

GROWING IN

# Grace

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"Lutherdists and Methorans"  
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ELCA Bishop Article and UMC Video  
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**April 2024**

***Greetings Easter people in the name of the Risen Christ -  
"Alleluia, He is Risen"***

*In the year of our Lord 2024 "God is up to something here in Monroe at the soon to officially  
be "United in Grace", A ministry of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)  
and the UMC (The United Methodist Church)"*

*God is up to something here in Monroe!!  
As we live in God's Amazing Grace  
**Expect Surprises in 2024!***

One of the Easter Hymns which we sing here at Morning Star Lutheran and Monroe United Methodist on Easter morning, is "Jesus Christ is Risen Today". This song is one of my favorite hymns, especially as the people of God here on Lewis Street, because it is so full of surprises on this day when God's love and grace win over and conquer hatred and death. This year as we belted out the Alleluia's we may have been surprised to also hear the new sounds of instruments that will accompany Jill, the powerful sound of the choir singing "Majesty" as they processed in down the center aisle. Let us also not forget how wonderful, powerful and glorious were all of the voices as we sang: "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" in the midst of this glorious celebration to be delighted and surprised.

This song is written in such a way that it reminds us of something that has happened in the past and as we remember it in that way it also moves us to understand that it is happening again right now in the present, and happening in a way that can be full of surprising grace, right here in this time and place. So, on Easter Sunday we sang once again, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today, our triumphant holy day." It is not that we pretend that every Easter Jesus rises again, because we still sing "**today**." We do not sing, "Jesus Christ was raised almost 2000 years ago." The past is never just the past, because we make it our own now, **today**, right here in Monroe, in April of 2024.

We sing "Jesus Christ is Risen Today, our triumphant holy day" because we expect once again, Jesus to show up **today** and surprise us **today** with a new and renewed life! The Season of Easter is about the celebration of the resurrected Jesus poured upon us to sustain us the church to rejoice, proclaim, love and serve the world.

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 our world and wants to break into our lives. God is indeed up to something here at Morning Star Lutheran Church and Monroe United Methodist Church soon the be "United in Grace", a joint and blended ministry of both denominations here in Monroe! Will we dare to live in God's amazing grace? Will we dare to expect God to show in surprising and new ways?

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! **Jesus Christ is Risen Today!**

***"He is risen indeed!"***

*Pastor Malcolm*

Hi All and happy official spring –

As United in Grace is in the process of writing its own constitution and bylaws that will reflect who we are as a new entity of a “Lutherdists and Methorans” church, it seems appropriate that all of us might want to more fully understand the differences and similarities of both the Lutheran and Methodist denominations in the administration styles and how it related to the methods and administration of each denomination, in order to be truly blending our ideas for United in Grace. Pr. Malcom and I have collaborated on this information to hopefully bring a bit of clarity and understanding to those who are interested.

The two denominations have completely different Administrative structures the serve the local churches, and how they relate to the regional and broader church.

Let’s start with the ELCA: The **ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)** believes that there is one church with 3 ways in which they connect called the 3 **expressions** or equal parts of the church. (Any activity that fulfills in some way a community aspect of God’s people is an expression of church.)

They have what might be called a “Bottom Up” administrative structure, which puts the first expression, the **local church**, to have all of the autonomy to run their churches basically on their own.

The **Synod** is the next expression. There are 65 synods in the ELCA across 9 regions. **MSLC** is part of Region One, which is Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Montana. There are 6 Synods within Region One, Alaska, Northwest Washington, Southwestern Washington, Northwest Intermountain, Montana and Oregon, and **MSLC** is part of the Northwest Washington Synod that basically goes from the Canadian border to somewhere around Federal Way and from the ridge of the cascades to the Puget Sound waters. Each of the 65 Synods has its own bishop. Bishop Shelley Wee is the Bishop of the NWWA Synod. This synod staff consists of 8 other people under the bishop.

The **Northwest Washington Synod Council** is made up of Bishop Wee, pastors and lay people from the NWWA Synod. The council, meeting every other month, serves as the board of directors and the interim legislative authority in between Synod churches. They provide vision, support, and resources so that congregations and other ministries can carry out their mission.

The third expression of the church, which is **the ELCA** gathers every third year as a national organization again to make decisions based on the larger church, the synods and all of its congregations. And often it's when the constitution gets changed based on the vote of the of the members of **the National Convention**. The presiding bishop chairs the triennial Churchwide Assembly and provides for the preparation of agendas for the assembly, the ELCA Church Council and its executive committee, the **ELCA Conference of Bishops**, and the **Cabinet of Executives** at churchwide ministries. The presiding bishop, The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, is also the chief ecumenical officer of this church and provides leadership and care for the bishops of this church’s 65 synods.

