

GROWING IN

Grace

June 2025

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

God is up to bold things in our world and is calling us to be bold!

As we live in God's amazing grace, EXPECT SURPRISES!

As the season of Pentecost (the 50th day of Easter) is now upon us (June 8th) we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday as United in Grace for the first time.

In March of 2022 we were invited by the NW WA Synod to share a video of our story to be shown at the Synod Assembly on June 4th. *We were asked to consider how God's Hope has inspired and led the **collaboration between Morning Star Lutheran and Monroe United Methodist Church.***

On May 16th, 2025 about 7:00pm we were affirmed, approved, and welcomed as *United in Grace* by an unanimous vote of well over 320 delegates to be the first "Union" Lutheran and Methodist congregation in the NW WA Synod.

On June 27th at the PNW Annual Conference of the UMC during the plenary session a short celebration of the formation of United in Grace will take place as a Federated Congregation of the UMC. Michael Gore (Council President), Missy Maxson, myself and Pastor Judy Brennan (The *Director of Evangelical Mission of the Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA*) will be in attendance.

What began as a nudge from the Holy Spirit God sent forth two leaders, (initially Missy Maxson and Nancy Franke), who carried the flame of the Holy Spirit and filled us with the abundance of gifts needed for us to carry out God's mission into our community of Monroe and the world.

We prayed that the Holy Spirit would lend fire to our words, and we had courage as a congregation to live out our lives with love, grace, and strength to our witness in new ways, so that we will be beacons of Christ's light through our living proclamation of hope, love and grace in our world; and as a shade tree for those in need of love and grace.

On this Pentecost Sunday, in this new time, with the calling of the Holy Spirit, we will celebrate this new way of being God's church, a Pentecost church, through the Holy Spirit, in and for the people of Monroe and the world. We are learning what it means to take risks as we listen to God's dream for us stepping out of our comfort zones for the sake of the world.

We are indeed Pentecost People and Easter People! And God is indeed up to something here! Will we dare to live in God's amazing grace? Will we dare to expect God to show in surprising and new ways? We will dare to ask the questions: "Who has God called us to be?" & "What has God called us to do?" The Holy Spirit has indeed been nudging us into something new in this time and place, today, for the sake of God's beloved world.

Remember to wear Red on Pentecost Sunday- June 8th

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Malcolm



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 Jones- 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.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO APPROVE BUDGET: June 29 Following Worship in the Sanctuary

Reductions in Staff Hours Proposed

A congregational meeting will be held on June 29 in the sanctuary immediately following worship. The purpose of this congregational meeting is to approve a budget designed to narrow the gap between income and expenditures. After many hours of study, a task force composed of the Finance Chair, the Treasurer, and the Staff-Parish Relations Chair, submitted a draft budget to the church council for their approval. The council voted 9-1 in favor of the proposed budget and forward it to the congregation for final approval and implementation. A copy of the budget will be emailed to members in early June. Of note, the draft budget proposes three difficult but necessary actions to reduce expenditures and increase income:

- The budget reduces the pastor to ½ time.
- The budget reduces the office administrator position from 34 to 20 hours per week.
- The budget retains a \$13k deficit that will need to be filled by increased giving or future reductions.

The Church Council regrets the impact these cuts will have on our church staff. The cuts do not reflect negatively on the work of our pastor or office administrator, but rather reflect the realities of our congregational finances. If the budget is approved, the congregation will need to understand the significant reduction in work hours for both the pastor and the church administrator will limit what they can do. This means members must calibrate their expectation of our staff members accordingly since they will only have time to focus on the core responsibilities of planning and implementing worship while maintaining only essential administration and crisis response duties. Patience and understanding of the new reality will be required by all.

Who may vote in this congregational meeting? Voting members are active church members. Such active members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have attended worship services in person or online in this Congregation and shall have made a financial contribution of record to this Congregation. Members of this Congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the Congregation.

Please plan to attend this important meeting. If you have questions before then, please direct them to goremw@msn.com.

Michael Gore
 Church Council Chair

LETS TALK ABOUT WORSHIP – WHO’S IN CHARGE HERE!??

Hi All and Happy June!

I’m sure this will be a busy month for many of you as school gets out and summer trips are planned, and it may mean that we may not see some of your smiling faces at times. This is the rhythm of the season and after the special Sundays of Pentecost on June 8th, Holy Trinity Sunday on June 15th and Apostles Sunday on June 29th, it’s pretty quiet as far as celebrations go, until Holy Cross Day in September.

