

GROWING IN

Grace

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

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October 2021

Greetings in Christ!

We are now eighteen full months, a year and a half, into this new reality of living in a COVID world in the year of our Lord 2021. We continue experiencing life in new and unprecedented ways like no other time in our living memories or our world history. We are living in a world that that is in constant flux as the sands continue to shift underneath our feet. We are in a moment, a new time to perhaps consider so much about our past, present and future.

This moment is now, and the future of the church is wide open. Can we imagine and enter into God's dream for us?

I, like many of the voices I have heard, am wondering what the Fall and Winter seasons will have in store for us in Western Washington and our world, in this growing new reality. Autumn is, above all else, even in the normal of yesterday's world, a time of change. It is also a time of new beginnings. In addition to the changing weather as the hours of daylight shorten, we often curtail or eliminate our evening outdoor activities. It is not as dramatic for us here in the Pacific Northwest, yet we still experience the changes in nature from our un-watered brownish lawns turning plush green again with the fall rains, to the changing leaves giving us glimpses of the brilliant colors of autumn. Our lifestyles often change as well; typically, autumn means back to the routine, back to work, back to school, and beginning our planning for fall church and family events. While much of this is still true, whether completely or in part, what will most certainly be true in this time will be the new and changing ways of experiencing fall with adjusted and new routines, experiences, and patterns of life.

As fall begins, our calling is the same as it has been in the past: to experience and hear God's voice, to practice the presence of God, to become closer to God and to follow God on God's mission to bless and heal our world. God has not stopped speaking and calling us even if we are limited in our gatherings and the movements in our lives.

Is it possible for us to remember and imagine that God is with us, for us, and has given us all that we need and the vision to move forward, calling and guiding us as two congregations under one umbrella, and faithfully remembering that God is real and present as we work to not speak, but to be still and quiet to listen and hear God's voice for us.

We will continue to worship online until such a time as the Re-Opening Committee and the Church leadership from both congregations feel it is safe to do so and we have the equipment and person resources in place to gather safely together as we are so desperately longing to do.

We need to remember that this online experience is real worship, and we are still a worshipping community of the Body of Christ in Monroe and beyond. Our worship team continues to creatively design, record and publish our services each week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their faithful, creative, and hard work in this new and ever-changing landscape. Thank you, Kathi, Missy, Cindy, Jill, Nancy and Bryce for your persistence as we learn new skills and as partners in the Gospel, the living Word of God's love and grace.

I appreciate with thanks and gratefulness the leadership of both congregations as we are challenged to rethink with new imaginations and listen to God's imagination for us. We continue to gather as one, united by the grace and the love of God, Jesus the Christ and the Holy Spirit.

We need to remember that wearing masks, social distancing, and getting vaccinated are real and authentic acts of love for one another and our world. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement calls us to consider Three Simple Rules. He said, "If you want to follow Jesus—if you want to love God and love your neighbor—then live by these three simple rules: ***Do no harm, Do good, Stay in love with God.***"

May you continue to seek, find, and receive God's hope, love and grace this autumn in surprising and unexpected ways.

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May you *imagine* and trust the promise that we are who God tells us we are, beloved, and then to simply live that out in our lives wherever we are, and with whomever crosses our paths as the image of God’s grace, love and presence intersecting their lives.

See you in church! Remember that church has not been cancelled and that while we worship online, we are still the Body of Christ worshipping and living out our calling as disciples of Christ in and for our world.

God’s love, grace and peace be with you, your family, and friends,

Pr Malcolm

Celebrate the
REFORMATION
with Morning Star Lutheran &
Monroe United Methodist
Churches



Remember ...
the color of the day is
RED!





**SUNDAY
WORSHIP
ATTENDANCE**



Average monthly views for YouTube and Facebook services:

<u>September: 46</u>	<u>August: 54</u>
<u>July: 66</u>	

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.

The custom of commemorating all the martyrs of the Church on a single day goes back at least to the Third Century. All Saints Sunday, Nov. 7th, celebrates not only the martyrs and saints, but all the people of God, living and dead, who together form the mystical body of Christ.

