

GROWING IN

# Grace

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**January 2023**

## ***HAPPY EPIPHANY!***

***"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Isaiah 9:2***

Epiphany is January 6<sup>th</sup> (the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas or also called the 12<sup>th</sup> Night), and we will be celebrating Epiphany on Sunday January 8<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate and rediscover each year that **Someone** has come! Has come to us and to all people sent by God to bring God's love and presence into our lives and the lives of all people, to heal our brokenness and to reveal to us the unimaginable depths of God's love for you and I and the entire of creation, which God loves so very much.

Epiphany is a Greek word meaning: "appearing" or a "revealing", that is, the revealing of God through God's Son sent down to be with us and to all the tribes of the world. Throughout this season of light Jesus is revealed to us as repeatedly stepping beyond the accepted tribe, (those like us) to and for the entire world.

***"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5***

In the readings of the season of Epiphany, before Lent begins, Jesus is consistently breaking down the walls between tribes, denominations, neighborhoods, class, all religions, even beyond Jews and Gentiles, between the powerful and the marginalized, who is in and who is out, family and stranger, clean and unclean social, cultural and political affiliations; and all the other ways we use to separate and divide those who are not like us. Today in this time and place our tribalism needs to be challenged with Jesus; fierce and radical inclusiveness and love for all just as you are.

## ***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

Before Thanksgiving, both congregations voted and made the commitment to move head and become united as one congregation as the body of Jesus the Christ for the sake of the Gospel and God's world. In this new year, before the end of January the core leadership from both congregations will gather prayerfully to listen to and be guided by the Holy Spirit as to the next steps. This group will be the seeds of a slightly larger team that will guide us through the steps as we work with both congregations and denominational questions and concerns. We will begin initially by primarily seeking the questions we will need to address sooner than later as they relate to our first steps.

This will be a process indeed and we will need all of your prayers, grace and questions. During the process we will have some listening times for us to hear from you and a time for us to let you know what we are up to and what the time line might look like. We will work to faithfully move ahead, taking the time needed and at the same time not letting the process get bogged down as we become "United in Grace".

Together as "United in Grace" because we believe that the Holy Spirit has called us to do this work together and because we also believe that we have been called to do so and will be better together for the sake of Gospel love and grace God is with us, as this light found in a humble manger, which has come into the world whether we recognize it or not, or accept it or not; to love all, to give hope for all and make the world whole again.

We are called to be not just a place of healing and grace, but also a beacon of light for our world and our community, and a place of radical hospitality where all are welcome. To be a Place where **all** are welcome, not how we want them to be or think they should be, but just as they are and who they are when they come to us!

***Happy Epiphany and A Happy New Year!***

***In this Epiphany season and New Year may the light of the star and the glory of God be revealed to you and in new and unexpected ways!***

Pastor Malcolm






### New Member Sunday & Potluck Lunch!

**January 29<sup>th</sup> beginning @ 10:00am**

After the excitement of Christmas and New Years, January can seem a little too quiet. A potluck is just what we'll need! Bring your favorite "comfort food" recipe for a United in Grace potluck after church



### WORSHIP ATTENDANCE DECEMBER 2022

In Person: 45      Online Views: 15      

*If you like to serve where you see a **RED question mark**, please call Kathi at the office and let her know. Thank you.*

	JANUARY 1 NAME OF JESUS	JANUARY 8 2 <sup>ND</sup> EPIPHANY	JANUARY 15 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD	JANUARY 22 3 <sup>RD</sup> EPIPHANY	JANUARY 29 4 <sup>TH</sup> EPIPHANY
Worship Asst. t	Nancy Franke	Kathleen Sallee	Nancy Franke	Nancy Franke	Missy Maxson
Greeter	Jerry Esqueda	Denny & Diana Coates	????	Denny Diana Coates	????
Ushers need 2	Jerry Esqueda ????	???? ????	Ben & Kaitlyn Ault	???? ????	Ric Hart ????
Acolyte	Jerry Esqueda	Jerry Esqueda	Timothy Gray	Markus Gray	????
Reader	Perter & Missy Maxson	Ric Hart	Brian Johnson	Kathleen Sallee	Missy Maxson
Serve Comm.	Kathleen Sallee	N/A	Lori & Brian Johnson	N/A	N/A
Comm. Prep	Kathleen Sallee	N/A	Kathleen Sallee	N/A	N/A
Coffee Hour	????	Amy Halgren	Kathleen Sallee	????	Amy Halgren
Soundboard	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley

## Books – TV – Movies



We're getting together at 6:30 on Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> to share our most recent literary, theatrical or televised find, and of course share a few snacks! Amy Halgren is our host this month. Email Amy for her address: amygren@comcast.net. All women are welcome and encouraged to attend!