We all know what we, personally, get out of our worship service and what it means to us, and we all may have different opinions of what that worship service should include, what we like best (the singing, the message, the reading, the great communion wine), or not so much, and it is those things that help us find a good ‘home church’ that meets our needs and makes us feel refilled, refreshed and closer to God when we leave the service to go back out into the world that is our own “mission field”. But what is the purpose of the worship service? Do you want to be entertained? Have a break from a crazy world for an hour? Catch up with your friends? Be spiritually fed? Probably all have different opinions and expectations on that, I’m sure. And what kind of mood do we present? Are we a church of reverent and solemn behavior in the sanctuary as we worship our God, or are we more casually and occasionally irreverent and outspoken? I think we are a mix of both (I’ll let you guess what category I fall into 😊).

continued on next page

All of us might worship in different ways as we have different relationships with the Holy Spirit that we know in our own lives, so that when we come to a Sunday worship service who do we look to form how the worship itself should go? Well, traditionally the congregation looks to the pastor who, as Spiritual leader of the church, forms the tone, spirit and mood of any particular service, be it somber for Good Friday, or joyful for Easter or contemplative for times when the prayers or scriptures for that day, cause us to want to examine our faith and our relationship with God for our own benefit. When I asked Pr. Malcolm if he considered himself the leader of the worship services he replied this –**“The worship service is all of ours as we praise and thank God. My strong belief is that we are the stewards of what is important as we worship, as managers of worship and what is important.”** And, indeed, our worship services are a collaborative effort, starting with Pr. Malcolm as our spiritual Leader, who uses the weekly lectionary scriptures to prepare his message, along with help from the newly formed UIG Worship committee that consists of myself as committee chairman and the one who prepares and delivers the weekly Prayers of the People, Kathi Cooley who prepares all the slides, finds the prayers and videos, prepares the readings and the announcements and compiles it all into a complete detailed bulletin for everyone with parts in the service, both verbal and technical, Jill Sumpter who, as the Music Director, picks and prepares all the songs to go along with the themes of the weekly scriptures as well as preparing choir and special music, and Charlie Brown who prepares the announcements sheet for hand out to the congregation. All of us have a vested interest in making the church service the best we can make it, even if we might all have a different approach to making it what it should be - be a communication with the Holy Spirit with our hearts and minds, through songs and prayers and readings and a message to tie it all together, to be a pleasing tribute to God (who, after all is the reason we are there), and to be closer to Him and to leave feeling love and grace all around us. As the new United in Grace we are forging ahead to make this new church the best it can be for now and in the future and we have an awesome group of dedicated volunteers that are giving of their time and talents to figure out the work of the new church with the resources that we have been given, and the great thing is that you are all free to give your input on how to make it better as we all work together with grace and understanding for one another. If you have a suggestion for worship, feel free to email the office and Kathi will pass on the suggestion to Pr. Malcolm and the Worship Committee to see if it might fit for a future service.

See you in church –

Nancy Franke
Worship Committee Chairman

TREASURER REPORT FOR JUNE

Below are the financials for United in Grace Church for April. Please note that while Brown Bag Brigade shows a negative number for April, expenses paid were for January - March of 2025.

April Financials

General Fund			
	Income		
		General Fund	\$ 12,802.00
		Hazel's Pantry	\$ 533.00
		Capital Fund transfer	\$ -
	Total Income		\$ 13,335.00
	Expenses		
		General Fund	\$ 17,832.00
		Hazel's Pantry	\$ 190.00
	Total Expenses		\$ 18,022.00
	Ahead/Behind		\$ (4,687.00)
Brown Bag Brigade			
		Income	\$ 325.00
		Expenses	\$ 937.00
	Ahead/Behind		\$ (612.00)

Valarie J Cole

Treasurer, United in Grace Church
(206) 817-4799



June is Pride Month

Our mission is to show that United in Grace is a church of open welcome and inclusion of all LGBTQA — Walk in the Snohomish Pride Parade with us and the UIG banner on June 7th 10-12 — Help with the table at Pride Festival June 8th from 11-4 (as well as set up and take down). Donations are also needed to provide otter pops (popsicles) to give away at our table in Monroe, and to help pay for the cost of the vendor table in Monroe. If you would like to contribute feel free to put your contribution in an envelope with your name and the word "Pride" on it and put into the offering plate on any Sunday. We hope to show our community that we are welcoming to all, and specifically the LGBTQA community, for those who are looking for a home church in Monroe.