Now, in contrast, here is the International **UMC (United Methodist Church)** structure:

The UMC has what is referred to as a “Top Down” administrative structure, with each tiered “conference” providing guidance and support for the conference below it, all the way down to the local church. In the United Methodist structure and organization, every local church is linked to an interconnected network of organizations or conferences, that join together in mission and ministry, allowing the UMC to accomplish far more than any one local church or person could alone.

The structure starts at the top with the **General Conference**. As the primary legislative body, General Conference is the only entity with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader.

As a part of **General Conference** is the input from **Central Conferences** that serve the United Methodist Congregations in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. There are seven geographical regions, called central conferences.

As the denomination’s highest judicial body or "court," the **Judicial Council's** nine members, made up of laity and clergy, are elected by the General Conference

The **Council of Bishops** includes all current and retired Bishops.

**The Jurisdictional Conference\*** consists of **Annual Conferences** situated in a geographical region. There are five jurisdictions in the United States. **The Pacific Northwest Conference**, which **MUMC** is in, belongs to the Western Jurisdiction which includes the Annual Conferences of Alaska (Missionary), California-Pacific, California-Nevada, Desert Southwest, Mountain Sky, and Oregon-Idaho.

The **Pacific Northwest Annual Conference** is divided into five geographic areas, called Districts. Each local church belongs to a geographic district. These districts are; **Puget Sound**, SeaTac, Vancouver, Seven Rivers, and Inland Missional Districts. A superintendent is assigned to each district. **MUMC** is in the **Puget Sound district**. Pr. Mark Galang is the DS (District Superintendent) for this district.

Finally, each annual conference has a bishop assigned to an episcopal area. Bishop **Cedrick D. Bridgeforth** is the Resident Bishop of the **Greater Northwest Episcopal Area** which includes the **Pacific Northwest Conference** in addition to the **Alaska and Oregon-Idaho Conferences**. The PNW Conference has a staff of 29, including the district offices under Bishop Bridgeforth.

Lastly is the local church who acts under the laws of the **Book of Discipline** and the programs, guidance, leadership and resources of the various conferences that cover and oversee it.

Here are 3 major differences in UMC from the ELCA to further add to the comparison: In the UMC, church pastors are appointed by the conference and stay at the assigned church for an indeterminate amount of time. While the local church has a chance to give input on their current pastor through the SPR (Staff-Parish Relations) Committee at their annual charge conference, it is still up to the Bishop to keep or move a current pastor at any time. These new assignments are made every June and usually take place 30 days after announcement when the outgoing pastor leaves and the new assigned pastor arrives. This is in contrast to the ELCA who lets individual church's call their own pastors at their own pace and expense.

Another main difference is that the local conference purchases and retains ownership of all church properties that the local churches use. This is in contrast to the ELCA that lets each church be responsible for buying and maintaining their own property, or renting a worship space.

The third and perhaps biggest difference is all ELCA churches write their own constitution and bylaws (with ELCA guidelines) based on the missions and needs of the individual church and areas itself, where as all UMC churches are subject to The Book of Discipline, which constitutes the law and doctrine of the United Methodist Church in place of an individual church Constitution and Bylaws.

So there you have it in a not-so-small nutshell – the two very different administrative leadership strategies of the ELCA and the UMC. ELCA is more “hands off” in more of an advisory capacity for its local churches and the UMC is very much “hands on” in its having a pre-determined set plan and procedure for most all circumstances and providing the support and guidance from the extensive Conference staff to see that all individual church concerns are addressed and denominational requirements met.

I hope some of this was helpful and will help us all to understand where we have come from and where we are going as we get closer to being United In Grace.

See you in church!

Nancy Franke



SOON!

**Baby Bear**

As we progress through Holy Week and culminate with Easter, excitement is in the air for me. I'm heading down to Las Vegas for the birth of my first grandchild, Keenan Harvey Barrett already affectionally known as Baby Bear. I am abundantly blessed. I'm grateful for this little one and for my children. As I write this, I just found out my daughter has to go the hospital with pre-eclampsia. My excitement is tempered with worry. They'll monitor her for a couple hours and likely induce. Hopefully as you read this, I'll be cuddled up with the little guy in my arms, my daughter safe and healthy. The new parents filled with joy at the miracle they've made.



As I asked for prayers, I was given this response, "Trust in God, my sweet friend." It touched me. It was a good reminder that God is in control. It was also a good reminder that I am not. We had all these plans. The baby shower is in two days. Maternity pictures never got done. She got her hair dyed blue yesterday and she kept saying, "I'm going to sweat blue hair!" Fear was also present. Trusting God when life is scary is hard.