We would like to honor the saints in your life, your loved ones that have passed away this year. If you would like your loved one’s name included in the prayers during the worship, please email Kathi at mslc@morningstarlc.org or Nancy at NFranke@comcast.net. Please send your email by **November 1st**.

**Daylight Saving Times ends on
Sunday, November 7.
Remember to set your clocks back!**





From the Spirit, October 2021

From the Bishop:

At first glance, it does not seem as though Teresa of Avila, noted Spanish Roman Catholic saint from the sixteenth century, would have much to say about today's world.

You see, she is well known for her mysticism, her ecstatic prayers, several quotes that she might or might not have said, and her reforms in the church. All of these things are interesting – but what do they have to do with the 21st century and what is happening in the world today? In the last few days, though, I have been thinking about what she writes at the beginning of her work, *The Interior Castle*.

At the beginning of this book Teresa admits that she is tired. On the first page she writes, "I'm writing this book under obedience and I'm already finding it hard. God hasn't given me any desire for this work, and my head is so full of noise I can barely compose a letter about the most ordinary business, much less a book about prayer."

I am so thankful for Teresa stating it bluntly. Teresa is unsure if she'll succeed, she is not sure she has it in her to do what she is being asked to do, she is nervous and distracted. In other words, St. Teresa sounds a lot like all of us – especially when we are being asked to do something that is different or hard or difficult.

Truthfully, it can be daunting as we continue to navigate this pandemic, as we continue to navigate the changes of the world and the changing church, as we strive to live into what God is calling us to do. It is difficult, as Teresa fully expresses, to push past our fear or our unease or our malaise to do what God is calling us to do. It is pretty impossible to do a new thing without God's help and guidance.

And so, as I reflect on Teresa's difficulties, our difficulties, I am also drawn to scripture – specifically Isaiah 43. In the first part of Isaiah 43 we read:

But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
 For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

The prophet writes that God created us, God formed us. We have no need for fear because God knows each of our names. God calls each of us. We are God's. No matter the circumstance, no matter the trial, no matter the fire. This is what Teresa understood and it is what we cling to when we struggle and when we wonder if we can go on. I invite you to hold Isaiah 43:1-3 closely as we hear these words from Isaiah 43:18-19.

Do not remember the former things,
 or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
 I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers in the desert.

As we hold close the promise that God creates us, forms us, names us, calls us, and holds us, only then can we hear the promise in these words that a new thing, a new day is coming. That God will make a way. May we hold close the words of St. Teresa and the prophet Isaiah. May you feel God's love surrounding you when all seems overwhelming. And may you rise in the strength of the Lord knowing that God's love surrounds you and fills you – and a way is being made as we all go forward together in Christ.

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

bishop@lutheransnw.org



Bishop Stanovsky and the leadership from the Greater Northwest Area of the United Methodist Church have released a statement concerning the Boy Scout units chartered by local United Methodist Churches. Follow the link to read the statement in full.

<https://greaternw.org/category/blog/>



OCTOBER GUEST PREACHER

The sermon on October 3 is offered by
Pastor Andy Yee. Pastor Yee comes to us
 from the NWWA ELCA Synod as a means
 of support for congregations in the Pacific
 Northwest



I'm not a theologian and don't claim to be one, but I am a believer in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe in God's Word, that it contains eternal truths made evident by the Spirit and that we can draw closer to Him through the teachings His Word contains. I heard God speaking recently during a sermon by Retired Licensed Local Pastor Peggy Ray (otherwise known as my mother) 😊 During her sermon she said this, "To be a disciple of Jesus is to follow where he leads. John Wesley distinguished between "bearing a cross" and "taking up a cross." We "bear a cross" when suffering is laid on us that we did not choose. Keeping our faith under those circumstances is a significant challenge. But Jesus really is asking for more. He is asking that rather than focus on our suffering, on ourselves, we continue to focus our attention on doing his work. Taking up the cross is accepting the call to act with God's love in the world, whatever the cost."