The Infant Care Room (also know as the Cry Room) has been spiffed up! The speaker has been fixed, the toys have been cleaned and sanitized and the shelves have been made safe. While children are **ALWAYS** welcome and a **JOY** to have in the sanctuary, it's nice to know you have a place to take your little one if you'd like to. The room is located in the narthex.



### Take the Next Step

\$146 was donated to our friends at Take the Next Step.

This gift came from the undesignated offering given at the Christmas Eve service.

### United in Grace Women's Retreat!

March 4<sup>th</sup> 9am-3pm

Invite a Friend!

Attention all women! The annual United Women in Faith Women's Retreat returns Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> from 9-3. Our theme this year is "Smile" and we encourage you to come and bring a friend! This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better and truly become sisters in Christ.

Hope to see you there!

### Reverse Advent Gift of Food

Thank you everyone for your participation in our 2022 Reverse Advent Calendar event.

Together we collected **282 pounds of food!** That will go a long way toward feeding those who are food insecure.

A special thank you to Kathleen Sallee for coordinating the event and to Kathleen and Stephen for taking the 282 pounds of food to the food bank!



### HAZEL'S LITTLE FREE PANTRY

We continue to be blessed every day by your offerings of socks, food & money to keep our Little Free Pantry running. What a JOY to be able to provide warm socks every day during the bitter cold weather we had. Please know that your generosity and goodwill has been greatly appreciated.



*Hazel's Little Free Pantry Sunday is January 29<sup>th</sup>*

I am so blessed to be surrounded by so many loving, caring, and giving people! Thanks so much for all the help you have given me this past year in support of our Care Ministry. You've done a LOT!

Happy New Year! I pray you will have a joyful, peaceful, and blessed year.

Rhonda Morgan  
Care

**January Birthdays & Anniversaries \***

- 6 Cody Missel
- 20 Jasmine Ray-Symms
- 21 Kyle Cook
- 23 Annette Kyle
- 24 Jerry & Judie Esqueda \*



*From the Spirit, January 2023*

**From the ELCA Bishop:**

More than twenty years ago now, when I was serving in a congregation, I sat with a woman who was dying. I loved this woman. Her name was Bobbie. She was fierce and funny. She was smart. She could be a little intimidating. She was a tall, big woman who pounded her cane into the ground as she walked. Throughout her life, like most people, she knew grief and joy. Disappointment and surprise. I was honored to hold her hand and sit with her as she took her last breaths.

As pastor, I have had the opportunity to sit with many people as they are dying. It is one of the most holy things a person can do. There is truly a thinness between what is and what is to come.

While there are many things I love and miss as a congregational pastor, one of the top absences is being invited into people's lives as they leave this world and enter into God's presence in the company of all the saints.

Recently I attended a three-day retreat with several bishops and leaders from the western part of the United States. Most of what we talked about and discerned was what it means to be church today. Included in the conversation was how to journey and accompany congregations that are dying. This retreat wasn't a "how-to manual" of what to do. Instead, the intentional prayer, singing, worship, and community led us to sit in the same "thinness" feeling that I mentioned above: what is and what is to come.

As we sat in both the grief of some of our congregations closing and in the anticipation of what God is calling us towards, one person made the comment, "There is Spirit-led death and then there is just death." I've been pondering about this statement since it was said. What does it mean to have a Spirit-led death? What does it mean to just die?

Perhaps we can use Bobbie's death as a guide.

I think back to Bobbie who I met with many times before she died. She made it clear to me what her wishes were for her funeral. She talked many times about how thrilled she would be to see her husband again. (Her husband died when he was twenty-eight leaving her with two small sons.) She was looking forward to resting. She wanted to make sure that I knew how glad she was to not be a burden any more to her sons. She had hopes for the assets she was leaving behind and how they would be used to further her passions. Most of all, she was excited about what was next for her – she talked quite frequently about the questions she was ready to ask Jesus.