So, I offer up this prayer to God, "keep my baby safe and bring her baby into this world healthy and happy." I reminded my daughter, "Your baby will be born healthy, happy, and loved." God is in control. And if, God forbid, that prayer isn't answered, I will trust God to bring us through, no matter the outcome. We will come through this. God is good.

Jasmine Ray-Symms

[www.jasmineraysymms.com](http://www.jasmineraysymms.com)

Photo by [kids&me Germany](#) on [Unsplash](#)



**CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

**MARCH 2024**

**In Person: 44    Online: 15**

**April Birthdays & Anniversaries\***

- 4     David Garrison
- 4     Rocky & Annette Kyle \*
- 5     Susanne Olson
- 11    Chris & Michelle Cooper \*
- 13    Rob Williams & Allene Zanger\*
- 13    Harriet Barr
- 14    Elliot Hughes
- 16    Jacob Maxson
- 29    Peter Maxson

**APRIL SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE**

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

	APRIL 7	APRIL 14	APRIL 21	APRIL 28
<b>Worship Asst.</b>	Missy Maxson	Christine Coco	Missy Maxson	Christine Coco
<b>Greeters</b>	Bev Rice	Pat Holtz	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Ushers</b>	Christine Coco	Valerie & Perry Cole	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Kaitlyn Ault & Julia Chambers
<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	Valerie Coley	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Reader</b>	Ric Hart	Gwen Paietta	Joel Garrison	Ric Hart
<b>Comm. Prep.</b>	Kathleen Sallee	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	JoLynn Garrison
<b>Serve Comm.</b>	John & Tanya Hubbard	Tanya Hubbard & Susanne Olson	John & Tanya Hubbard	Joel & JoLynn Garrison
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	Rob Williams & Allene Zanger	Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Kathleen Sallee	Christine Coco
<b>Altar Flowers</b>	Pat Holtz	Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Susanne Olson	Tanya Hubbard
<b>Soundboard</b>	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown





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

In fifth grade, I started playing trumpet. This wasn't the instrument that I chose – it was chosen for me because my aunt had an old trumpet and my mom said, "If you want to be in band, you can use this trumpet." But even though I wanted to play the flute, the trumpet was definitely the instrument for me. I loved playing trumpet. I loved the sound, the way to make different notes with just three valves, using different mutes that produced complexity of tone. I loved to polish and clean my trumpet – especially when I received a new silver trumpet in high school. The only thing I didn't like was carrying it to and from school because of the big hill that we lived on.

In high school I was in both band and jazz band. In jazz band we traveled to many competitions – winning the Reno Jazz Festival one year. When I look back on my experience in band, I realize that there are so many things that I continue to apply in my life, and as part of the body of Christ, that go back to being in band.

First, you can't be a band on your own. If you play a solo instrument, that is lovely. But that isn't a band. There needs to be a group to form a band – it can be small or large – but an agreement that you are engaging with one another and playing music with one another leads to forming a band. If you are using music, the same music is important – also the same key and the same beats per measure helps. An agreement on how fast or slow the tempo is important. In short, community is needed for a band.

Second, you can't all play the same instrument. I mean, I love the trumpet – but a band of trumpets is one-dimensional (and can be very loud). I admit that as much as I love brass, you need more than brass to form a band. We have all heard brass quartets – but for a band, you need the saxophone, the piccolo, the clarinet, the drum, and so much more. Diversity is needed in a band.

Third, you can't drown out others. I speak as one who plays trumpet. Trumpets know how to be loud. And if trumpeters are not careful, they will hide the beauty of the other instruments. There is nothing more gorgeous than notes from an oboe coming from seemingly nowhere to fill the air with that wistful, haunting sound. In other words, listen for

the woodwinds. A variety of sounds and voices are needed in a band – especially those that are more hidden.

Fourth, harmony doesn't mean the same note. It would be boring if every single instrument played the very same note for every song in a band's repertoire. Our ears are tuned to hear melody, harmony, dissonance, and resolution. In a band, it is imperative that different notes are played – different rhythm patterns are introduced, and a play amongst the instruments happens. Harmony and dissonance are needed in a band.

Dear people of God, these four things are also needed in the church and in the world: Community, diversity, variety of sound and voice, harmony and dissonance. I invite you to think about your worshipping community. How are we all like a band? How can we be more intentional in these four areas?

Our composer and maestro is God – God is directing and leading us – in the music we co-create. May this spring awaken you in the beauty and grace of God. May the community in which you gather bring music in all its fullness.