I've led a challenging life – worse than some and better than others. I've frequently thought of the unfairness that "bearing" a cross brings. I get angry at God for making me bear what I've had to bear. It is, as she said, a challenge to keep my faith during these times and I show my immaturity in my faith when I focus on MY suffering instead of the sacrifice God made for me. When I stop feeling sorry for myself and realize the gift I've actually been given through the cross, I am shocked into awareness of the reality of my life. Yes, I've been betrayed by friends but no one has sold my trust. Yes, I've gone through pain in my life but I've never been nailed to a cross. And I've never CHOSEN to put myself through these most painful of circumstances all for others.

Jesus calls us to "take up" our cross. I like the action verb. It's not passive. It's not "enduring" suffering. It's CHOOSING suffering for God's sake. It's focusing on the "other" rather than the "self". I find these words comforting because it takes all my pain and uses it. Our suffering isn't for nothing. Whatever we're going through, whatever we're struggling with, God is taking all of that and using it for good. I am accepting the call to be there for others. I'm accepting the call to spread the Good News. I'm "accepting the call to act with God's love in the world, whatever the cost."

Jasmine Ray-Symms

www.jasmineraysymms.com

REOPENING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Reopening Committee completed its work and presented it to the MSLC and MUMC Church Councils in June. At that time, the Church Councils realized that reopening would take many more volunteers than usual. Since many congregation members as well as key members of the worship committee were on summer vacations, it didn't seem feasible. The hope was that we could reopen in September. However, the transmissibility of Covid has increased rather than decreased since then. The Delta variant and the high percentage of unvaccinated residents in Snohomish County increases the risk of transmission. So the situation is far riskier now than it was in June.

There is some possibility that the present Delta Covid surge will run its course and we will soon see a decrease in case rates. In the meantime, if you are ready and willing to help with ushering, help with audio visual recording, and/or online reservations, please contact either office.

MINISTRY GROUPS

Greetings!

Please let me know which ministry groups are meeting and when, and which groups you would like to see come back or even start!

During this challenging time I have heard from a few of you about being more diligent with groups and how we can provide the Ministry opportunities to members. I would love to hear from you about what groups you think should be a focus at this time.

Jill Sumpter

360-348-7231

MSLC Ministry Director

With much love we remember Jessie Pajetta.

Your life was a blessing
Your memory a treasure
You are loved beyond words
And missed beyond measure

Thank you for holding Gwen and Martin Pajetta
and family so close to your hearts and for
showing such unwavering support as they
navigate through their grief.

Rhonda Morgan
Care

Continued Prayers
for Don Hoerner who will have
(or may have already had,
if hospital beds are available)
another surgery on his hip that
is dislocated, his 8th surgery
in as many months.



October Birthday & Anniversary* Celebrations

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 02 Rhonda Dean | 07 Chris Cooper | 24 Audrey Harris |
| 03 Chris & Samantha Missel * | 11 Paul & Carole Smith | 28 Katrina Chaney |
| 04 Velma Smith | 11 Mike & Lee Ann Obright * | 28 Dennis & Susanne Olson * |
| 04 Megan Schroeder | 12 Paul Smith | |
| 06 Beverly Zehrung | 21 Brian & Lori Johnson * | |



Facilities
Report
9/28/21

Special thanks to Del, Chris, & Jerry
for helping with the Annex deck and
ramp railing. It's about 90% done
and we'll finish up in the next couple
of weeks. Looks pretty nice.

We still need to add a piece of siding
at the deck surface and replace some
anti-skid material on the ramp.

Jay M



We had a very productive work day, with lots of raking leaves, hoeing to get rocks out of the prayer garden and washing more than 100 bricks. The majority suggested that I explore selling the much larger pile of bricks inside the prayer garden "as is".

Many thanks to Doug Brender, Denny and Diana Coates, Jerry Esqueda, Ric Hart, and Jasmine Ray-Symms for good work, good conversation, good company.

Appreciatively,

Margaret Peggy Ray

JOHN: THE GOSPEL OF LIGHT AND LIFE

- BEGINNING OCTOBER 5 -

Explore the Gospel of John this fall with ADAM HAMILTON

Tuesdays 6:00 -7:30 p.m.

