

GROWING IN

Grace

February 2025

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Pastor Malcolm's thoughts for February 2025

During the month of February, as we continue in the season of Epiphany on a journey to Ash Wednesday on March 5th, let us continue to be the people of God together seeking, listening and paying attention to God; seeking the living presence of God in our daily lives and called to be God's presence in and for God's beloved creation and world.

We are now no longer two congregations of Christ followers, we are now one congregation gathering as one to be sent out on a mission, God's mission to bless and heal a broken world. This sole mission of God then becomes our sole mission as well. We are now the people of United in Grace gathered and sent by the Holy Trinity, on a journey to discover God's amazing grace and love, and seeking to encounter the living presence of God and risen Christ in our daily lives through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday February 2nd we will hear these words at the end of the Lukes Gospel:

²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.

We are called to be courageous and to be the interruption in the lives of others we encounter as we are the living presence and the bearers of God's love, grace, hope and the peace of Christ for them.

The following words I heard spoken at the Western States Youth Gathering on July 5th 1996, with over 6,000 youth and adults in attendance, by Lorraine Monroe. For me on that day it was as if they were spoken directly to me and personally for me. These words touched the eyes of my heart then and was the beginning nudge of my sense of call by the Holy Spirit to be a witness of God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness for the sake of those who are far off from God and need God's grace and hope.

May you also hear these words spoken to you and may your hearts also be open in this new time to a new adventure in mission as United in Grace.

If you can say "I was sent to do this work," or even if you can say: "I wonder if I was sent to do this work",

PURSUE IT!

You do whatever comes into your hands and life if it furthers the work of God! It's about being sent. Being sent to do this work! So, the charge that I leave you is to find the work, it is there, and pursue that work with passion and courage!

Pursue it when others tell you: #1- You're crazy!

#2 -There is no prestige in it!

#3- There is no money in it!

#4- Other's have tried and failed!

#5- The people you want to help don't want to be helped, they will never change!

#6- They are not like us, why do you want to help them?

I SAY PURSUE

I SAY BE COURAGOUS

I say that there is a dream in every part of this room, in this whole building that is God's! And you don't have to tell anyone what it is because sometimes it is so corny you don't even believe it!

But you pursue that!

Because the world is better for the dreamers, is better for the believers, better for the doers.

The mission of your life is to be that interruption in the lives of others who suffer poverty & degradation, to be that interruption in the lives of others who are hurting and broken.

May God be with us, bless us and pour upon us abundant courage and grace,

Pastor Malcolm

CHURCH COUNCIL



2025 UNITED IN GRACE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council Officers:

Council Chair: Michael Gore - goremw@msn.com
 Council Co-Chair: Ben Ault - bendieseldx@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Valarie Cole - valariejcole@gmail.com
 Secretary: Christine Coco - christinecoco@live.com

Committee Chairpersons:

Finance: Gwen Paietta - gwenpaietta@gmail.com
 Worship: Nancy Franke - nfranke@comcast.net
 Facilities: Perry Cole - perrycole58@gmail.com
 Congregation Life: Jasmine Ray-Symms - jasisymms@outlook.com
 Mission & Outreach: Jay Morgan - j.morgan40@gmail.com
 Staff & Parish Relations: Rebekah Kirby - Shinediva@gmail.com

Council Meetings are *typically held on the second Sunday of the month. Congregation members are welcome to attend any regularly scheduled meeting.

*February's meeting has been rescheduled for the 16th.

United in Grace "OUTREACH"

report (by Jay Morgan)

I have volunteered to lead the United in Grace outreach ministry this year. The first thing I focused on was simply summarizing the things we already do, and they are a lot. Not as much as we used to do but still "We have a heart for outreach". Our main on-going ministries are "Brown Bag Brigade" and "Hazel's Little Free Pantry". The Pantry continues to be well supported but Brown Bag has suffered from lower contributions and volunteers. But both of these ministries continue to serve the community. We have supported Take the Next Step programs for many years but were unable to get volunteer support to continue this year. In addition to these, we have added hosting the VOA Cold Weather Shelter and Rebekah's "Refit"™ program. And finally there are the annual events including the Women's Group "Christmas Bazaar" fund raising, Trunk or Treat, "Socktober" and probably more I have missed.

My next step will be to ask each of you what you think United in Grace should focus on for outreach. You will be receiving an e-mail from me soon and please, please, let me know where your heart is.

CONGREGATION LIFE

Hello! I'm Jasmine Ray-Symms and I am the Congregation Life Chair. I want to share with you all the different ways United in Grace offers to deepen your walk with God.

