

**SPOKANE VALLEY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**
115 NORTH RAYMOND ROAD
SPOKANE VALLEY WA 99206
509 924-7262

Sundays
Traditional Service 9 a.m.
Sunday School 9a.m

Staff:
Congregation: Ministers of the Church
Alissa Amestoy: Reverend
Betsy Pletscher: Piano & Organist
Luke Henderson: Director of Music
Margie Manfred: Hospitality Director
Mackenzie Draper: Church Secretary
Lexi Shay: Interim Technical Ministry
Samantha Wallace- Ministries with Young People
Cassandra Strickland: Nursery Care
Jackie Florian: Sunday School Teacher

Volunteer Staff Position:
Zack Reiber: Lay Leader

Church Office: (509) 924-7262
Office Hours
Monday-Friday
11am to 4pm

Church Website:
www.spokanevalleychurch.org
Church E-mail:
secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org

OUR PURPOSE: *Spokane Valley United Methodist Church is here to invite people to: follow Jesus, love others, and transform the greater community through the grace of God.*

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Spokane, WA

Return Service Requested



CONNECTIONS

April 2024

New Members Class

Madelyn Bafus and I would like to extend the invitation to you to join us April 14th at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel for the New Member's Class. There is no RSVP needed, no strings attached, just show up! This is a great way to learn about our church.

Margie Manfred
Hospitality Director



WELCOMING THE WILDERNESS

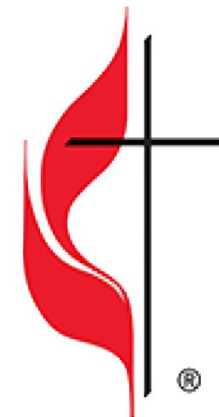
Pastor Alissa will be taking her annual week of renewal April 21 (after church) – April 26 and participating in the PNW Five-day Academy for Spiritual Formation at the Palisades Retreat Center in Federal Way. During this time, she will be unreachable by phone or email. Please contact the office for pastoral care needs.

SVUMC Mahan Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is available to students attending school for an undergraduate or graduate degree during the 2024-2025 academic year. Applicant must be a member or an active constituent of SVUMC.

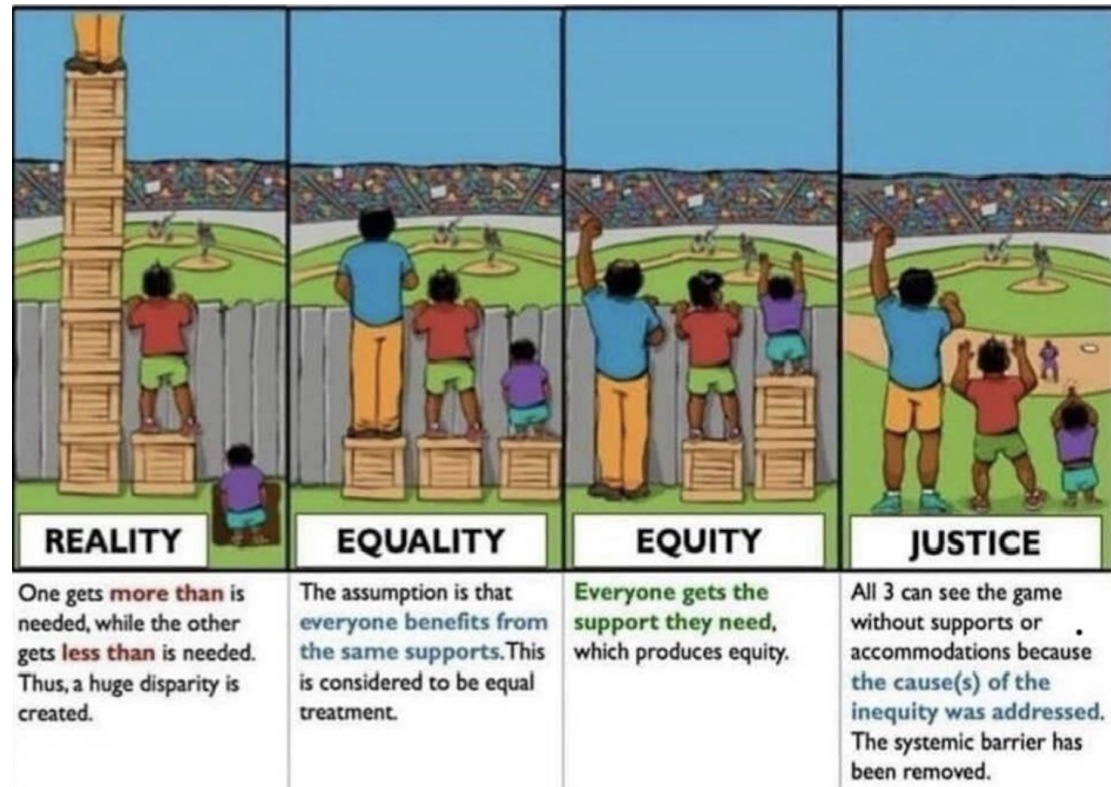
Scholarships will be for a minimum amount of \$800.

