

# GROWING IN *Grace*

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

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July 2021

Dear siblings,

As our communities begin to open up, we begin to breathe a sigh of relief and hope that all will be back to normal once again. Our world has changed, we have changed, our routines have changed, perhaps even to the extent that our lives may not be completely the same post pandemic in our new world. Our lives may not even be a new normal but a new reality, full of new possibilities even as we grieve the past and what we have lost, especially not being able to be together in person for worship and fellowship.

We have learned to be, and do, and live in this new place, in this new world in new ways. We learned to depend on each other in new ways and have found new ways to be together as church and people, who are also longing to be back together in worship and fellowship once again. We have been longing for the old ways and yet with some fear and grieving we know that they are to be no more.

As people of faith, we may struggle to live in God's love and faithfulness, and trust in the peace of Christ. Jesus may not always rebuke and stop the literal storms and pandemics of our lives and in our world, but he will be the living presence through the Holy Spirit and bring the peace of Christ to us and for us in the middle of life's storms, always.

The church has been closed we would say. We are clearly not the church we would ponder, and surely, we were not a true and real worshipping community as we called our services virtual, not real.

***And yet—We need to remember that the church has never been closed; we have not stopped worshipping; we have not stopped being the church; we have not stopped being the Body of Christ in and for the world. God has not stopped being faithful, loving and grace filled. We have not stopped being called into the world for the sake of the world in our mission field as an outpost, and we have not stopped being community in fellowship with each other and the world. We have not stopped being God's beloved. The wind of the Holy Spirit which forms the church is still urging us outside the walls and doors of our building. God is still on a mission to bless and heal a broken world and God wants and desires to use us as the hands, feet, ears and voice of love, grace, mercy and forgiveness, and living presence of God.***

***We must stop thinking and saying that the church has been closed. Only our building's physical doors have been closed; the front doors of our church have always been, have continued to be, and will always be wherever we are in the name of God's love and grace. The Little Free Panty is a sure sign that God is present and active by using us, in and for our community. By listening to a prophetic voice among us we became a new creation of God Bearers, reminding each other and our community of this living presence of God's love, grace, peace and mercy.***

My dear siblings, ***Breathe Deep!*** Breathe in the living breath of the living God who has been faithful through the years, continues to be faithful today, and will continue to be faithful tomorrow and forever. Trust and believe that God is leading and guiding us to be sign of love, hope, healing, mercy and grace. This is the mission of God and is our mission, our only mission. We have something the world needs!

[continued on next page](#)

We have no other mission than this one!! God has given all the gifts needed by the Holy Spirit for that mission, to accomplish that mission in our own unique way, yes, even during these last 15 months.

*God has not stopped being faithful, loving and grace filled. We have not stopped being called into the world for the sake of the world in our mission field as an outpost, and we have not stopped being the church as God's beloved, called and sent.*

Peace, love, hope and grace,

*Pr Malcolm*



MSLC and MUMC are looking to return to in person worship services in the fall. However, this will not be the same as worship a year and a half ago. Under the current guidelines from the UMC Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, six-foot distancing and wearing of masks are required. Every person over two years of age is required to wear a mask indoors even if you have been vaccinated. If you do not have a reusable mask, we will provide a disposable mask.

Attendance will be capped at 15 households each Sunday, so you will be required to register each week with how many will be attending. You will need to arrive early as entrance will be one household at a time.

Our plan is to re-open **only** the upper floor for worship services on Sundays and reopen **only** the lower floor for church groups during the week. Cleaning and disinfecting will be based on this requirement.

**On-line worshipping is here to stay.** We will continue to have online services after reopening.

**Unfortunately there will be no congregational singing.** Clapping hands, snapping fingers, or hand gestures appropriate to the words are alternatives. We will have small groups of musicians – 1-2 soloists with singers' masks or 1-2 instrumentalists with instrument players face masks and instrument covers.

**The guidelines may change between now and September.** IF the guidelines are relaxed, we will relax our reopening procedures.

The Reopening Committee

*Margaret Ray, Judith Esqueda, Pete Maxson, Mike Obright, Jasmine Ray-Symms, Jill Sumpter*

The results from the Reopening Survey are on the following page

### **Guest Preachers**

The NWWA Synod is providing pre-recorded sermons from the rostered synod staff members for the first Sunday of the month through October.

The sermon on July 4 is provided by  
Rev. Dr. David Hahn.