- Jesus and Java (Adult Sunday School) meets Sunday mornings at 8:15am. We're currently discussing Adam Hamilton's "Wrestling with Doubt Finding Faith". If you're looking for a way to study God's word with fellow travelers, we're it! It is not necessary to purchase the book to participate.
- Bible Nerds (biweekly Bible study) meets every other Wednesday night with dinner at 6:00pm and study at 6:30pm beginning March 5th. We'll be studying Amy-Jill Levine's "Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week". This group goes a little deeper and reading the book is highly encouraged but not required.
- Women's Ministry meets the second Saturday of the month at 9:00am with special events like the Fall Tea, Christmas Bazaar, and Women's Retreat throughout the year. This is a wonderful way to meet other women and simply have fun!

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- Prayer Ministry. If you are in need of prayer, please reach out to Rhonda Morgan (425) 387-1532 or the church office (360) 794-2111.
- Memorial Ministries assist with preparations for Memorial Services or weddings. This can be coordinated with the church office (360) 794-2111.

All activities are offered in the Fellowship Hall at church. Questions? Contact Jasmine Ray-Symms (425) 223-9866.

Worship

Hi all –

Now that the new church council is in place, and the various committees are looking over their duties and responsibilities, you can probably expect to see sign-up lists coming out from the various committee chairpersons, asking for sign-ups to work on the various committees when needed. This is an opportunity for everyone to help us all keep United in Grace Church running smoothly by volunteering in areas that you have the time, interest and talent for (or not – maybe it just sounds interesting and you want to learn something new 😊). Our church is so blessed to have such dedicated people who have stepped up to be the church officers and committee heads, but they can't do everything alone, so please consider helping where you can.

Now, let's talk about **worship**. As your newly elected Worship Chairman I have been thinking a lot about what my role might be and thought it best to get the thoughts of those who have actually attend the worship services, to get your input if you are willing.

So tell me - **What inspires you in our church service now? What is it that you're coming for?? The Fellowship? The music? To refill your "spiritual engine" to go back out into a world that is too often filled with concerns about our everyday life? What feeds your soul?** It is a joy and a blessing to see each and every one that comes each Sunday and for those that come regularly, it sounds like Pr Malcolm and the worship team are doing something right! 😊

I would be interested in your thoughts to help me determine how I can best work with Pr Malcolm, Kathi, Jill and Bryce to continue to make the worship services as meaningful to those who come, as possible. Also if you watch online and have any comments about any problems with viewing the service, either the streaming or the posted service on YouTube, I'd like to know that as well. You are important too!

Under the worship committee is also the responsibility to decorate the church for the seasons and special days - this was what the old "altar guild" did. This can be accomplished by letting you know when decorating needs to be done and putting out the call out for volunteers to meet either after Sunday service or during the week. This will also include the display cabinet and perhaps some new ideas to decorate with timely themes and decorations on a more regular basis as new ideas come up.

Also, there are little "housekeeping jobs that need to be done" – being sure pencils are sharpened in the pews and offering envelopes stocked. Keeping the candles filled with oil, keeping an inventory on the communion wine and juice to repurchase when needed (can't let THAT run out !!), changing the banners, and paraments and knowing what it is that we actually have by inventorying these occasionally. See?? Something for everybody to do!

The committee will be forming soon and I'll be asking for those who would like to be on it to give input for, as well as volunteers to decorate seasonally as the old altar guild did.

If you are interested in being on the committee, please sign up when the sheet comes out, which will be soon.

Thanks in advance for your input, and for being a part of the new United in Grace Church. You can email me your comments at nfranke@comcast.net

See you in church!

Nancy Franke

Worship Committee Chairman

FELLOWSHIP, STUDY, AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Books, TV & Movies!
February 21st - 6:30pm



Share your favorite reading & viewing entertainment this winter over snacks and drinks at this month's BTM. Call Kathi in the office if you'd like to serve as the Host.



United Women in Grace

United Women in Grace is holding our next meeting on February 8, 2025, 9am in the Fellowship Hall. Come and spend some time with other women drawing closer to God and each other. All women are welcome so bring a friend and have some fun!



JESUS AND JAVA EXAMINING LITURGY

Begins February 23rd at 8:15am in the Fellowship Hall

Have you ever wondered what the different parts of the church service mean or where the colors of the seasons come from? Perry Cole will be leading a study on liturgy: A study of our denominational and our congregational liturgies, discussion of the purpose of the liturgy and the elements, and how we can live out the elements of the liturgy. We welcome your ideas and questions as we learn together.