Please call the church (509-924-7262) to request an application. Completed applications must be received in the church office by May 5th, 2024.



From The Pastor's Desk

Just a few days after I returned from my month-long renewal leave and trip to Egypt last October, I got an email from Rev. Daniel Miranda, our District Superintendent, inviting me and up to two lay members of our congregation to apply to be part of a new area-wide congregational equity initiative as part of the "E" of the Bishop's M.I.L.E - *eliminating racism*. If you're not familiar with the term *equity*,



I have found the graphic to the left to be very helpful in illustrating the differences between equality and equity in the work of overcoming injustice in whatever forms it presents itself.

As the image shows, equity is a precursor to justice. Wesleyan theology invites us to a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ that bears fruit as just action in the world. That said, the church has been both active and complicit in centering white-dominant culture as the standard for much of our institutional and

congregational life. The work our church has been invited to enter into is about uprooting those standards, evaluating them through different lenses, and determining an inclusive path forward.

After reviewing the materials regarding the *Congregational Equity Cohort* (there's also an *Institutional Leaders Cohort* and one to train people to teach what we are learning), I proposed it to our leadership and, after receiving their blessing to pursue it further, I reached out to Zack Reiber, our Lay Leader-elect at the time, and Ali Norris, a young-adult member of our congregation who serves as the Executive Director of *Mission Community Outreach Center*, a local non-profit that operates a free clothing and hygiene bank (among other household items) to individuals and families in need. Both of them eagerly agreed to be part of our application to the *Congregational Equity Cohort* and in December we learned that our Spokane Valley UMC team had been accepted as one of two churches from the Inland District! Along with Pastor Geoff Helton and the lay team from Audubon Park UMC, our team travels to Portland or Seattle once a month (Jan. to July) to join with lay and clergy teams from 19 congregations from the PNW and OR-ID Conferences to learn together through a cohort process. As part of our work, we commit to taking our learnings back to our local churches as well as committing to influence and support congregations in our districts to do this work in the future.

We do this work with the leadership, coaching and support of Beth Zemsky. Zemsky has consulted with major foundations, non-profit organizations, and faith communities to move institutions from diversity and inclusion aspirations to action. With 35 years of experience in this field, Zemsky has developed tools and processes that have tangible results. At our first gathering in January, she named that we, in the church, use the terms *diversity*, *equity*, and *inclusion* as if we have shared understanding of their meanings when in reality, we often do not. She defined diversity simply as "counting the people." In other words, keeping track of demographics like age, gender, clergy/lay, ethnicity, etc.

Meet Our New Church Secretary Mackenzie Draper!

Hi all! I'm Mackenzie, and I'm taking over the Church Secretary position at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church. I'm honored and excited to be here! I have already met some of you, but I look forward to making even more connections as I learn the ins and outs of this vibrant community.