Hazel's Little Free Pantry Stocking Volunteers Needed

The Little Pantry is stocked every day of the week and some volunteers are doing 2 days a week at this time. If you would like to help and can commit to one day a week to come and fill the pantry between 9 – 11 with provided food, as well as making 4 peanut butter and jam sandwiches (peanut butter and jam provided – just bring the bread), you will find the gratefulness of a community of neighbors in need that rely on the pantry each day for food to get by. If you would like to help please email the office at: office@unitedingrace.org. Currently Mondays and Saturdays are open days to fill. Thanks!



Church Kitchen Towel Laundry

Who does it? Anybody who is willing and sees the need! Feel free to take the basket that is down in the Fellowship Hall by the bathrooms and return the following week to the kitchen. Thanks!!

SPECIAL SUNDAYS FOR OUR FOOD MINISTRIES

BROWN BAG SUNDAY: JUNE 8 — HAZEL'S LITTLE FREE PANTRY SUNDAY: JUNE 29

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.



UNITED IN GRACE IS STARTING A CHILDREN'S MINISTRY!

Do you like working with children? Now's your chance! United in Grace is starting a children's ministry and we need volunteers. This ministry not only serves the children but also their caregivers. Parents or guardians can enjoy the service knowing their children are in a loving safe environment. Ideally, we'll have enough volunteers so that people aren't working every Sunday.

If this sounds appealing to you, come to our informational meeting on Sunday, June 1st, after church to learn more about this program and how you can help.

Questions?
Contact Jasmine at
425-223-9866,
or jasisymms@outlook.com.



SUMMER RECESS

Jesus and Java, United Women in Grace*, and the **UIG Choir** will take a short recess for the summer.

These beloved ministries will return in the fall, refreshed and ready to reconnect, serve, and inspire. We're grateful for all who have participated and led throughout the year, and we look forward to gathering again when the seasons change.

Stay tuned for fall start-up dates and enjoy a season of rest, renewal, and sunshine!

***UWG** is having a Potluck at Jasmine's home on July 12th. More information will be coming soon!



congregational
CARE



Missy will host this month's BTM at 6:30. Bring your viewing and reading recommendations and come eat cupcakes with Diana! (it's her birthday!)



On **Thursdays June 26 and July 24**, you are invited to have Thursday lunch with other church members at the Monroe Senior Center. Please meet us at the Senior Center located at 276 Sky River Pkwy at 11:45 am. Lunch is only \$5 per person.

If you need transportation, please contact Susan Slate or Allene Zanger.



Please join us in the woods for a summer picnic at Flowing Lake Park on **Sunday, July 27 from 11:30 am - 2:30 pm**. It will be a potluck with lots of scrumptious food! There will be games for children, so please invite families to join us.

The covered picnic area is close to the bathroom and accessible to those with mobility challenges. The park charges a \$10 parking fee, which is another reason to carpool. If you need transportation or have any questions, please contact Susan Slate or Allene Zanger.

Sandy Bloor Memorial Service

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Sandy Bloor on April 28th, 2025. To celebrate her life, we invite you to a memorial service on June 14th at 1:00pm at United in Grace Church.

Sandy was a long time member of Monroe United Methodist Church and the Brown Bag Brigade.

There will be a light reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

June Birthdays and Anniversaries*

- 5 Rebekah Jones Kirby
- 6 Alan Barr
- 8 John Hubbard
- 9 Joel & JoLynn Garrison*
- 17 Kathi Cooley
- 17 Diana Ault
- 18 Frank Geer
- 21 Perry Cole
- 23 Jay & Rhonda Morgan *
- 28 Ric & Marian Hart*
- 29 Gwen Paietta
- 30 Brian Johnson

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE MAY 2025

In Person: 35 Online Views: 8



LOVE IS LOVE

June is Pride month. It's time to recognize all the diverse voices that make up our world. It is calling the world to unity not prejudice, to acceptance not vilification. It's an opportunity to show support of those of us on the fringe, just trying to live our lives and love who we wish. To let us know we aren't alone, we are accepted by many and there are people standing in solidarity with us.

I read a post on Facebook that pointed out that the Lord's Prayer, how Jesus taught us, is directed at "us" not "me". The basic tenet of Christianity is love and we're taught that love is the foundation of our relationship with God and the least we can offer others.

Matthew 6:9-13 NRSVU (emphasis added)

9 "Pray, then, in this way:

Our Father in heaven, may **your name** be revered as holy.

10 May **your kingdom** come. May **your will** be done on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give **us** today **our** daily bread.