Join Rebekah & Lisa for **REFIT** — a group fitness program that combines dance, toning, flexibility and strength training.

Wednesdays at 12:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

Cost = Free

Dance Like Nobody's Watching!



SPECIAL SUNDAYS FOR OUR MINISTRIES

BROWN BAG SUNDAY — FEBRUARY 9

HAZEL'S LITTLE FREE PANTRY SUNDAY — FEBRUARY 23

Special emphasis is given and financial offerings are accepted for these important ministries on these days. Specially marked envelopes are found in the backs of the pews and on the Greeters desk on Sunday morning.




FEBRUARY SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE

You are an indispensable part of the body of Christ. Thank you for serving.

	FEBRUARY 2	FEBRUARY 9	FEBRUARY 16	FEBRUARY 23
Worship Asst.	Missy Maxson	Nancy Franke	Nancy Franke	Jasmine Ray-Symms
Greeters	need	Perry & Valarie Cole	Rebekah Jones-Kirby Jasmine Ray-Symms	Denny & Diana Coates
Ushers	need	Perry & Valarie Cole	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Denny & Diana Coates
Acolyte	Ric Hart	need	Ric Hart	need
Reader	Missy Maxson	Jasmine Ray-Symms	Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Ric Hart
Comm. Prep.	Charlie Brown	Susan Slate	JoLynn Garrison	need
Serve Comm.	Charlie Brown need	Joel & JoLynn Garrison	Valarie Cole Gwen Paietta	need
Coffee Hour	Missy Maxson	Pamela Gore	Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Priscilla High
Altar Flowers	need	need	need	need
Soundboard	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown	Kathi Cooley	Charlie Brown





CHURCH ATTENDANCE

January 2025

In person: 33 Online: 9

February Birthdays

3	Rob Hughes	19	Cindy Gulbranson
7	Martin Paietta	19	Jay Morgan
9	Lori Johnson	23	Ric Hart
13	Denny Coates	28	Ben Ault
13	Pamela Gore		



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

Dear Beloveds,

One of my most vivid childhood memories is when my home congregation welcomed a Vietnamese family. As a young child, I remember helping

prepare the home that the family would live in, going grocery shopping with my mom for food to fill the pantry, giving our couch to them, helping with the “world dinner” that would raise money for this endeavor, and, most of all, anticipating the arrival of these new people – Loung and Young and Quin. I remember when this little family stood in the back of the sanctuary and everyone stood and clapped and embraced this family.

As you might know, I grew up in a little town in eastern Washington. This town was conservative and mostly voted Republican (although my grandmother was mayor and she was a Democrat). I believe that my hometown church, St. Paul Lutheran Church, was also more conservative in nature. I am grateful for the values taught to me by my siblings in Christ there. The love and care that I received and learned formed who I am today. These people embraced the challenge and gift of welcoming a family from a different continent, a different religion, a different language, a different culture, a different country, and so much more to become part of our community. According to my parents, there was no partisan debate about accepting a Vietnamese family with open arms.

Today, when I listen to political rhetoric or podcasts or the news, I wonder when and why the topic of immigration has become so fraught. While I understand that there are complexities and nuances of immigration and I understand the need to make sure that there is control and order at the U.S. border, I don't understand why there is the need to vilify the vast majority of immigrants who are, quite simply, desperate for safety, work, and good government.

I know the arguments: Yes, sometimes people come into this country through the wrong avenues. Yes, sometimes people stay without documentation. Yes, sometimes crime happens by people who are in this country illegally. Yes, sometimes resources are used for people who are not citizens. Yes, there are laws in this country and people should follow the laws.

But let me push back a little bit. There is overwhelming statistical analysis that show immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S. citizens. We know through our own experiences that immigrants will work hard at whatever job they find – as I have been told by one Mexican immigrant, “Mexicans will do anything and we'll work harder and longer than anyone else.” We know people who were brought to this country as children and know no other country. We know that there are some laws that are simply unjust made to target people who are already desperate – simply because of the color of their skin or their birth country.

As people of faith, we are called to reflect God's vision towards a more just and reconciled world. As people of faith, we are called to follow Jesus' example towards loving and caring for all people – especially those that have been marginalized. As people of faith, when we are grappling with hard things, we are called to turn to God and scripture for wisdom and knowledge. In view of welcoming the stranger from other lands, here are a few passages:

Genesis 23:4, Deuteronomy 10:19, Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 27:19, 1 Chronicles 16:19-22, Job 29:15-17, Psalm 146:9, Jeremiah 7:5-7, Ezekiel 47:22, Zechariah 7:9-10, Matthew 5:43-44, Matthew 25:35, Matthew 25:40, Luke 10:27, Acts 10:34,

Romans 12:13, Romans 13:8, Romans 13:10, Colossians 3:11, Hebrews 13:1-3, 3 John 1:5, Revelation 21:3, and there are many more not named.