I have worked in administrative capacities in nonprofits and churches for years. Most recently, I worked at Moran UMC, Frontier Behavioral Health, and Morning Star Boys' Ranch. I've also been in and around churches since I was born; my dad is an ordained Assemblies of God pastor, and our family was in the mission field in Bosnia & Hercegovina and in Serbia when I was a kid. I've been part of many church families and have some insight into the various joys and challenges a church body might face.

These days, I attend a church called All These Branches that meets in the Liberty Park UMC building every other Sunday. I also sit on the board of ATB as Secretary. I love our little community and take every chance to spend time with my Branches family, whether in the evenings at Perry Street Brewery or by doing yoga in the park.

In my spare time I like to read and crochet. I recently finished a sweater for my sister's birthday! I'm also a writer and love writing short stories about eccentric characters; I am inspired by the stories of Ray Bradbury, Shirley Jackson, Flannery O'Connor, and Isaac Asimov.

I live with my fiancé and our two cats on the lower South Hill near Sacred Heart hospital. Our families are both in town, which makes it easy to see them as often as we want!

If you get a chance to drop by the church during the week, please come by and say hello! I love meeting new people and getting the chance to put faces to names. Thank you all for letting me join your lively and beautiful community.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senior Lunch Bunch

Sign up for this month's Senior Lunch Brunch by Sunday March 31 (Easter). We will meet for lunch on Sunday, April 4 at 11:45 a.m. at Darcy's diner. To sign up, you can go to the Connect Desk or call Nancy Ashworth (509) 993-9074. Please call to cancel if you are unable to attend.



About the Hymn: Precious Lord Take My Hand.

Many people think this great old gospel song was written by the famous big band leader Tommy Dorsey. It wasn't. The author's name is Thomas Andrew Dorsey, and he was the son of a black revivalist preacher. Young Thomas played piano at a vaudeville theater and later in one of Al Capone's Chicago speakeasies and with leading jazz bands. Thomas was converted to Christianity at a national Baptist convention in Chicago in 1921 and began writing hymns and trying to get them published. He became discouraged because it took years to finally get one of his hymns in circulation. In August, 1932, while leading music in St Louis, he was handed a telegram telling him his wife was dead and he later learned that he had also lost a son. "I began to feel that God had done me an Injustice," Thomas later said. "I didn't want to serve him anymore or write anymore gospel songs." But the next Saturday, while alone in a friend's music room, he had a "strange feeling" inside---- a sudden calm and a quiet stillness. "As my fingers began to manipulate over the keys, words began to fill in place on the melody, like drops of water falling from the crevice of a rock." Precious lord, take my hand. Lead me on, let me stand. I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.....

Today Thomas A Dorsey is remembered as the "father of gospel music" and the author of hundreds of gospel songs including his equally famous, "Peace in the Valley", which we are planning to sing in the next hymn sing.

Wes Holmquist

If you have a request for a song for hymn sing,
contact Wes at Wesleyross@protonmail.com

"Diversity is necessary, but not enough," Zemsky said. If diversity is about counting the people, then *inclusion* according to Zemsky, is about "the people *counting*." Do we listen deeply to one another? Do we invite the authentic voices of those whose life experiences are different from the majority to influence decisions? Do we include?

If diversity is about counting the people and inclusion is about the people counting, then *equity*, according to Zemsky, is about "*outcomes*." Do diversity and inclusion make a difference in our *actions*? Can we analyze our policies and practices to determine who is advantaged and disadvantaged, and reconstruct our systems for equity? Can we sit with the discomfort of uncovering biases to create just systems that reflect our deeply held beliefs that *all* people are of sacred worth and made in God's image?

There are the kinds of questions this training is encouraging to ask both of ourselves and our churches and this is the work that Zack, Ali, and I have undertaken on behalf of our congregation and the Inland District. This is long work - not just in terms of the 9-hour trainings we attend (trust us when we say it's been a firehose of information!) but also in the scope of time it takes to bring about systemic change - sometimes years or longer. And yet, this is the good work of eliminating racism that we are called to do - a call voiced by Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth that has its roots in Jesus' Parable of the Samaritan. This is more than training - it is capacity building for our congregation and the Greater Northwest Area of the UMC to increase relationships with all God's people in a manner that is liberative for all.

