

GROWING IN

Grace

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

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April 2023

Greetings Easter people in the name of the Risen Christ -

“Alleluia, He is risen!”

In the year of our Lord 2023

*“God is up to something here at **United in Grace**,*

*A blended ministry of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)
and the UMC (The United Methodist Church)”*

On Sunday March 26th we gathered together as one, with representatives of both the Lutheran Synod of the ELCA and the United Methodist Conference, to learn about becoming formally one within the Body of Christ and what our next steps will be. Clearly the Holy Spirit was in the room lifting us up, filling us up and guiding us in our time together and discussion. More information will come later as the Blending Team meets to determine the tasks of the next steps and a timeline.

What I anticipate and know is that as we live into the nudging and guidance of the Holy Spirit, following Jesus into our world and live in God’s Amazing grace, we will need to be ready to expect wonderful and beautiful changes, take risks, there will be a few messes along the way, many experiments, incredible growth in our faith journey and many surprises in 2023.

God is on a mission to love, heal and bless the whole world. God has gifted us at this mission outpost we now call, **United in Grace**, and has called us to show and tell of this mission of God. This mission of God is our mission, *our only* mission. We have something the world needs! God has given all the gifts needed by the Holy Spirit for that mission, to accomplish that mission in our own unique way, today in 2023, in Monroe, Washington. It will mean living differently every day out there in the world. It will mean thinking differently as a church that looks outward and not inward. We have no other mission than this one!!

We stand on grace, the work is hard, and it will take courage; to dare to take risks, and to dare to make messes as we follow God into all kinds of new places. We will encounter all kinds of grace in new people and their stories; in the company of strangers on paths we would have never picked ourselves. We will do this because we stand on grace.

We are indeed Easter People! So we sing boldly and with gusto, *“Jesus Christ is Risen Today,”* and the past is no longer just a prologue, but the present. God is indeed breaking into **United in Grace**, our world, and wants to break into our lives. God is indeed up to something here in these two congregations worshipping together as one united by the love and grace of God! Will we dare to live in God’s amazing grace? Will we dare to expect God to show in surprising and new ways?

Expect Surprises!

We will do this because we are Easter people, people of hope with the certainty of the future because the risen Jesus Christ stands in the gaps of our lives, the gap that is God’s grace and love, the gap that our world so desperately needs filled as they encounter God’s Easter people, **us**, in their lives.

We are indeed Easter People! And God is indeed up to something here! Let us dare to live in God’s amazing grace! Let us dare to expect God to show up in surprising and new ways to bless and change us!

“Alleluia, He is risen, He is risen indeed Alleluia! ”

Pastor Malcolm



Experience Holy Week at United in Grace

The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew

Palm Sunday

APRIL 2 - 10:00AM - BRUNCH TO FOLLOW

Service of Tenebrae

Good Friday

APRIL 7 - 7:00 PM

HE IS RISEN

Easter

He is risen indeed!

APRIL 9 - 10:00 AM

It's spring, and spring means flowers, and who doesn't love flowers?!

Velma and Jodi are decorating the cross for our Easter Sunday service with beautiful, living flowers and need our help. They are asking everyone to bring potted flowers in bloom to church this week. These flowers will sit at the foot of the cross on Easter Sunday.

You can purchase or plant your own in any appropriate waterproof container and take it home with you at the end of the Easter Service to enjoy in your own yard to remind you of the beauty and meaning of the Resurrection for months to come!

Please bring your flowerpots to the office on Good Friday, April 7th between 11:00am & 4:00pm or to the Good Friday service in the evening. You can bring them on Saturday morning, April 8th when the decorating will be done. Let's fill the altar area around the cross with the beauty of God's gifts of spring! It would be wonderful to have enough flowers to put some in the narthex, so bring extra if you can!



UNION OR FEDERATED CONGREGATION VOTE

As we move forward with combining our congregations into one in United in Grace, we learned at our meeting with our Methodist and Lutheran officials last Sunday, March 26th, that our next step is to take a vote on the type of congregation that we want to be - a Union or Federated congregation - which mainly determines how we handle the membership rolls.

Below are the definitions of two types of churches that you will be asked to vote on:

- ⇒ A “Federated Church” has members of two or more denominations worshipping together under the same roof as one congregation, while maintaining their denominational identities; **keeps separate denominational membership rolls**; shares the pastor; maintains one church budget, but separate denominational support (benevolences / apportionments) ; maintains one governing board.
- ⇒ A “Union Church” has members of two or more denominations worshipping together under the same roof as one congregation, while maintaining their denominational identities; has **one membership roll (but individual denominations can be noted in the roll, if desired)**; shares the pastor; maintains one church budget, but separate denominational support (benevolences / apportionments); maintains one governing board.