### **Sunday Worship attendance**

Average monthly views for  
our YouTube and Zoom  
services combined:

June: 37    May: 46  
April: 45



**Reopening the Church Survey Results**

There were 32 responses to the Reopening the Church Survey.

All 32 respondents and 27 spouses and 2 children were vaccinated. This is good news! If the 32 households who responded to our survey were the only persons who might attend our church, we would be very safe. But we want to be a congregation which welcomes visitors -- vacationers, newcomers to

Monroe, persons grateful for the Little Pantry, etc. So we can't assume that everyone who comes to worship will be vaccinated.

On the open ended question, thirteen households would like the church to reopen now or as soon as possible. Two of these explicitly rejected wearing masks and social distancing. Another eleven would be ready to come back when everyone is vaccinated. Five mentioned they would be ready if safety precautions were taken, such as wearing masks and social distancing. Three would come back when "all is as it was," when we can sing and pass the peace and share coffee again.

Similarly 13 felt it was very urgent to return to an in-church building service. Ten felt it was not at all urgent and nine felt it was not at all urgent with 10 in the middle.

Only one household responded that they would always attend on line, but three said they would mostly attend on line and eight said they would sometimes attend on line. So continuing on-line services after we reopen is necessary. Thirteen households would mostly attend in person and eight would always attend in person.

With six foot distancing, only fifteen households can attend on a given Sunday. This means there will likely be more households wanting to attend on any Sunday than can be accommodated. So a reservation system will be needed.

Respondents broke evenly on the question of participating and helping support both an on-line and in-person worship service with fourteen responding definitely or possibly yes and fourteen responding don't know, possibly no or definitely no. Hopefully this will provide sufficient participation and support to provide both on-line and in-person worship in the fall.

*Margaret Ray*

**Thank you for your constant and loyal support of  
Hazel's Little Free Pantry**

Our Little Pantry has a temporary new home. It was moved on June 15<sup>th</sup> to the covered portico on the west side of the church. *Thank you Jay Morgan!* The food and pantry supplies were relocated to the Fellowship Hall to make stocking easier. *Thank you Cindy Gulbranson, Ken Gross and Nancy Franke!* Everything will be moved back when the work on the Office/Annex is completed.

**Pantry Needs:**

The pantry consistently runs short of the following: chili, canned or boxed meals & soup (especially cup-o-soup types), granola bars, and shelf stable milk (small sizes). All are needed. Vienna sausage, tuna and fruit cups are also quite popular.

With summer heat upon us, water is essential for our friends without housing. Cases of water are fairly inexpensive and would be appreciated.

As always, if you'd rather donate money, we'll do the shopping for you!

**Thank you!**

Call or text if you have any questions or would like to donate:

Kathi Cooley: 425-293-8694 - Nancy Franke: 425-345-6954 - Cindy Gulbranson: 425-210-2095



*From the Spirit, July 2021*

***For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.***  
Galatians 5:1

What does freedom mean to you? In this month that we in the United States celebrate Independence Day with fireworks and barbecues (yay for vaccines – we can have barbecues again!), what is freedom?

Well ... first let's consider what freedom is NOT. Freedom is NOT enormous sums of money, power, privilege, assets, stocks and bonds, cars, clothes, or degrees. Freedom is NOT being able to do anything you want without worrying how your actions might affect another. Freedom is NOT hedonism or casual cruelty. Freedom is NOT the ability to yell at someone either in person or online. Freedom is NOT to be taken lightly.

Unfortunately, we have conflated freedom with selfishness. We have decided freedom means we don't have to worry about our behavior or words. We have decided that we no longer need to be civil or caring or understanding of another's viewpoint or worldview or interest. In this synod, I am concerned at the rancor I am hearing, the level of uncivil discourse, and the inability to listen to people from different sides of different issues.

So ... what IS freedom?

Martin Luther writes in *The Freedom of a Christian* that through Christ, we are set free from sin into new life. He writes:

From faith flow forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a cheerful, willing, free spirit, disposed to serve our neighbor voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. Its object is not to lay [others] under obligations, nor does it distinguish between friends and enemies, or look to gratitude or ingratitude but most freely and willingly spends itself and its goods, whether it loses them through ingratitude, or gains good will.

Freedom described in this way sounds amazing. But we know that it isn't that simple. We all know that even as baptized children of God, even as people assured that we are saved through Jesus Christ, even as people who revel in freedom – we know that we are not always cheerful and willing, disposed to serve our neighbor voluntarily. We know that the freedom we have been given through Jesus is sometimes squandered because of greed, racism, homophobia, sexism, nationalism, individualism, pride, and so much more. Quite simply, sin. We think that we are free and yet we are choosing death over abundant life.

