-group, we're ready to meet again. Bring some ideas of what you'd like the group to look like in the coming months, but as always, come hungry for food and companionship!

***Jesus and Java and Bible Nerds,
our Adult Bible studies have kicked off
and we'd love for you to join us!***

For Jesus and Java, we are studying "Luke" by Adam Hamilton on Sunday mornings at 8:30am.

Bible Nerds is studying "Jonah for Normal People" by Jared Byas on the second and fourth Wednesdays with dinner at 6pm and Bible Study at 6:30. It is not necessary to read the book ahead of time.

Come check us out!

Come and join us for

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Proceeds to Benefit:
**HAZEL'S
LITTLE FREE PANTRIES**
A place to help those experiencing food insecurity by giving a no-barrier, 24/7 access point to food.



AT UNITED IN GRACE

MORNING STAR LUTHERAN & MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES



Starring Seattle Celeb Crystyl Jewyl Box!

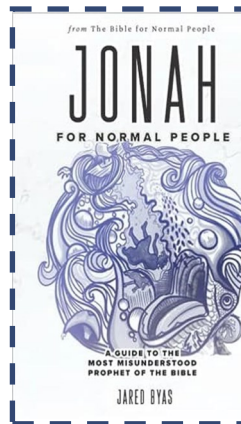
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14
DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 PM
EVENT STARTS AT 6:00**

Fabulous Prizes!



Tickets online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rainbow-bingo-fundraiser-tickets-716505847277?aff=oddtcreator>

Ticket includes bingo cards and pasta dinner
\$25 adults; \$5 for 12 and under 50/50 raffle with proceeds benefiting Hazel's Free Pantry

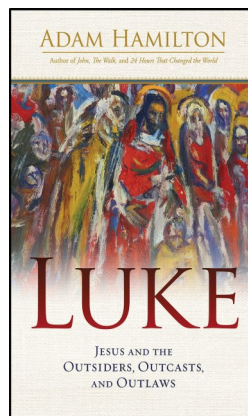


BIBLE NERDS

Second and Fourth Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall.

6:00pm Dinner
6:30pm Bible Study

Contact Jasmine with Questions.



Jesus and Java

Sunday Mornings at 8:30am in the Fellowship Hall
It is not necessary to purchase the book.
Drop-ins are welcome!



RACE AND GOD

Recently, a discussion came up regarding race in the church. As a predominantly white congregation, it's easy to gloss over the topic. We talk about white privilege believing it applies to other people not us. I have a unique perspective because I'm biracial. Few people think of me as white but they don't guess my ethnicity. I'm asked, "where are you from?" Me: "Pullman". Them: "no, what *country* are you from?" Because I pronounce my name with the Arabic pronunciation, I'm frequently thought of as being Arabic. Other options include Italian, Native American or Hispanic. Rarely do people realize my heritage is African American. My father was black and my half-siblings are black.



When my brother moved to Washington from Philadelphia, he went from a predominantly black community to a predominantly white community. I knew about the mild racism I experienced but was ignorant of the constant presence of normalized prejudice. When we looked for a place for him to live, I learned to let people know he was black or risk pushback when we went to visit. At the drug store, I watched a mom put her arm around her daughter and steer her away from my brother, watching him with alarm. When walking around Monroe, he shared the constant pressure of being an outsider.

Galatians 3:26-28 "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

In Christ there is no prejudice but outside in our community it surrounds non-whites. Whether little slights or comments or more obvious forms of racism, we must be conscious of the reality for so many in our community or we will perpetuate behavior that tears us down and apart.

Jasmine Ray-Symms

www.jasmineraysymms.com

Photo by [Wylly Suhendra](#) on [Unsplash](#)

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR,

JASMINE RAY-SYMMS

IN THE COURSE
'SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS
AND THE CHURCH'

This course explores ministry within the church to those with severe mental illness. Learners will examine the prevalence of mental illness, the difference between the more common mental illnesses and severe mental illness, and the efficacy of treatment for mental illness. Learners will also explore their own personal biases towards those with mental illness and the church's response.

"I WOULD ADVISE ANYONE IN CHURCHES TODAY TO TAKE THE COURSE. THE MENTALLY ILL AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE VERY MUCH A PART OF OUR LIVES. RAISE AWARENESS! LEARN! REACH OUT!"

COMMENT BY COURSE COMPLETER

2 Weeks | \$50 | 1 CEU | Oct. 23

BeADisciple.com

SEPTEMBER 2023 ATTENDANCE

In-Person: 36 Online: 15



It's been wonderful to hear the choir on Sunday mornings. It's amazing that such a beautiful and powerful sound can be made from a small, but admittedly, talented group of people.

