

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

Return Service Requested

Non Profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 69  
Spokane, WA

**Sundays**

Traditional Service 9 a.m.  
Contemporary Worship 11 a.m.  
Youth Group 6 p.m.

**Staff:**

**Congregation: Ministers of the Church**  
**Mike Graef: Pastor**  
**Desiree Forster: Christian Education**  
**Betsy Pletscher: Piano & Organist**  
**Luke Henderson: Choir Director**  
**Margie Manfred: Hospitality Director**  
**Nate Dunigan: Technical Ministry**  
**James Gilreath- Youth Worker**  
**Britny Grovon- Sunday School teacher**  
**Sophia Normand-Sunday School teacher**  
**Brittany Sarto- Nursery Caregiver**

**Volunteer Staff Position:**  
**Shirley Porter: Lay Leader**

**Church Office: (509) 924-7262**  
**Office Hours**  
Monday-Thursday  
9:00am to 12:00pm  
Closed Friday

**Church Website:**  
[www.spokanevalleychurch.org](http://www.spokanevalleychurch.org)  
**Church E-mail:**  
[secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org](mailto: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.*



# CONNECTIONS

## December 2021



**"Joy to the World,  
the Lord is Come!"**

**Christmas Eve Worship  
is 8pm , Friday,  
December 24th, here in  
our sanctuary.**

**Nursery care available  
for babies through 2  
years, please call ahead  
to 509-924-7262.**

The congregation is invited to the annual meeting of the Church Council of Spokane Valley and United Methodist Church, at 4 PM on Sunday, December 5, in the Chapel. At this meeting the Finance Team will bring a motion to approve the 2022 budget. Based on your faithful giving, and estimates for 2022, all members and friends of our church should be greatly encouraged that our ministry is well supported into the new year. Church Council members please attend, all are welcome.

**New Sunday Morning Schedule,  
starts NOW**

**9:00 am One Worship for All**  
**9:00 am Children's Sunday School,  
Room 210**  
**9:00 am Youth Sunday School,  
Youth room**  
**9:00 am Nursery**  
**10:10 am Coffee Chat, Fellowship Hall**  
**10:30 am Adult Sunday School, Room 115**

**6:00 pm Youth Group, Youth rm**



Dear Valley Methodist Friends, allow me to introduce you to a dear from of mine, Rich Lang. I've known Rich since the 1990s when he was pastor of Spokane: Central UMC. Rich's visionary leadership helped to found Shalom Ministries, which still serves 1000s of hot meals to hungry people in downtown Spokane every month. He filed his "coming back to church" with all the best reasons, and just the right tone. Hope you enjoy what he has to say. We see new ones "back" here at Valley most every Sunday. When the time is right, it'll be great to see you too. Blessed Advent Season! to you and yours. -- Mike G

COMING BACK TO CHURCH by Rev Rich Lang, currently pastor of Lake Washington UMC in Kirkland, WA

On the one hand I'm one of the at-risk folks. I'm 65, have diabetes, am a bit overweight, and my job takes me out of my house. On the other hand, I'm a risk-taker. I've been to Mariners games, wedding celebrations, walked crowded streets, been on a plane, and eaten in busy restaurants. Social distancing long ago ceased in my life. It also doesn't help that I'm basically gregarious and will extend a handshake or hug as easily as I breathe.

With all that as background please consider that these thoughts come from a place of privilege. These thoughts come from a basically healthy respiratory system.

For those who are in a similar status as myself I want to invite you back into person-to-person church participation.

Obviously, this is an intimate, and uniquely personal decision. One size doesn't fit all. I respect the integrity of each to live their life. But if you find yourself, like me, slowly going out into crowds, visiting with friends, expanding your bubble, if, like me, you've received your vaccinations and are basically (especially with your respiratory system) healthy, if, in other words, you are no longer in danger of hospitalization from Covid, then on Sunday mornings, I invite you to get into your car, ride your bike, or walk on over, and be with us in church.