October 5, 12, 19, 26 and November 2, 9

Join Zoom Meeting

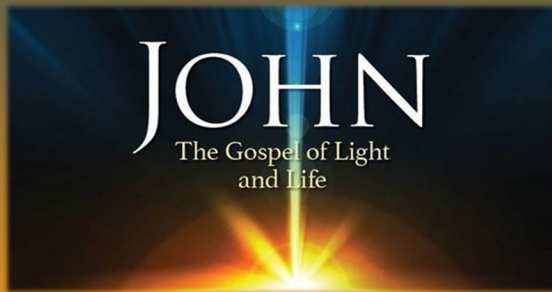
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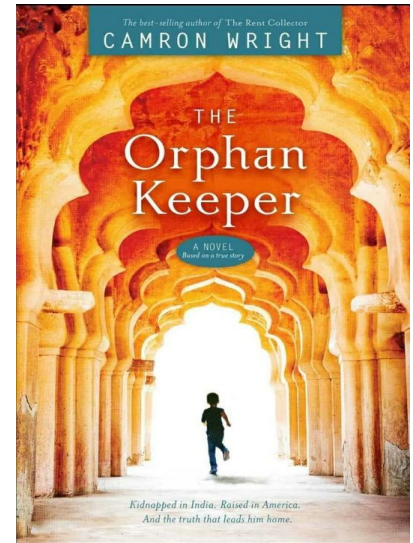
Meeting ID: 816 5663 8744

Passcode: 906371

Please let Margaret Peggy Ray know if you are interested in joining. 509-432-3029, peggyray731@gmail.com



**MSLC and MUMC
Women's Book Club**



Ladies, the time has come!

Mark your calendars for
Thursday, October 21, 6:30 pm
at the home of Marla Wardell.
(14528 249th Ave SE, Monroe
425-876-6228)

Can't wait to see you all!



Winter Preparations for Hazel's Little Free Pantry



It's been a busy summer and fall at the Pantry. We're grateful that we were able to help so many members of our community through this mission and we're now gearing up for the winter.

Cindy Gulbranson & Ken Gross have been huge supporters of the pantry for the last 5 months. They stock the pantry on a regular basis, and have provided a lot of food. But with winter coming, that means Cindy & Ken are leaving for the sunny skies of Palm Springs. While that's a blessing for them, it means the Pantry is in need of another kind soul to help out!

Do you have 1/2 hour to spare a few mornings a week? We promise it's not hard, and it's actually quite a blessing. Nancy Franke & Kathi Cooley take turns stocking the pantry and would love YOUR help. Give one of them a call or email the office and let's talk! (Nancy 425-345-6945; Kathi 425-293-8694)

It takes FOOD to stock the Panty

Donations of food or money to buy food are ALWAYS needed. With the cooler weather coming, that need is sure to grow. We could **especially** use the following:

fruit cups, canned meals (Spaghettio, chili, etc.), tuna, Vienna sausage, milk

Checks are welcome. Mail to 412 S. Lewis St., Monroe 98272. Write "Little Free Pantry" in the memo line.

Thank you for your continued support of this mission of the United in Grace Churches.



TOEVENBER IS NEXT MONTH!

Kathi would love to share the Joy of this Mission with someone. Give her a call or email if you'd like to help.



OCTOBER 2021 MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES			
	2021 Budget	July Actual	August Actual
Offerings	\$ 8,930	\$10,484	\$ 7,060
Expenses	\$10,163	\$ 9,760	\$10,140
Surplus/deficit		\$ 724	- \$ 3,080

ADMINISTRATIVE CONGREGATION MEETING



DECEMBER 12, 2021 11:00 A.M.

2021 MSLC COUNCIL

Administrative Director Missy Maxson	206-437-2535
Treasurer Brian Johnson	452-503-8352
Community Relations Cindy Gulbranson	425-210-2095
Facilities Jay Morgan	425-903-1678
Secretary Marla Wardell	360-794-4072
Ministry Director Jill Sumpter	360-348-7231
Worship Kathi Cooley	425-293-8694

We will be electing our 2022 Council and approving the 2022 Budget at the Administrative Congregation meeting on December 12, at 11:00 am. The meeting will be held on Zoom unless informed otherwise. You will be receiving a Zoom invite and log-in information next month. You must be present at the meeting to vote.