In the weeks before Bobbie died, her sons called me to ask if I would be available to sit with Bobbie when she died. They lived far away and knew that they might not make it to her bedside in time. I, of course, said yes. When the nurse called me, I went.

In Bobbie's last hours on earth, I was with her. I felt God's holy presence as I held her hand, sang hymns, prayed the Lord's prayer, shed tears, sat in silence, loved her, and was present with her and Jesus in the thin place between life and death and resurrection.

Going back to the retreat that I was at and the questions that arose, I wonder how we can have language to talk about some congregations having Spirit-led deaths. While I hope and pray that all congregations thrive and grow, I also know that there is a life cycle for all things. And I want to be able to live in the thinness between life and death and resurrection with all of us in the Northwest Washington Synod. I want to have the hard, deep conversations that need to happen. I want us to talk about looking beyond survival and instead talk about death and resurrection. How can we do this in meaningful ways? How can we do this before there is a sudden death? How can we do this acknowledging the pain and heartache and also living in faith and hope?

We in the synod office want to journey with you in these conversations. It is not easy and it is not wanted. But it is a time that can be holy and where God's presence is made known.

As this new year begins, may we walk together in the Spirit – placing our hope in God through Jesus. May we journey as resurrection people.

*Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee*

**Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee**

## Start Fresh

Every January 1 we have a new year. Every year we look at this day as an opportunity to start anew, a fresh start. While cliché at times, it is a blessing to be able to start fresh, to get a do-over. Whether it's giving up old habits or starting new, it is a new year with limitless possibilities. This year will be different. This year I will eat right and exercise. This year I will learn a new language. This year I will get that new and exciting job I've dreamt about. This year I will try to reach the same goals that I set every year – but have yet to achieve. This year...

We have this same opportunity in Christ only this new start is given to us with the power to make it happen. In Christ we are a new creation. In Christ we say goodbye to our old sinful selves and put on the new redeemed self. In Christ we are forgiven. In Christ we have the Holy Spirit to help us. In Christ we are already new.

As we face again a New Year, let's not focus on the human new start. The one that gives up around January 15<sup>th</sup> if we're lucky. Take that promise of a new start and realize we already have that. We already have been made new. We are already blessed. Whether it's January 1<sup>st</sup> or December 31<sup>st</sup>, it doesn't matter. We are made new because of Christ, not the date. Amen!

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come! Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Jasmine Ray-Symms

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



## Honoring Bishop Elaine Stanovsky as she retires



This fall, as she prepared for her retirement on Dec. 31, 2022, Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky shared a message of hope and love during charge conference season. If you have yet to watch the video, go to this website: [Charge Conference Missional Message 2022 by Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky \(vimeo.com\)](https://www.vimeo.com/711111111)

## Celebrating Bishop Elaine Stanovsky



ABOVE: Bishop Stanovsky sprinkles baptismal water on delegates at the 2017 Pacific Northwest Annual Conference

BELOW: Bishop Stanovsky visits the site of the Sand Creek Massacre in 2009 as part of an ongoing effort to tell the truth and make reparations.



### Led by Her Example

After a remarkable career, Bishop Elaine Stanovsky is retiring at the start of 2023. She has followed her call to ministry as a student, an ordained deacon and elder, a district superintendent, and finally as Bishop of Mountain Sky and then later the Greater Northwest. She's served on six general boards of the United Methodist Church, and participated in diverse ecumenical organizations and efforts.

Throughout her career, Bishop Stanovsky has made space at the table for new voices. She's shown us that women belong in the pulpit, the cabinet, and the boardroom. She's used her power and privilege to fight injustice by offering safe sanctuary for queer pastors, speaking out against racism, and prioritizing new church starts that reach underserved communities.

Share well wishes at

[www.faith.foundation/circle](http://www.faith.foundation/circle)

### A Cause Close to Her Heart

One of Bishop Stanovsky's special areas of focus has been making reparations to indigenous people who have been displaced and harmed by the United Methodist Church.