I think that it's time, for those in full health, to come back and be in church. Church is not just a building we go to on Sunday morning. Church is our energy source, our spiritual filling station. It's not about the sermon, or the hymns, or even the prayers. It's about the people of God gathering together. Indeed, church isn't a show we watch, it is a living participation of embodied presence. God is not a disembodied idea in our imaginations. Our soul is not individuated from other souls. Our spirituality is a way of life that connects God to the US that forms the I.

Covid separated our ability to gather in person together. Despite that, we've done well, we've stayed faithful, we've innovated new ways of gathering, and we've wisely loved our neighbors. But as I look at other churches who are gathering face-to-face, and take note that our congregation is vaccinated and respectful of others, as the kids return to school, and aspects of social life return, it seems to me that those of us who are already returning to social life, ought also return to the practice of gathering together as the incarnation of Christ.

There is strength and hope within congregational life, within face-to-face life, through person-to-person conversation, and greetings, and blessings. There is powerful magic simply by being with each other, seeing each other, and making the effort to show up for each other. There is so much more going on in Worship than just the liturgy. God speaks and moves and heals in the normality of personal, social life. Covid has injured that for all of us. I think, for most of us, it is time to come back to each other again.

Take your time. Find your own comfort level. Discern your need, and consider putting your toes back into the water. In the words of the old hymn:

*Oh, when the Saints go marching in,  
I want to be in that number  
When the Saints go marching in.*

Rich



**United Methodist Women  
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 your support of  
Our Takeout Annual Harvest Dinner**  
We served 134 dinners and made a profit of \$1,575.48.

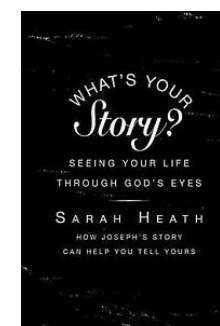
**Congratulations to Robin Gregory and Roberta Headley**  
Robin has been asked to be member of the Western Jurisdiction Leadership Team  
Roberta is the new Treasurer for the United Methodist Women Inland Missional District

### **United Methodist Women Tea Money**

Each month at the circle meetings, a collection of money is taken which is called Tea Money. Over the course of a year this loose change adds up. At the end of the year each circle decides where they would like their Tea Money to go. Rebekah Circle's Tea Money goes to Toys for Tots, Rachel Circle's Tea Money goes to American Childhood Cancer Organization Inland Northwest, Esther Circle's Tea Money goes to our Pastors Discretionary Fund. Sarah Circle's Tea Money goes to Mission Community Outreach Center. Circles usually collect between \$50 and \$100. Wonderful things happen and local charities are blessed when the change in a women's purse is collected and then put together with others.

### **To the Women of Spokane Valley United Methodist Church: Come and visit a Circle this month.**

Esther Circle meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at noon in Room 115.  
Contact—Sue McGovney (924-1555)  
Rachel Circle meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at noon in the Fireplace Room.  
Contact—Mary Alice Jones (921-1982)  
Rebekah Circle meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 11 am in Room 115.  
Contact—Nancy Olds (928-2930)  
Sarah Circle meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Fireplace Room.  
Contact—Robin Gregory (443-5953)



### **WHAT'S YOUR STORY: SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH GOD'S EYES**

By Sarah Heath

The book provides guidelines to help one tell his or her story. It allows us to follow Joseph's ups and downs, tests and trials in Egypt and the benefits he received from God. With assistance from the book, your story will be in three acts: 1) Characters, 2) Role effect good and bad, and 3) Your desires and orders of occurrences. In the book, there also suggest ideas, acts and climaxes.