12 And forgive **us our** debts, as **we** also have forgiven **our** debtors.

13 And do not bring **us** to the time of trial, but rescue **us** from the evil one.

We're called first to honor God, to plead His kingdom will come and asking for His will on earth. We're asking for this world to return to right fellowship with Him, our fellow journeyers, and the earth we inherit. It sets the stage for everything else.

And then, He does an interesting thing. He teaches us to pray for US. Meet OUR need for food. It's not just God meeting my needs, it's meeting OUR needs. Blessings on earth are here for all of us not just a select few. Not just one person who needs food but all of US. All in need.

The next is to ask for forgiveness for all of us as we have forgiven others. It's calling us again to pray for the community not just the individual. And it puts the onus on our actions. Are we demonstrating forgiveness? If we need forgiveness – and we all do – then we need to forgive others. We don't live in a vacuum. We live with other people who fail to live up to the perfect love God gives us, but we're called to show mercy to all of us: me, you and everyone.

Finally, I believe He lets us know that life will be bad sometimes and we need God on our side. Troubles will come, evil is real, fears can be pervasive, but God is in charge, and we can pray to Him for deliverance.

God calls us into community. He calls us to love not just the loveable but the unlovable. Not just the rich. Not just the connected. Not just those we agree with. God calls us to love everyone, pray for everyone, accept everyone. Amen!

Jasmine Ray-Symms

www.jasmineraysymms.com

Photo by [Yoav Hornung](#) on [Unsplash](#)



MAY SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY SCHEDULE

There are a few opportunities left to serve this month. Stop by the Volunteer desk in the narthex to sign-up.

	JUNE 1 7TH PENTECOST	JUNE 8 PENTECOST SUNDAY	JUNE 15 HOLY TRINITY	JUNE 22 2ND PENTECOST	JUNE 29 3RD PENTECOST
Worship Asst.	Nancy Franke	Missy Maxson	Nancy Franke	Christine Coco	
Greeters	Ric Hart	Bev Rice	Bev Rice	Joel & Jolynn G.	
Ushers	Missy Maxson	Perry & Valarie Cole		Joel & JoLynn G.	
Acolyte	Ric Hart	Valarie Cole	Ric Hart	Katrina Chaney	Ric Hart
Reader	Joel Garrison	Missy Maxson	Christine Coco	Michael Gore	
Comm. Prep.	JoLynn Garrison	Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Kathleen Sallee	Harriet Barr	
Serve Comm.	Christine C. & Peter M.			Nancy Franke	Christine Coco
Coffee Hour	Christine Coco	Kathleen Sallee	Priscilla High	Missy Maxson	Allene & Rob
Altar Flowers		Rebekah Jones-Kirby	Jill Sumpter	Priscilla High	Jasmine Ray-Symms
Sound-board	Kathi Cooley	Perry Cole	Kathi Cooley		



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2025 NW WASHINGTON SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The 2025 NW Washington Synod Assembly was held May 16-17 at the Edward D. Hansen Conference Center in Everett. Our theme of **WOVEN INTO GOD'S STORY**, based on Gal. 3:26-29.

We received reports and messages from our synod and churchwide leaders.

You will find written reports from our synod bishop, synod secretary, synod vice president, and our presiding bishop of the ELCA on the website for your review.

We connected with ministry partners through videos, display tables, and presentations.

You will find written reports submitted to the synod AND video messages shared at the assembly linked on our [synod website](#).

We held a Bishop Election.

Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee was reelected for a second 6-year term on the second ballot.

We passed a budget.

The proposed budget is found on synod website [here](#).

We celebrated ministry milestones of rostered ministers.

Find our celebration video here <https://vimeo.com/1086166969>

We voted to recognize and receive the congregation **United in Grace, Monroe, WA**, a union of Morning Star Lutheran Church and Monroe United Methodist Church, as a congregation of this synod.

We discussed Resolutions & Memorials:

These can be found on the assembly webpage: www.lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly

Resolution 1– Supporting Global Refuge's Camino a Casa Program – **passed**

Resolution 2– Affirming Northwest Washington Synod's commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church In European Russia (ELCER) through the Companion Synod Program – **passed as amended** (amendments replaced "Team Russia" with "companion synod.")