Either designation, Federated or Union, will be agreed upon by all parties (both Monroe United Methodist and Morning Star Lutheran churches, with approval of their respective denominational authorities, The NWWA Synod of the ELCA and the Pacific NW Conference of the United Methodist Church), defines how pastors are chosen, what benevolences / apportionments are paid, property issues, and representation granted in judicatory bodies.

This is your ballot. Extra ballots will be available at the church on April 9th. If you’re receiving this by mail, extra ballots have been included for your convenience.

I CHOOSE:

FEDERATED CHURCH

UNION CHURCH

You have several ways to vote:

- you may vote by email to mslc@morningstarlc.org, indicating your choice of **FEDERATED or UNION**.
- you may print your ballot and mail it to 342 Lewis St., Monroe, WA, 98272
- you may bring your completed ballot to church with you on **Sunday, April 9th (Easter Sunday)**. There will be a basket in the narthex (lobby) for you to put your ballot. Extra ballots will be available if needed.

The votes will be collected and tallied on that Sunday, and the results will be announced the following week.

A Plan of Agreement will be written with the majority vote stated and will be presented for a vote of approval at a short Congregation Meeting on Sunday, **April 30th**.

Thank you for your participation as we move one step closer to becoming **United In Grace!**

Blessings and peace,

The Blending Team

Accountability Groups

For a long time, I've wanted to be a part of an accountability group. I've read about them and known people who've been a part of them but never had the opportunity myself. I've heard how rewarding they can be, and I've had a desire to form deeper relationships with other Christians, but joining a group never worked out.

So, what is an accountability group? It's a small group with some particular attributes: holding one another accountable to walking with God, sharing openly and honestly about how your walk is going, and supporting one another in prayer and fellowship. The logistics can vary by group. You can meet weekly or monthly, in a home or in a restaurant or coffee shop, do a study or read a verse of scripture. Ideally accountability groups create "an environment in which people could trust and be trusted, love and be loved, and be vulnerable in a way that is needed for true growth in grace and love of God, neighbor, and self to occur." (Accountable Discipleship Living in God's Household by Steven W Manskar p.93)

I encourage us all to pray about whether to participate in an accountability group. If you're interested in deepening your walk with God or having a deeper relationship with others, maybe this is for you. It can be hard with all the busyness of life to fit one more thing in but, with God's guidance, this group will feed you, and not be one more thing to deplete you. If you're interested, let me know!

Jasmine Ray-Symms
www.jasmineraysymms.com



APRIL SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE



You are welcome and encouraged to serve wherever you see the word **"OPEN"**. No experience necessary—on the job training is provided! You'll find this form in the church narthex (lobby) under the "Sign Up To Serve" sign.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV

	APRIL 2 PALM SUNDAY	APRIL 9 EASTER SUNDAY	APRIL 16 2 ND EASTER	APRIL 23 3 RD EASTER	APRIL 30 4 TH EASTER
Worship Assistant	Nancy Franke	Nancy Franke	Missy Maxson	Jasmine Ray-Symms	Nancy Franke
Greeter	Ric Hart	Ben Ault	Perry & Valerie Cole	OPEN	Joel & JoLynn Garrison
Ushers need 2	Ric Hart	Ben & Kaitlyn Ault	OPEN	OPEN	Joel & JoLynn Garrison
Acolyte	Markus Gray	Timothy Gray	Peter Maxson	Brian Johnson	OPEN
Reader	~~~~	Ric Hart	Missy Maxson	Lori Johnson	Susanne Olson
Serve Communion need 2	Susanne Olson Jasmine Ray-Symms	OPEN	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	OPEN	OPEN
Communion Preparation	Missy Maxson	Harriet Barr	JoLynn Garrison	Kathleen Sallee	OPEN
Coffee Hour	Pete & Missy Maxson	~~~~	Pete & Missy Maxson	Brian & Lori Johnson	Kathleen Sallee
Provide Altar Flowers	John & Tanya Hubbard	Susanne Olson	Missy Maxson	Jill Sumpter	Missy Maxson

From The Greater NW News

Stories of Vital Mission and Ministry

[The Well](#) welcomes artist/theologian Julian Davis Reid to Seattle on April 20, 7-9:30 PM for a workshop called Notes of Rest: Sabbath and Our Ancestors. Sabbath and Our Ancestors will explore the rhythms of work and rest that we have inherited, how they have made their home in our bodies, and how we might discern what to honor and relinquish and what to elevate and bring to life once more.