And yet ... what a gift we have been given! For when we live fully into our baptisms, we are called into community with God and with one another. We are called into caring for one another. We are called to listen, love, and serve others – even those we might not particularly like. God calls us away from selfish behavior and into freedom to commit ourselves fully to each other. As Paul writes in Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." As

baptized children of God and as the body of Christ in this world, we are called to the freedom of Christ. And this means we are called to a life not only for ourselves, but to die to ourselves and live truly in the freedom of bearing one another's burdens.

As a proud American, I love the Fourth of July. As a person following Jesus, I know that freedom means more than waving a flag or wearing the colors of red, white, and blue. As Martin Luther writes in his treatise *On Christian Freedom*,

***"A Christian is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."***

May freedom in Christ reign. May the love of Christ be with you and all that you encounter.

*Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee*



From the Bishop: Join me in honoring Juneteenth National Independence Day People of God,

***"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."***

John 8: 31-32

June 19, known as Juneteenth, celebrates the freedom of enslaved Black Americans, by recalling the day in 1865 when the news of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was finally proclaimed in Texas, three years after it was issued.

Yesterday the U.S. Congress established June 19<sup>th</sup> as a federal holiday: Juneteenth National Independence Day. The action awaits President Biden's signature.

On Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m., the Coos Bay Museum in Coos Bay, Oregon, will dedicate a memorial to the only confirmed lynching of a Black man in the state of Oregon. Alonzo Tucker was lynched in Coos Bay in 1902 as a crowd of 300 people watched. Sponsors of Saturday's memorial event hope at least 300 people will attend the online dedication of a memorial to Alonzo Tucker.

The memorial to Alonzo Tucker's lynching is part of a movement of the National Memorial of Peace and Justice to remember and mark the sites where more than 4,400 Black people died by lynching between 1877 and 1950. Taylor Stewart began the Oregon Remembrance Project after visiting the National Memorial as part of a Civil Rights tour of southern states.

Much of our nation's violent racial history has been forgotten or suppressed by white Americans or assumed to have occurred only in slave states. This event, on Juneteenth, 2021, is an opportunity for citizens of the Northwest to remember and realize that this region has its own violent past that is ours to reckon with and heal.

I hope you will join me online on Saturday, Juneteenth, 2021, as part of the crowd that stands for truth, justice and reconciliation.

Thank you,

*Elaine W Stanoddy*

## Called to Serve



I think we can all agree God wants us to serve others but what does that mean? What does that look like? We see those who serve the homeless, work in the foodbank, minister to those in prison, or pastor a flock and say “those people are serving God”. But God doesn’t put restrictions on service. He doesn’t define certain tasks as ministry. Instead, He calls us to use the gifts He’s given us and rely on His strength to minister **“so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ”**. I think it’s helpful to look at the bigger picture, not just

servicing by a list of ministries but seeing God in all of His children and showing love to others by our love, respect and, if called, our assistance.

There’s a difference between serving God and serving the church. God’s children are more than just those sitting in pews or, in the era of COVID, watching a screen. And service is more than the actions of the church. While we move forward as Christians, rethinking our methods of reaching out, let us always remember the call we have received to serve and ALL those we are called to serve. I believe we should see service as an act of love, as natural as breathing rather than pre-approved actions designed for accolades. The call is from God, the power comes from God and the Glory belongs to God. **“To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”**

**1 Peter 4:10-11** “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Jasmine Ray-Symms

425-223-9866

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In one way or another, in everything we do as a church, we are showing love for our neighbor and care for our neighbor as well. I’d like to thank all our members out there who show the love of Christ as they live day to day.

In particular I’d like to thank Pastor Malcolm for his care ministry and Cindy Gulbranson who has been a great help to me as care coordinator. She is in constant contact with our members and relays care concerns to me that I’m not always aware of. She also supports our Care ministry by sending out cards to those in need of comfort in one way or another. Jim Olson brings sunshine to our Village East ladies every time he leads a bible study, and the Worship group has worked tirelessly to bring us a Zoom service each week.