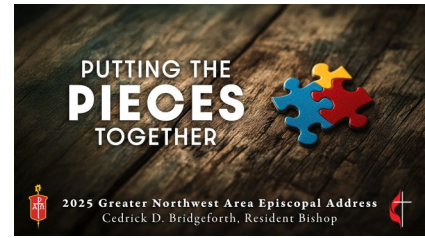
Memorial 1 - To affirm transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer people of God – **passed** – **will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**

Memorial 2 – To authorize ELCA participation in national legal actions in support of vulnerable ELCA communities – **passed** – **will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**

Memorial 3 - Call for an end to the occupation of Palestine and recognition of its statehood in the United Nations - **passed** – **will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**

A generous offering was collected at assembly

Over \$10,300 was received – thank you for your generosity! This will be shared equally with Lutheran Disaster Response, Bishop's Caring Fund, New & Emerging Ministries, and the synod's LIVE Project.



2025 GREATER NORTHWEST AREA ADDRESS

For the 2025 Annual Conference Season •
Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth

In an episcopal address preceding the annual conference season, Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth outlines the Greater Northwest Area's bold path forward, centered on the M.I.L.E. framework: Ministries that Matter, Itineration and Location, Lay Leadership Enhancement, and the Elimination of Racism. He highlights top ministry priorities—housing, health, discipleship, Indigenous ministries, and anti-racism—and emphasizes that no congregation can thrive alone; collaboration is key.

A major shift toward team-based superintendency is underway to provide more contextual, sustainable leadership. Laity are being empowered to claim their calling beyond committee work, with new training in spiritual leadership, conflict resolution, and practical skills.

The bishop reinforces that every ministry must be examined through the lens of eliminating racism, with ongoing equity work, cultural competency training, and truth-telling initiatives. Stewardship of church properties is also evolving, aligning assets with mission, not mere survival.

In closing, Bishop Bridgeforth calls for courage and collective commitment. The ambitious goals ahead demand partnership across clergy, laity, and communities, all rooted in the conviction that Christ walks this M.I.L.E. with us.


PUBLISHING NOTE: *The links provided below can be used to navigate the address. Audio is provided for those who prefer to read along as the bishop shares his address with us.*

Episcopal Address Text

- [1. The M.I.L.E. – a container for the journey](#)
- [2. Ministries that matter: Grounded in shared priorities](#)
- [3. The power of teams: Rethinking itineration, location, and superintendency](#)
- [4. Equipping the called: Enhancing lay leadership](#)
- [5. Eliminating Racism: A lens for all we do](#)
- [6. Cultural competency and truth-telling](#)
- [7. Property assets and Shared Services](#)
- [8. From innovation to transformation – learning from the past](#)
- [9. Team-based superintendency: A new way forward](#)
- [10. Concluding thoughts](#)

June 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10 Worship 7 TH EASTER	2	3	4 12:30pm Refit Class in Fellowship Hall	5	6	7
8 <i>Brown Bag Sunday</i> 10 Worship PENTECOST SUNDAY	9	10	11 12:30pm Refit Class in Fellowship Hall	12	13	14 1:00pm Sandy Bloor Memorial Service
15 <i>Happy Father's Day!</i> 10 Worship HOLY TRINITY	16	17 6:30pm Books, TV, & Movies	18 12:30pm Refit Class in Fellowship Hall	19	20	21
22 10 Worship 2 ND PENTECOST	23	24	25 12:30pm Refit Class in Fellowship Hall	26 11:45am Senior Lunch @ Monroe Senior Center	27	28 10am Grace in the Wild @ TBD
29 <i>Hazel's Little Free Pantry Sunday</i> 10 Worship 11:15 Congregational Meeting 3 RD PENTECOST	30					

 United in Grace
412 South Lewis Street
Monroe, WA 98272-4149

 JUNE 2023

 Pentecost June
Sunday 8

REMEMBER TO WEAR RED!

LOOKING AHEAD THIS MONTH:

- * **Children's Ministry Meeting**
Sunday the 1st at 11:15 am in the Fellowship Hall
- * **Books, TV, & Movies**
Tuesday the 17th at 6:30 @ the Maxson home
- * **Congregation Meeting to Approve Budget**
June 29th immediately following worship
- * **Grace in the Wild**
Saturday the 31st at 10:30am @ TBD

June 1: 7th Easter ~ Scripture: Psalm 97; John 17:20-26

June 8: Pentecost ~ Scripture: Acts 2:1-21; Rom 8:14-17; John 14:8-17 (25-27)

June 15: The Holy Trinity ~ Scripture: Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

June 22: 2nd Pentecost ~ Scripture: Isa 65:1-9; Psalm 22:19-28; Gal 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

June 29: 3rd Pentecost ~ Scripture: 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16; Gal 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

CONTACT US:

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Email: office@unitedingrace.org

Website: www.unitedingrace.org

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



unitedingrace.org