Notes of Rest is a spiritual formation ministry grounded in scripture and black music that helps the body of Christ receive God’s gift of rest. It is a practice of contemplation and creativity that moves us toward the rest we were created to receive. This workshop – Sabbath and Our Ancestors – will use music, teaching, and interaction to explore how we carry in our bodies patterns of work and rest inherited from our ancestors. As we explore how some patterns helped our ancestors survive, we will ask how those patterns serve us today. And, what from our ancestors – familial and spiritual – have been buried deep inside of us and yearns to be released and given life?

Julian Davis Reid is a pianist, producer, and composer with a focus on jazz, electronic music, and gospel. He is a founding member of the jazz-electronic fusion group The JuJu Exchange (in partnership with Grammy Award winner Nico Segal and drummer-inventor Nova Zaii). Julian holds a B.A from Yale University and an M.Div. degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Julian and his wife live in Chicago.

Scholarships are available if the ticket price is a hindrance to attendance. We charge to offset costs, but we never believe that cost should keep someone from attending our public engagements. Call us or email us if you need financial relief to attend.

Tickets are available for \$15 via Brown Paper Tickets: <https://juliandavisreid.bpt.me/>

Exploring the rhythms of work and rest inherited from our ancestors, this workshop is a practice of contemplation and creativity that moves us toward the rest we were created to receive.

Julian Davis Reid


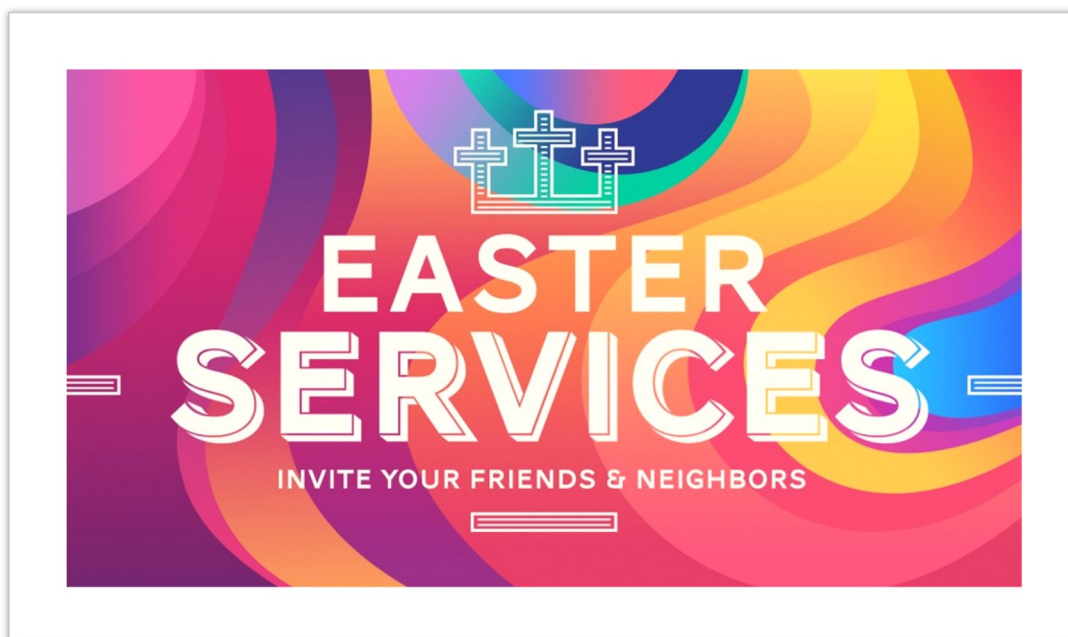
Notes of Rest:

Sabbath and Our Ancestors

April 20, 7-9:30 PM, \$15

The Well @QAUMC
1606 5th Ave W
Seattle, WA 98119

www.thewellqueenanne.org

THE CELEBRATION STARTS AT 10:00AM!

Prayer Wall

Lord of our salvation, receive our prayer

We believe in the power of prayer. The Bible says that if we have any needs whether they be physical, emotional, or spiritual, we should bring those to God through prayer and He will hear us. If there is anything in your life that you need from God, we would love to add it to our *Prayers of the People* on Sunday mornings.

The Prayer Wall, located in the narthex, is a way to have your prayers brought before the congregation during the Prayers of the People. These can be made anonymously of course, if you choose.

Simply write your petition on a slip of paper from the basket in front of the prayer wall, then tuck it into the wall. You may include your name and/or names of people you wish to be prayed for, or you may keep it completely private. Your prayer will be included during the service.