The following council positions are up for election or re-election.

Communications Ministry Director

If you would like information about any of the positions, contact either member of the Nominating Comm, Christopher Missel and Patty Tompkins, or call the church office.

OCTOBER 2021 MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Hi friends!

Another month come and gone as we march into Fall!

Although we are not yet back in the church for services, due to the still-rising Covid cases, we are working together to get things done around the church. Last weekend Jay Morgan headed up the work party to build the new railing around the Annex deck and replace the old wheel chair ramp railing and it looks great! Thanks to all from both churches who volunteered your time and talents to get it done! On the same Saturday, there was a work party in the Prayer Garden headed up by Peggy Ray, and MUMC volunteers raked and prepared the old labyrinth area for bark and cut down the plants and pulled weeds, as well as washing the old bricks that will be for sale. These funds will go towards the cost of replacing 3 old sections of fence in the garden that are rotting and falling down, so if you know anyone who is interested in buying the bricks, please send them our way! The efforts here will turn the Prayer Garden back into a place of peaceful meditation for all to enjoy – thanks to all who helped!

Below is the August treasurers report. As you will see, the income is much lower than the disbursements, which can happen when two months bills or lease income are recorded in the same month, as you can see, the overall YTD giving and income is still exceeding the expenses, so that is great! We keep on with our mission and our ministry. **God is good and faithful to us and so are all of you!**


August Treasury Report	Aug 2021	YTD 2021
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 4,762.99	\$ 57,324.06
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 7,232.09	\$ 52,628.33
	- \$ 2,469.01	+\$ 4,695.73

2021 MUMC LAY LEADERSHIP

Board of Trustees Co-Chairs Chris & Don Hoerner	360-563-9309
Finance Chair Mike Obright	206-369-5028
Treasurer Tanya Hubbard	425-210-2095
Financial Secretary Nancy Franke	360-794-6954
Staff-Parish Relations Committee Judie Esqueda	951-201-0061
Membership Secretary Rhonda Dean	425-359-2851
Lay Leader to Annual Conference Nancy Franke	360-794-6954
UMW President Jasmine Ray-Symms	425-223-9866
Recording Secretary Margaret Ray	509-432-3029

Happy Fall! Go walk in crunchy leaves, admire the change in colors and embrace the much-needed rain, and remember: Autumn is the season that teaches us that change can be beautiful!

Peace and Blessings –
Nancy Franke,
Financial Secretary MUMC

 Morning Star Lutheran Church

 Monroe United Methodist Church

412 South Lewis Street
Monroe, WA 98272-4149



October 3: 19TH PENTECOST Worship with Holy Communion - Scripture: [Psalm 8](#); [Mark 10:2-16](#)
October 10: 20TH PENTECOST Worship - Scripture: [Psalm 90:12-17](#); [Mark 10:17-31](#)
October 17: 21ST PENTECOST Worship with Holy Communion - Scripture: [Psalm 91:9-16](#); [Mark 10:35-45](#)
October 24: 22ND PENTECOST Worship - Scripture: [Psalm 126](#); [Mark 10:46-52](#)
October 31: Reformation Day Worship with Holy Communion - Scripture: [Psalm 46](#); [Romans 3:19-28](#); [John 8:31-36](#)

CONTACT US:

Pastor Malcolm Brown

Email: prmalcolmb@gmail.com Phone: 360-794-2111

MONROE UNITED METHODIST

Office Administrator: Jasmine Ray-Symms

Phone: 360-794-8863

Email: office@monroeumonline.org

Music Director: Lee Ann Obright: 206-369-1621

Website: www.monroeumonline.org

MORNING STAR LUTHERAN

Office Administrator: Kathi Cooley

Cell Phone: 425-293-8694

Phone: 360-794-2111

Email: mvlc@morningstarlc.org

Music Director: Jill Sumpter: 360-348-7231

Website: www.morningstarlc.org

YOU are invited to WORSHIP!
Morning Star Lutheran Church
and
Monroe United Methodist Church

JOIN US
this weekend
ONLINE

The service is ready for viewing Sunday's
after 6:00 a.m. and is available all week,
all the time.

YouTube