• *Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee*  
[bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)



(From the UMC PNW District Service Center)

# Happy Easter

FROM THE DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER



<https://tinyurl.com/bddwmnpp>

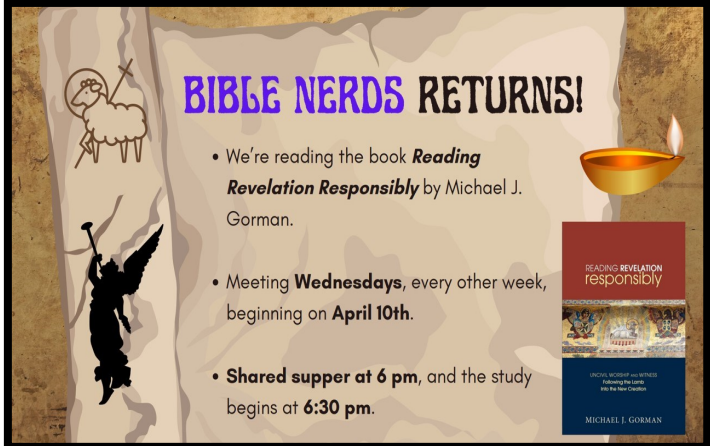
Click the link to watch the  
*"The Meaning of Easter"*,  
 told by a 5 year old

## GET CONNECTED – FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES



**Jesus and Java Returns!**

8:30am Sundays  
Beginning April 7<sup>th</sup>  
Featuring  
Rob Bell Videos



**BIBLE NERDS RETURNS!**

- We're reading the book *Reading Revelation Responsibly* by Michael J. Gorman.
- Meeting **Wednesdays**, every other week, beginning on **April 10th**.
- **Shared supper at 6 pm**, and the study begins at **6:30 pm**.



**United Women in Grace** will be skipping our April Meeting due to Easter and Spring Break.

**SEE YOU IN MAY!**



**Books, TV & Movies!**

**April 16, 6:30pm**

Come for great discussion and snacks at this month's BTM. We'll keep you posted who the host is this month!

*all are welcome!*


### Hazel's Little Free Pantry Donation Bucket



Feel like going shopping? You're invited to bring your pantry donations on Sunday mornings and drop them in the blue bin in the narthex. Things most often needed: soft granola/breakfast type bars, juice boxes, peanut butter crackers, and any other type of snack food.

Of course if shopping isn't your thing, the Last Sunday of every month is dedicated to Hazel's Little Free Pantry. Specially marked envelopes are found in the backs of the pews and on the Greeters desk on Sunday morning.

### **BROWN BAG SUNDAY — APRIL 14**



Brown Bag Sunday is the second Sunday of each month. Special emphasis is given and financial offerings are accepted for this much loved ministry in Monroe. Specially marked envelopes are found in the backs of the pews and on the Greeters desk on Sunday morning.

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THESE UNITED IN GRACE MINISTRIES**



**INTERESTED IN  
VOLUNTEERING FOR  
KIDZ CLUB  
AT TAKE THE NEXT STEP?**

Reach out to  
Sarah Lunstrum [sarah@ttns.org](mailto:sarah@ttns.org) for  
more information or come to the  
**Kidz Club Volunteer Orientation**  
**Tuesday April 16 3:30pm**  
at Monroe Covenant Church 202 S.  
Sams St. Monroe



**Church Business**

**APRIL 2024 - MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

MONROE UNITED METHODIST  
TREASURY REPORT  
FOR MONTH ENDED: JANUARY 31, 2024

TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 4,914.22
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$10,182.54

Short: - \$ 5,268.32

**2024 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  
**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

**Church Business**



**APRIL - 2024 - MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**2024 NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES**

	2024 Budget	January Actual	February Actual
Offerings	\$ 8,917	\$ 6,475	\$ 5,611
Expenses	\$10,384	\$10,073	\$12,934
Surplus/ deficit		- \$ 3,598	- \$ 6,783

**2024 MSLC COUNCIL**

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

 Morning Star Lutheran Church  
 Monroe United Methodist Church  
412 South Lewis Street  
Monroe, WA 98272-4149



**LOOKING AHEAD THIS MONTH:**

- \* **Jesus & Java**  
Sunday mornings at 8:30
- \* **Bible Nerds**  
Wednesday's the 10<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm
- \* **Books, TV, & Movies**  
Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm
- \* **Grace in the Wild**  
Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> at 10am

April 7: **SECOND EASTER** ~ Scripture: Psalm 16; John 20:19-31

April 14: **THIRD EASTER** ~ Scripture: Psalm 4; Luke 24-36b-48

April 21: **FOURTH EASTER** ~ Scripture: Psalm 23; John 10:11-18

April 28: **FIFTH EASTER** ~ Scripture: Psalm 22:25-31; John 15:1-8

**CONTACT US:**

**Pastor Malcolm Brown**

**Phone:** 360-794-2111

**Email:** [prmalcolmb@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:office@monroeamonline.org)

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

**MORNING STAR LUTHERAN**

**Phone:** 360-794-2111

**Email:** [office@unitedingrace.org](mailto:office@unitedingrace.org)

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

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



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