Nathan's Clothing Bank (in the parsonage garage) is in need of volunteers to sort donations and help supervise while the bank is open. If you have a few hours a week that you could spare or even just one time and would like to help and see what this mission is all about, you're encouraged to sign up on the list at church in the entry or go to our SignUp Genius at: [volunteers: Nathan's Free Clothing Bank \(signupgenius.com\)](http://volunteers:Nathan's Free Clothing Bank (signupgenius.com))

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING

Hazel's Little Free Pantry

Your generous and constant support these past 3 years has fed hundreds that otherwise would have gone hungry.

We hear from guests that frequent the pantry how grateful they are for the food. Some stop by on their way to work for milk and cereal and maybe a sandwich for lunch.

We are filling a need in Monroe and it's greatly appreciated.

Thank you 

APRIL BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES *

- 4 David Garrison
- 4 Rocky & Annette Kyle *
- 5 Susanne Olson
- 11 Chris & Michelle Cooper *
- 13 Ken Tompkins
- 16 Jacob Maxson
- 17 Rocky Kyle
- 18 Allison Tompkins
- 19 Russ Sumpter
- 29 Peter Maxson



From the Spirit, April 2023

I recently learned that the largest glacier between Mt. Rainier and Glacier Peak is no more. The reporter actually said that the glacier had died. Died. Gone. For thousands of years, the Hinman Glacier lived in the Washington Cascades providing much needed water to the Skykomish River. It is now gone.

A few months ago, my beloved dog, Gracie, died. She was thirteen. She was sick. It was time. But Gracie was with me through my cancer treatment, my children leaving home, my marriage ending, moving to a new city, beginning a new job, being in a new relationship ... and now she has died. She is now gone.

In this synod we recently had two churches close: Clearbrook Lutheran Church in Lynden and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Concrete. There are additional congregations who are discerning closure in this synod. All these congregations thrived in their communities for many years. Baptisms, weddings, funerals happened. People heard, shared, and lived into the good news of Jesus. And now these congregations have either decided, or are discerning, if their time lifecycle has come to an end.

All of these deaths are hard. They hurt my heart. There is grief and there is pain. And, while I might not know what you are grieving, I am sure that there is heartache in your life, too. Sometimes it seems that there is so much death. And sometimes it seems overwhelming.

As Christians we might say, “But I thought we were promised immortality. I thought “death has lost its sting.” Truthfully, it doesn’t feel that way. Death is real. It hurts. Where is this resurrection and new life we are promised?”

Dr. Brian Bantum, professor and author, writes regarding human immortality:

Our personhood, the body we speak of so confidently that was meant to live forever, is itself an arrangement of cells and tissues that are cycling through life and death. Our bodies are constantly undergoing changes, small transformations in our gradual development from infant to adult. Our bodies are no different and are connected to the cycles of life and death that are intrinsic to creation’s goodness. As Indigenous theologian Randy Woodley reminds us, ‘Death is simply another part of living.’ (*Christian Century, Did God intend for Adam and Eve to live forever?, March 12, 2023*)

On Ash Wednesday this year, I had a vision of God playing in the dirt. Kneeling down, mixing dirt into mud, molding and mixing, and forming each human. God – laughing and creating. God – loving and generating. I smiled at this sight. Later in the service, when I went forward to receive ashes in the shape of a cross upon my forehead, when I heard, “Dust to dust and ashes to ashes,” I had a vision of God scooping each beloved human into God’s arms at the end of their life. Holding the human turned dirt again. Loving and creating even more.

Dr. Bantum writes later in the same article, “Change, transformation, death, cycles of renewal and cessation—these are all part of God’s creation. And this change is beautiful and good.” Is it possible to move beyond the grief we feel when something ends and see the new life that might be coming?

Perhaps the glacier that died could be an impetus for us to take seriously the threat of climate change. I would hope so. I hope that the love my dog Gracie had for me will make me more loving towards others. In our synod, we are working with the closing congregations so that together we may begin new ministries and new ways of being church in this new day and age.

During this season of Lent – and into Holy Week and Easter – we know the truth of death. We know it in our bones. We acknowledge the pain, the difficulty, the fear, and the grief that comes with death. And yet, even more so, as people of faith, as people who celebrate Easter, we trust in God’s love through Jesus Christ who died and rose again for us and for the redemption of this entire world. Yes. There is death. And yes. There is resurrection.

God continues to play in the soil. God continues to create and nurture new life. God continues to hold and sustain life. And, fundamentally, without question, God brings life from death - each and every day.