Anna Jenkins





**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 ways 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*

**Thank You**  
**Broadway Elementary Trunk or Treat Volunteers**  
**Thursday Crew for delivering paper product to Naomi**  
**and**  
**All who supported "Children at Risk in Honduras" by buying a cinnamon roll!**



**Blessed to be a Blessing, Our Annual Christmas Giving Event**

As a reminder, take a paper ornament at the Connect Desk that has the gift information on it and bring back your unwrapped gift to the church by Sunday, December 19.  
**Jeans and tops to the church by December 1st.**



**Boys and Girl's jeans and tops** (sizes 10 and 12) for *Children's Christmas Joy at Mission Community Outreach Center* (If you bring back jeans and tops after December 1st, they will still go to Mission Community Outreach Center)

**\$10 Gas Gift cards** for Naomi, Family Promise & Valley Partners



**Hats and Gloves** to be given out at *St. Ann Neighborhood Sunday Lunch Christmas Lunch on December 19*  
Hats and gloves will also be given to Shalom Ministries



**Sunday, November 21st, 11AM worship was a joyous celebration of 20 years of inspiration and life-changing ministry with contemporary music, the last 14 years ably led by our own Tracey Partridge!**



The sermon of the day was an interview with Tracey, in which she highlighted moments in the history of this worship service, when upwards of 20 people volunteered their time to provide a truly contemporary worship experience. The volunteer spirit and deep spiritual impact of this particular music brought testimonies of joy and tears. There were testimonies of the beautiful impact of this particular music. But we also lamented the fact that since our reopening after the Covid shutdown, only two volunteers remain from those great teams of the past — not enough to sustain a worship service right now. I had a chance to mention that a few of the United Methodist congregations our size have also gone to one worship service since reopening. Covid has been tough on ALL, and on churches too.

So we used language of putting a comma “,” on the service, not a period “.” Not an end. In fact, all of the musicians agreed to come back for an 11 AM worship service on Easter Sunday, this coming April 17. Perhaps by taking a breather, we will recharge our batteries, and a new energized team of volunteers will emerge. The new pastor who arrives in July will also have his or her own impact on what a second service might bring to the future growth of our church.



So now we grieve, but we also go on to celebrate; recognizing that when Mary Magdalene was at her lowest point, a man she believed to be the gardener spoke her name, and by this she knew Jesus was alive and with her. May all who have been impacted and have worked so hard to make second service so powerful, hear Jesus speak their name within. Then each will know he lives for them. He can open doors, and he will. All we need to do is pray, “thy will be done.”

Lord we praise you for second service, for these 20 years of ministry! We look forward to what you will do to provide an alternative music for those who feel your touch more powerfully from the music they love the most. – Mike G





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|---|--|
| 12/02 Sharon Partridge                              | 12/19 Madelyn Bafus<br>Mike Graef      |
| 12/04 Paul Watson                                   | 12/20 Terry Evans                      |
| 12/05 Norm Cwiek<br>Alan Lovchik                    | 12/21 Jacob Bouvette                   |
| 12/06 Anna Jenkins<br>Nancy Larson                  | 12/26 Mary Picken                      |
| 12/07 Kyra Straub                                   | 12/27 Louise Hartford<br>Carol Hickman |
| 12/08 Norma Hardy                                   | 12/28 Margie Collin<br>Shirley Porter  |
| 12/09 David Oswald                                  | 12/29 Suzan Sloan<br>Deanah Watson     |
| 12/13 Sam Barrett<br>Quincey Gerth<br>Vicki Ludecke | 12/31 Abbey Cweik-Garrett              |
| 12/14 Taeryn Beauregard                             |  |



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

- 12/02 Jim & Mary Picken
- 12/03 Norm & Lois Cwiek
- 12/21 Delbert & Rojean Flory
- 12/27 Bob & Darlene Turner
- 12/28 Wes & Ann Holmquist
- 12/28 Jerry & Nancy Larson
- 12/29 Terry & Linda Evans



**YOUTH**

The Youth Room reveal was a huge success! Thanks to all the Youth, their families and to everyone who stopped in to see the new room!