Rhonda Morgan  
Care Coordinator

### July Birthdays and Anniversaries \*

*Happy Birthday and Congratulations!*

- 1 Shelly Nagy
- 5 Kathleen Sallee
- 6 Don Hoerner
- 7 Dan & Sharon Wegenast \*
- 12 Karen Sanders
- 13 Jim & Jan Gee \*
- 13 Pete & Cindy Hartzell \*
- 23 Monique Coburn
- 24 Nannette Missel
- 25 Dorothy Ames
- 29 Jan Gee

**JULY 2021 MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH**

<b><u>NON-DESIGNATED OFFERINGS AND EXPENSES</u></b>			
	<b>2021 Budget</b>	<b>April Actual</b>	<b>May Actual</b>
<b>Offerings</b>	\$ 8,930	\$11,823	\$ 3,754
<b>Expenses</b>	\$10,163	\$ 5,750	\$ 6,551
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>		\$ 6,073	<b>- \$ 2,797</b>

The minutes from the June 24<sup>th</sup> Mission & Ministry Cong. meeting are available. Please contact the office at [mslc@morningstarlc.org](mailto:mslc@morningstarlc.org) and a copy will be emailed to you. If you do not have email access, call Kathi @ 425-293-8694 and a copy of the minutes will be mailed to you.

**2021 MSLC COUNCIL**

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

**JULY 2021 MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Happy summer to you all! I hope you have all been staying cool and safe and healthy!

Another month and your support has been phenomenal! Thank you to all of BOTH congregations who give to support the work of your church with your time, your prayers and your resources!!

**MUMC Treasurers Report - May 2021**

Total Receipts	\$ 6599.02
Total Disbursements	\$ 6042.45
Surplus	+ \$ 556.57

Thanks to our treasurer, Tanya Hubbard, for all she does!

**A few Around The Church updates:**

The annex is being pressure washed and painted by Amsberry Painting starting this week. The old layers of paint were found to contain lead, so the entire building will have to be scraped and carefully disposed of before new painting begins. Thanks to Chris and Don Hoerner, MUMC Trustee Co-Chairs, for arranging all of this.

Speaking of Don Hoerner, he is still at Bethany Rehab awaiting surgery to replace the hip ball that had to be removed because of infection. Surgery is hopefully scheduled for late the month and Don will be back home and vacuuming the house again soon! Our prayers are with you, Don (and you too, Chris!)

Velma Smith is still recovering from a broken neck and hopefully will be out of the neck brace that she has worn for over 2 months, very soon. As we all know, nothing keeps Velma down for long! Blessings to you, dear Velma.

Judie Esqueda reports that her PT has been helping to get her back on her feet again after a bad bout of sciatica. That is great news! Keep up the good progress, Judie, our prayers are with you!

Peggy Ray attended our UMC Annual Conference at the end of June which was virtual again this year.

She said the major focus was the movement of the Alaska Conference to become a district of the Pacific Northwest Conference. Various methods to introduce Alaska Conference leaders and strong focus on indigenous people. Also that Bishop Elaine Stanovsky *has reappointed Pastor Malcolm Brown to Monroe United Methodist Church for the 7-1-2021 – 6-30-2022 year.* There was a 0.86% salary increase to minimum compensation of \$44,010 + accountable reimbursement plan, professional expenses and housing expenses. Whoo Hoo! Thanks for attending, Peggy !

Have a happy healthy, July and may you all see God's many blessings every day, no matter what the weather!

Nancy Franke  
Financial Secretary

**2021 MUMC LAY LEADERSHIP**

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

*Have you colored your Alleluia Butterfly yet?*

We'll be coming back to the church and worshipping in person soon. As a way to celebrate, we want to decorate the sanctuary with butterflies!! Not real ones of course, but ones that you color and we can put on the walls.

Please print a copy the butterfly for each member of your household and color it. Mail it to the church office or bring it with you on our first day back together (date to be determined).

*Alleluia!!*





Morning Star Lutheran Church



Monroe United Methodist Church

412 South Lewis Street

Monroe, WA 98272-4149



**July 4: 6<sup>TH</sup> PENTECOST ~ Online worship with Holy Communion ~ Scripture: Psalm 123; Mark 6:1-13**

**July 11: 7<sup>TH</sup> PENTECOST ~ Online worship ~ Scripture: Psalm 85:8-13; Mark 6:14-29**

**July 18: 8<sup>TH</sup> PENTECOST ~ Online worship with Holy Communion ~ Scripture: Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

**July 25: 9<sup>TH</sup> PENTECOST ~ Online worship ~ Scripture: Psalm 145:10-18; John 6:1-21**

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worship  
ONLINE

**Morning Star Lutheran Church &  
Monroe United Methodist  
Church**

**The service is ready for viewing  
Sundays after 6:00 a.m. and is  
available 24/7.**

**YouTube**