May you have a blessed Easter. May we together, in this real world that we live in, trust in Jesus. And may we, with all the angels, archangels and all the saints, shout the good news together, “Happy Easter! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!”

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org

APRIL 2023 - MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Greetings All!

Lots going on around our beloved church as we enter April and the start of Spring! Hopefully you have all seen our new digital sign in person and agree that it makes MUMC / MSLC more visible to the public and brings a little smile to those that pass it by and read our messages of welcome, inclusion and the invitation to worship God with us any time! I am excited about the new mission that this sign has started, along with the continuing missions of the Hazel's Little Pantry and Nathan's Donation Station and Free Clothing Bank, and speaking of the Free Clothing Bank, it is now operating regularly Tues, Wed, and Thursday from 2:30 – 4:30 in the garage in back of the parsonage on the church grounds! This clothing bank will provide free clothing for all (including children) during those hours and will also accept donations as well during opening hours, so if you are cleaning out your closets and would like to pass those useable clothes and shoes on to someone in need, please bring your donations during opening hours or leave them with me on Sunday and I will see that they get to Brigitte, who coordinates the clothing bank (she is the one who is staying in the motor home by the garage, until her permanent housing is ready to move into). The clothing bank could also use volunteers to sort donations and help those that come for clothing, so if you have a few hours a week or even just once, that you could spare and would like to help and see what this mission is all about, I encourage you to sign up on the list at church in the entry or go to our SignUp Genius at [volunteers: Nathan's Free Clothing Bank \(signupgenius.com\)](mailto:volunteers:Nathan's Free Clothing Bank (signupgenius.com)) or type in www.signupgenius.com/findasignup and enter my email nfranke@comcast.net and you will see the sign up for Nathan's Free Clothing Bank!

Another mission of help and inclusion that we are doing is our participation in the first annual Snohomish Pride Festival in Snohomish on June 3rd. Kathleen Salee and I will be carrying our church banner in the first ever Pride Parade that day and if you would like to come and walk with us and show your support, please plan to meet us!

We will also have a booth, as we did last year, at the Monroe Pride Festival in Monroe on June 11th and can always use volunteers for that as well!

Lots of flower planting and sprucing up around the church is going on and thanks to all that are helping with that. Remember – the Prayer Garden belongs to everybody and will take a village to keep it looking beautiful for all to share this year, so don't feel that you have to wait for a special organized day to get in there and dig in the dirt! Ric has done a lot in that garden and I'm sure would be happy to make suggestions of what you could do, if you are in doubt!

No treasurer's report this month, but the lights are still on and the doors are still open, so in my book, that means all is well! Thanks to you all for your support in works, in offerings and in prayers, and thanks be to God for his many blessings on us all and the works that we do in His name!

May the blessings of Easter be with you every day of the year!

Nancy Franke
Financial Secretary, MUMC

2023 MUMC LAY LEADERSHIP

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		
Lay Leader to Annual Conference	Margaret Ray	509-432-3029
UMW President	Jasmine Ray-Symms	425-223-9866
Recording Secretary	Margaret Ray	509-432-3029



CHURCH ATTENDANCE

MARCH 2023

In Person: 35 Online: 15


APRIL 2023 - MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES

	2023 Budget	January Actual	February Actual
Offerings	\$ 8,917	\$ 3,770	\$ 7,474
Expenses	\$10,384	\$12,567	\$10,037
Surplus/deficit		-\$ 8,797	-\$ 2,563

2023 MSLC COUNCIL

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



LOOKING AHEAD:

- Palm Sunday Worship and Brunch: April 2
- Good Friday Service: April 7
- Easter Sunday Celebration Service: April 7

April 2: PALM SUNDAY ~ COMMUNION ~ **The Passion of Our Lord According to Matthew - Brunch**

April 7: GOOD FRIDAY ~ Scripture: **A Service of Tenebrae**

April 9: EASTER SUNDAY ~ COMMUNION ~ Scripture: Acts 10:34-43; Ps.118:1-2, 14-24; **Gospel: Matthew 28:1-10**

April 16: SECOND EASTER ~ COMMUNION Scripture: Ps.16; **Gospel John 20:19-31** Guest Pastor

April 23: THIRD EASTER ~ COMMUNION Scripture: Ps.116:1-4, 12-19; **Gospel Luke 24:13-35**

April 30: FOURTH EASTER ~ COMMUNION Scripture: Ps. 23; **Gospel John 10:1-10**

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Live stream/editor: Bryce Cooley

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MORNING STAR LUTHERAN

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Website: www.unitedingrace.org

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



[unitedingrace.org](http://www.unitedingrace.org)