She helped set the record straight about the massacre of Arapaho and Cheyenne people at Sand Creek, and brought thirteen busloads of United Methodists to the site in 2014 for an act of repentance. With her blessing, parcels of land in Wallowa County previously occupied by the United Methodist Church were given back to the Nez Perce people in 2018 and 2021.

Bishop Stanovsky also helped to start the Circle of Indigenous Ministries, which is part of an ongoing effort to heal historic trauma and dismantle racism. She has asked that any retirement gifts benefit this ministry. Learn more and contribute at [faith.foundation/circle](http://faith.foundation/circle)



**JANUARY 2023 - MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Happy New year to you all!

Hope you all had a wonderful, blessed Christmas and are ready to go into 2023.

If you had the chance to attend the Christmas Eve candlelight service, then I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. It was truly the best CE service EVER!! So many children and Pr Malcolm’s special time with them gave us all a reason to smile and realize what a gift they are!

Update on our sign – we got our Christmas Miracle and the permits for the new digital sign outside the church have been approved by the city and the electronic sign has been ordered. The mason will start the base in early February, using the old blank bricks that we took up from the prayer garden, so it will have some special significance (and save us some money). The bricks do need to be cleaned and dried before they can be used however, so if anybody has a spare hour or so that they might want to come over and wash a few bricks (dirt in the holes needs to all be cleaned out) and get them under the tarp to dry, feel free to come any time! Its going to be a wonderful sign when finally completed and will serve us and the community well, I’m sure!

Year End Giving statements for MUMC will be sent out by mail no later than the end of January. If you have a contribution that will be made by check that has not yet been given, but you want it included in your 2022 giving statement for tax purposes, please date your check in 2022 and make a notation on it to “include in 2022 giving “ and we will see that it is included in the 2022 tax year. If you have any questions about your giving statements , feel free to contact me at [nfranke@comcast.net](mailto:nfranke@comcast.net).

No Treasures report this month, but the lights are still on, so that's always a good sign 😊 Thank you all for your generous support of your church through your time, talents, offerings and prayers.

May God walk with you through this New Year and bless you greatly –

Cheers!

Nancy Franke

MUMC Financial Secretary

<b><u>2022 MUMC LAY LEADERSHIP</u></b>		
Board of Trustees Chairman	<b>Ric Hart</b>	360-794-7772
Treasurer	<b>Tanya Hubbard</b>	360-793-8959
Financial Secretary	<b>Nancy Franke</b>	360-794-6954
Staff-Parish Relations Committee	<b>Judie Esqueda</b>	951-201-0061
Membership Secretary		
Lay Leader to Annual Conference	<b>Margaret Ray</b>	509-432-3029
UMW President	<b>Jasmine Ray-Symms</b>	425-223-9866
Recording Secretary	<b>Margaret Ray</b>	509-432-3029


**JANUARY 2023 - MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**2022 NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES**

	<b>2022 Budget</b>	<b>October Actual</b>	<b>November Actual</b>
<b>Offerings</b>	\$ 8,917	\$ 7,262	\$ 6,098
<b>Expenses</b>	\$10,384	\$10,310	\$10,551
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>		<b>- \$ 3,048</b>	<b>- \$ 4,453</b>

**2022 MSLC COUNCIL**

Administrative Dir.	<b>Missy Maxson</b>	206-437-2535
Ministry Director	<b>Kathleen Sallee</b>	425-387-2638
Treasurer	<b>Brian Johnson</b>	425-503-8352
Community Relations	<b>Jill Sumpter</b>	360-348-7231
Facilities	<b>Jay Morgan</b>	425-903-1678
Secretary	vacant	
Worship	<b>Kathi Cooley</b>	425-293-8694

 Morning Star Lutheran Church

 Monroe United Methodist Church

412 South Lewis Street  
Monroe, WA 98272-4149

**JANUARY**  
**2023!**

- January 1:** NAME OF JESUS - COMMUNION SUNDAY ~ **Scripture:** Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:15-21
- January 9:** EPIPHANY Sunday ~ **Scripture:** Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14. Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12
- January 15:** BAPTISM OF OUR LORD ~ COMMUNION SUNDAY ~ **Scripture:** Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
- January 22:** THIRD EPIPHANY ~ **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23
- January 29:** FOURTH EPIPHANY ~ **Scripture:** Micah 6:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

## **CONTACT US:**

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



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