These scriptures are about welcoming the foreigner, the outsider, embracing those who are in need, loving God by loving neighbor. If someone wants biblical authority, scripture makes it pretty clear. We are to welcome and embrace those who come from other places. We are to love our near and far neighbors as God loves us.

I am writing this article one week before the new administration begins. Truly, I am deeply concerned about the millions of people who will be affected and harmed by presidential action and legislative policies that have been promised by the incoming president.

I encourage you to learn more about how to support and welcome these new neighbors in need:

ELCA AAMPARO (<https://www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church/ammparo>)

Faith Action Network (<https://fanwa.org/>)

Lutheran Community Services Northwest – Refugees Northwest (<https://lcsnw.org/program/refugees-northwest-2/>)

Global Refuge (<https://www.globalrefuge.org/blog/resources/congregational-resources/>)

Watch for more information from the Synod as we work and move and join together in loving God by loving the most vulnerable.

Please, I implore you, love and welcome and embrace your neighbor as God embraces each one of us.

+Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee | bishop@lutheransnw.org

From the PNW News Digest | January 23, 2025

Dear Readers,

This week, everyone had an opinion about presidential pardons. Some bemoaned the unprecedented pardons offered by former President Biden to family and to others threatened with potential prosecutions during a heated campaign season. Others were disturbed by the pardons and acts of clemency given by President Trump to those charged and convicted of participating in the riots on January 6, 2021.

This morning, I ran across a unique reaction from a woman in Boise, Idaho, who was formally rejecting her pardon from President Trump for her participation in the January 6 insurrection.

In an interview with the Idaho Statesmen, the woman, Pamela Hemphill, shared, “Accepting the pardon would be an insult to the Capitol Police officers, to the rule of law, to our nation.”

Hemphill, also known as the “MAGA Granny” from videos that circulated online after the attack on the capital, explained that by accepting the pardon, she would be contributing to an effort to “rewrite what happened on that day.”

All of us have, at one time or another, done something that we regret. By taking responsibility, we can avoid the trap of cheap grace and grow as people and as disciples.

In owning her mistakes, Hemphill is walking the path less taken, and in doing so, she offers others a good example and a little hope for a world desperately needing examples of integrity. May God use us in similar ways to provide a little light in dark times.

grace&peace

Patrick Scriven

Director of Communications

February 2025

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

						1
2 <i>4th Epiphany</i> 8:15 Jesus & Java 10 Worship	3	4	5 12:30pm Refit Class Fellowship Hall	6	7	8 9:00am UWG Fellowship Hall
9 <i>5th Epiphany</i> <i>Brown Bag Sunday</i> 8:15 Jesus & Java 10 Worship	10	11	12 12:30pm Refit Class Fellowship Hall	13	14	15
16 <i>6th Epiphany</i> 8:15 Jesus & Java 10 Worship 11:15 Council Mtg.	17	18 Books, TV, & Movies 6:30pm Host TBD	19 12:30pm Refit Class Fellowship Hall	20	21	22 10am Grace in the Wild Al Borlin Pr.
23 <i>7th Epiphany</i> <i>Hazel's Little Free Pantry</i> 8:15 Jesus & Java 10 Worship	24	25	26 12:30pm Refit Class Fellowship Hall	27	28	

February 2025

LOOKING AHEAD THIS MONTH:

- * **Jesus & Java**
Sunday's @ 8:15 in the Fellowship Hall
- * **UWG Meeting**
Saturday the 9th @ 9am in the Fellowship Hall
- * **Church Council Meeting**
Sunday the 16th at 11:15am in the Office
- * **Books, TV, & Movies**
Tuesday the 18th at 6:30 @ TBD
- * **Grace in the Wild**
Saturday the 22nd at 10am @ Al Borlin Park

FEBRUARY'S SCRIPTURE:

February 2: Fourth Epiphany ~ Scripture: **Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:1-13; Luke 4:21-30**

February 9: Fifth Epiphany ~ Scripture: **Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11**

February 16: Sixth Epiphany ~ Scripture: **Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26**

February 23: Seventh Epiphany ~ Scripture: **Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**
Luke 6:27-38

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



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