As Zack, Ali, and I continue our training, we commit ourselves to sharing what we learn so that Spokane Valley UMC can continue to be a community of faith where we celebrate diversity *and* inclusion with an aim toward equity and justice for all God's children. If you have questions about the *Congregational Equity Cohort* and what our team is learning, please contact me: alissaamestoy@gmail.com or 509-879-2278.

Peace-
Pastor Alissa



April Worship Preview

April 7 – Second Sunday of Easter: *The Dawning of New Understanding* (Communion)
John 20:19-29 - Pastor Alissa preaching

April 14 – Third Sunday of Easter: *New Series - How Shall We Live*
1 John 1:1-2:2 and Hymnsing - Pastor Alissa preaching - "We Live in the Light"

April 21 – Fourth Sunday of Easter: *How Shall We Live*
1 John 3:1-7 - Pastor Alissa preaching - "We Purify in Hope"

April 28 – Fifth Sunday of Easter: *How Shall We Live*
John 15: 4, 9, & 11 - Sue Magrath preaching - "We Abide in Christ"



Helping Hands
serving one another in love
GALATIANS 5:13

*“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”*
John Wesley



**United
Women
in Faith**

United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

*Thank
you* ❤️

For supporting Partners Food Drive.
Besides sending food we are able to send over
\$1,000!

For supporting Broadway Teachers Soup and Salad Luncheon.

This is an opportunity to let the staff at Broadway know that we appreciate and value the work they do in teaching the children of our community.



**Thank you for supporting
Spokane Valley United Women in Faith Dining In and Takeout Easter Dinner.
Thank you to all the women who helped prepare and serve this delicious ham dinner.
Because of all the hard work we were able to make \$1,026 for mission work
both globally and locally.**

**Mark you Calendar
Spring General Meeting
May 18, 11:30 am—1:30 pm
More information in May Newsletter**



**Window Work
At the Connect Desk in April**

**Mission Community Outreach Center
Toiletry Drive
April 7, 14, 21 and 28**

Items Needed:

Shampoo, Conditioner, Toothpaste, Lotion, Deodorant, Bar Soap, Body Wash, Razors, Laundry Detergent, Baby Shampoo, Baby Wash and Baby Lotion

Here is Ali Norris, Executive Director of MCOC, from our last toiletry drive for MCOC. She recommends we purchase items from any dollar store. The cost is less and the product is good.



**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH WESTERN JURISDICTION
May 9-11, 2024 IN Anchorage, Alaska**

Robin Gregory, Madelyn Bafus, Linda Hansen and Sue McGovney will be attending.

This is a time for United Women in Faith to **GET TOGETHER!**

To
FEEL the joy when faith-filled women unite
NURTURE our souls through the strength of our sisterhood
DEEPEN our relationship with God
EXPLORE the power of love to make a difference

Spokane Valley United Women in Faith Circle Meetings

Sarah Circle will meet April 1 in the Fireplace Room at 6:30 pm
Program: Where the Money Goes 2024!
Contact Robin Gregory, 858-344-7462

Esther Circle will meet April 9 at 12:30 pm in Room 115
Program: Ivetta Howell Sharing Hosting Riders on a Bicycle Tour
Contact Nancy Ashworth, 509-993-9074

Rachel Circle will meet April 11 at 9:30 am
Program: Tour of Ronald McDonald House, making sandwiches for residents and then lunch at The Chalet Restaurant
Contact Susan Henderson, 509-924-5192

Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet April 8 and 22 in the Youth Room at 10:00 am
Contact Jodi Mackin, 509-922-4074

**Cinnamon Roll Sale on Sunday, April 14
Benefiting
Our Covenant Relationship with Katherine Parker**



**55 Plus Luncheon and Program
April 25, Thursday, at Noon in the Gym
Lunch: Ham and Bean Soup & Cheese Sandwich
Program: “Spokane County Recycling Best Practices”**