Thank you Jill, for the time spent choosing music and for your dedication to the choir and to United in Grace.

Thank you Choir, for using your talents to bless others and to glorify God. You are a blessing to our congregation.

Jill said there is ALWAYS room for more in the choir. If you'd like to join them, simply show up at 9:15 on Sunday morning and you're in!

October Birthday & Anniversary* Celebrations

- 02 Sherry Carrol
- 02 Rhonda Dean
- 03 Chris & Samantha Missel *
- 04 Velma Smith
- 04 Megan Schroeder
- 06 Beverly Zehring
- 07 Chris Cooper
- 11 Mike & Lee Ann Obright *
- 11 Jasmine Halgren
- 16 Loggan Coco-Cron
- 21 Brian & Lori Johnson *
- 24 Audrey Harris
- 28 Katrina Chaney
- 28 Dennis & Susanne Olson *

It's still a month away, but we don't want you to miss a thing!

Daylight Saving Times ends on Sunday, November 5.

Remember to set your clocks back!



COVID19

As we enter fall and the long winter months, when so much of our interaction moves inside, these practices will help to minimize the impact of Covid, the flu, and RSV as they circulate in our communities, enabling us to do no harm even as we gather to celebrate and serve.

- Get vaccinated/boosted (only 43% of 65+ were up to date before the new booster)
- Stay home when you are feeling ill (not everything is allergies)
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly
- Wear a mask when in crowded indoor spaces (especially when the virus seems to be active in your community).

[a new booster](#) continues to roll out to pharmacies and clinics. Households are again eligible for [free tests](#) from the government.

We can make a difference by taking care of ourselves and others.



From *The Spirit* is a publication of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA.

From the **Bishop:**

[“Sometimes it’s boring. Sometimes it’s thrilling. Sometimes it makes me cry.”](#)

(Quote from “The Wonderful Ordinarity of Congregational Life” by Cheryl Fullerton, Christian Century, March 2022)

Recently I was thinking about church. (Full disclosure ... I think about church quite a bit.) But, in particular, I was thinking about the rhythm of church life. And I think the above quote from Cheryl Fullerton sums it up pretty nicely.

Sometimes it’s boring.

I admit, sometimes there is something that is uninteresting about church. Perhaps it is the repetitive nature of it. Perhaps it is the cyclical nature of things. Perhaps it is seeing the same people in the same pew week after week and year after year.

We know that Fred will sing the hymns out of tune ... every time. We know that Mary will cluck her tongue at someone’s tattoo peeking out from their sundress. We know that Mike will fall asleep during the sermon and we know that Dan will try to share the peace with every single person. We know that the children will fidget. We know that the baby might cry. We know that we have rituals and sacraments and prayers that we say each week. We know that sometimes we won’t hear the utter preposterousness and absurdity and utterly amazing news that Jesus loves each of us and all of us – that sometimes this message sails over our heads because we’re too busy looking at the bulletin.

And yet ...

Sometimes it’s thrilling.

I always get goosebumps when I hear the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” I rejoice each Easter when we all shout, “He is risen! He is risen indeed!” Candles lit in darkness bring hope and light on Christmas Eve. When I am privileged to place bread in people’s hands and I see young, old, wrinkled, black, white, brown hands reaching out for Jesus, it is truly miraculous.

We know that Fred cares for his wife with Alzheimer’s. We know that Mary still grieves her daughter. We know that Mike works the late shift and we know that Dan only leaves his group home for church. We know that the children will hear of Jesus. We know that the baby will grow up in the community of elders. We know that sometimes we will hear and understand, if even for a moment, the utter preposterousness and absurdity and utterly amazing news that Jesus loves each of us and all of us.

And so ...

Sometimes it makes me cry.

Church is not for the faint-hearted. Church is not for people who only want to be with their own kind. Church is for the young, the middle-aged and the old. The healthy and the sick. The spiritually depleted and the spiritually full. Those who are seeking, those who are exhausted, and those who are filled with fire for justice. We all come together. The Freds and Marys and Mikes and Dans. And we sing and we pray and we receive Jesus, in community, together.

Church is wonderfully boring and thrilling. We catch glimpses of the divine amongst the coffee pot and petty disagreements. We see Mary hug the tattooed young girl after she is baptized. We see Mike exchange high fives with Dan. We see Fred with tears singing at the top of his lungs, “I Know that My Redeemer Lives.”

There is nothing like church.

“Sometimes it’s boring. Sometimes it’s thrilling. Sometimes it makes me cry.”

- Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org

OCTOBER 2023 - MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

Church Business

2023 NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES

	2023 Budget	July Actual	August Actual
Offerings	\$ 8,917	\$5,795	\$11,856
Expenses	\$10,384	\$9,825	\$12,048
Surplus/deficit		- \$4,030	- \$ 192

2023 MSLC COUNCIL

Treasurer:	Brian Johnson	425-503-8352
Community Relations:	Jill Sumpter	360-348-7231
Worship:	Kathi Cooley	425-293-8694

OCTOBER 2023 - MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OCTOBER BLESSINGS TO YOU ALL –

This month will see our church with two caretakers in residence at the parsonage and more security and maintenance done around the grounds. Both Dean and Brent will be watching the grounds daily and enforcing the church policy of no overnight camping on the grounds. Our church is meant to be for all, especially the homeless, to know that a place still exists in town where it welcomes any and all who wish to stop and rest or eat lunch or just sit on the steps and feel the presence of something other than rejection and scorn for a short time before moving on, and we try to honor that, along with remembering that security for Kathi in the office and other volunteers that come and go around the church is a priority. We are blessed to have such great new caretakers and it shouldn't take me any time at all to "whip them into shape" 😊

As you know now, our church will be the new location for the Monroe Cold Weather Shelter starting Nov. 1st and running through March 15th. I know many in our church may have been or are now, volunteers of this program and can attest to how worthwhile it is. I, personally, was so excited for our church to be given the opportunity to be part of this necessary and critical program, and I truly felt the hand of the Holy Spirit was bringing this to us (who can say "no" to GOD, huh? 😊), so with the enthusiastic approval of trustees and our leadership team of both MSLC and MUMC, we will welcome this new mission and support it as best we can. Hope everyone will be a part of this in the future as well!

Also want to report that former MUMC pastor Gisela Tabor passed away September 22nd. She is survived by her son, Andrew B. Taber at 4210 36th Ave. NE, Olympia, WA, 98516. The gathering to celebrate the life and ministries of Rev. Gisela Tabor is planned to be a private service soon. Cards of condolences and memories of Gisela can be mailed to the above address of Andrew Taber in Olympia, WA.

Below is the treasurers report for August. I listed all the revenue and sources so that you will be aware of where the big jump in receipts came from. The generous bequest from the Estate of Myrtle Bengstrom gives the financial end a boost with expenses for the month and was an unexpected blessing! If any of you happen to know any of Myrtle's living relatives that we might contact to thank properly for this gift, please let me know.

August Treasurers Report

RECEIPTS

Fund Raiser - Kroger	26.47
Interest	0.28
Loose Plate	29.00
Rent Revenue from MSLC	900.00
Pledges and Tithes	3,200.00
Miscellaneous Income -estate of Myrtle Bengtsom bequest	5,000.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 9,155.75
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 7,674.09
	+ \$ 1,481.66

As we go forward in October, here is a great reminder for the month →


See you in church!

Nancy Franke –
Financial Secretary

Tanya Hubbard –
Treasurer

<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	Nancy Franke—temporary
Membership Secretary	Kathi Cooley 425-293-8694
Lay Leader to Annual Conference	Jasmine Ray-Symms 425-223-9866
UWF President	Jasmine Ray-Symms 425-223-9866
Recording Secretary	vacant



 Morning Star Lutheran Church

 Monroe United Methodist Church

412 South Lewis Street
Monroe, WA 98272-4149



October 1: 18th PENTECOST ~ Scripture: [Psalm 25:1-9](#); [Philippians 2:1-13](#); [Matthew 21:23-32](#)
October 8: 19th PENTECOST ~ Scripture: [Psalm 80:7-15](#); [Philippians 3:4b-14](#); [Matthew 21:33-46](#)
October 15: 20th PENTECOST ~ Scripture: [Psalm 23](#); [Philippians 4:1-9](#); [Matthew 22:1-14](#)
October 22: 21st PENTECOST ~ Scripture: [Psalm 96:1-9 \[10-13\]](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:1-10](#); [Matthew 22:15-22](#)
October 29: REFORMATION SUNDAY ~ Scripture: [Psalm 46](#); [Romans 3:19-28](#); [John 8:31-36](#)

CONTACT US:

Pastor Malcolm Brown

Phone: 360-794-2111

Email: prmalcolmb@gmail.com

Office Administrator: Kathi Cooley

Music Director: Jill Sumpter

Live stream/editor: Bryce Cooley

MONROE UNITED METHODIST

Phone: 360-794-8863

Email: office@monroeamonline.org

Website: www.unitedingrace.org

MORNING STAR LUTHERAN

Phone: 360-794-2111

Email: office@unitedingrace.org

Website: www.unitedingrace.org

**10:00 SUNDAY MORNINGS IN-PERSON
AND LIVE STREAMED**



unitedingrace.org