



# CONNECTIONS

## February 2024



### **Native Youth To Share Their Culture in the Inland District -February 10th**

The Inland District is hosting a cultural event led by "Dancing Our Prayers," a group of Native youth from the non-profit Yakama youth organization, *Mending Wings*. The event will be held at Covenant UMC (15515 Gleneden, Spokane, WA 99208) on Saturday, February 10th beginning around 5:30 pm. This invitation is open to church and community members.

**Home hosts needed!** In addition to attending the event, we are seeking a few families who would be willing to host 1-2 Native youth overnight on Feb. 10 and deliver them to our church the next morning. Hosts need to have a bathroom with a shower and separate beds for each youth. If you can attend the event and host some youth, please contact Pastor Alissa: [alisaamestoy@gmail.com](mailto:alisaamestoy@gmail.com) or 509-879-2278.

### **Inland District Choir in 2024**

Do you like to sing with a large choir? Do you enjoy listening to beautiful choral music, especially during Holy Week? if you answered "yes" to either question, then **put 4 pm, Sunday, March 24, on your calendar!** Singers from around the Inland District will come together at Spokane Valley UMC to usher in Holy Week with the cantata "Song of the Shadows" by Joseph Martin. Mary Jane Shervais from Cheney UMC will direct the Cantata as churches come together for worship in song and word. Our Director of Music, Luke Henderson, and members of our Traditional Choir will be participating. You do not have to be a member of our choir to participate! Rehearsals for singers in the northern part of the district will be held on Saturdays 4pm at Spokane Valley UMC on the following dates:

February 10th  
March 9th & 23rd

## SONG OF THE SHADOWS

Lenten Worship Series with  
*Shadows, Darkness, & Dawn:  
A Lenten Journey with Jesus*  
by Thomas R. Steagald

### **Pastor Klara Diesler, our Pastoral Intern is here!**

Our Pastoral Intern, Klara Diesler arrived from Germany on February 2nd. We will welcome her and install her in worship on February 5th and have a special German inspired Coffee Chat on February 11th. Please offer her a warm welcome and get to know her by inviting her to coffee, lunch, or a local outing! Her email is [kdiesler@gmail.com](mailto:kdiesler@gmail.com).



## *Lenten Preview from The Pastor's Desk*

*"Shadows...the place where light and darkness meet, where light is obstructed. A place we fear to go and where we guard ourselves against unseen threats and hidden dangers. A place our faith calls us to journey into each Lenten season. The prophet Isaiah wrote: 'The people living in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the shadow of death, a light has dawned.' But if our light has dawned, why must we return to the shadows, why must we retell stories of woe and walk through the valley of death? It wasn't so many weeks ago that we were praising the light of the star that led the wise men to the manger where the Christ Child, our long-awaited Savior was born! Why must we turn from its light so soon?*

*"Because on that very night where the Star of Bethlehem filled the sky with a blinding brilliance, the shadow of the cross was already forming. Already the powers of this world were conspiring to eliminate any trace of God's Promised One for though the light of heaven was shining, the darkness of the world could not understand it. And so, even on that holy, star-filled night, the shadows began to gather. What began in that humble little cattle shed in the City of Bread was a sacred journey of obedience, sacrifice and love that ended on a rugged cross in the City of God. Love came into the world to shine the light of God but also to show that the shadows of this world cannot overcome it.*

*"This is why we tell the whole story each year – why we set aside a season to remember that there is no dawning light, without the darkness of the shadow of death. To remember that our faith isn't built on the birth of Christ alone, but also on his death – a death that brought the gift of salvation for all of creation. A gift given freely and without expectation of reward. A gift we all too often forget to honor. And so, this Lenten season, we are invited to "come to the shadows" to remember how Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by crowds crying of "Hosanna" and sent to the cross by their same cries of "Crucify him!" How friends who professed loyalty to the end, slunk into the shadows the first sign of trouble. How he shared a cup in the flickering candlelight of a Passover meal knowing silver had already been exchanged for his life. How the shadows of night hid the shameful faces of his disciples who couldn't keep awake and who gave him away for a kiss. How a secret late-night interrogation hid the light of justice and set in motion events that led to Jesus' sacrificial death upon the cross.*

*"Already the shadows are gathering, already the journey begins...will you come? Will you come to the shadows? Will you remember the life and death of our Lord? Come...come."*

These are the words that will call us to gather in the growing darkness of the sanctuary as we begin our Ash Wednesday service at 7pm on February 14 and embark on our journey into the season of Lent. As the echo of "Come...come" fades, the music of the "Song of the Shadows" cantata by Joseph M. Martin, that has inspired our Lenten series, will lead us onto Jesus's path to the cross and encourage us to remember that on the other side of the shadows and darkness of his passion, is the dawning of the Easter promise.

The inspiration for this series goes way back to 2019, when retired pastor Rev. Roger Hudson (then at Covenant UMC), called together some of the pastors and music directors in the Spokane area to propose the idea of doing an Inland District Holy Week cantata performance of the *Song of the Shadows*. We put together plans for Lent 2020...and though we had to cancel those plans due to COVID, the calling to offer this worshipful Lenten worship experience never went away. Last fall, following conversation with Rev. Sheila Miranda and Mary Jane Shervais, Cheney UMC's Director of Music and the 2020 cantata director, we agreed that the time was right to resurrect our plans and offer the experience on Palm Sunday of *this* year with Mary Jane Shervais once again conducting the mass choir which includes many members of our own Traditional Choir. There's more information in this newsletter - we hope you can join us on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 4pm here at Spokane Valley!

Originally, I had not considered using the *Song of the Shadows* as a Lenten series inspiration as I had no familiarity with the cantata...but once I heard the opening song during our first mass choir rehearsal back in January of 2020, I was compelled to change my mind! The music is so hauntingly beautiful and intimate, so invitational and compelling that I knew we had to include it in our worship experience on Sunday morning. After proposing my idea to Shirley Porter and Zack Reiber, we found a devotional resource that would complement the cantata and our Lenten worship series was created! Be sure to pick up a copy of *Shadows, Darkness, and Dawn*, to supplement your Lenten journey this year! Our small groups will be going deeper with this book as well as reflecting together on the music of the cantata.

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With *Song of the Shadows* as our guide, we will journey through the season of Lent following the shadow covered path to the cross that Jesus took during the last week of his life. Each week will have “shadow” theme for us to explore through scripture, reflection, and song, as well as featuring one of the pieces from the cantata. And, of course, on Easter Sunday, we will walk “out of the shadows” of death into the light of the resurrection...but until then, you are invited to journey into shadows. Will you come?

Peace-  
Pastor Alissa

### **Lent 2024 Worship Schedule**

**February 14 - Ash Wed. Service at 7pm in the Sanctuary:** *The Shadow of Contemplation* Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Psalm 51:1-7, & Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 and song: *Song of the Shadows*

**February 18 – Lent 1:** *The Shadow of Turning*

Matthew 21:1-11 and song: “*On the Road to Jerusalem*” - Pastor Alissa preaching

**February 25 – Lent 2:** *The Shadow of Betrayal*

Matthew 26:14-35 and song: *Lord, Is It I?* - Pastor Klara preaching

**March 3 – Lent 3:** *The Shadow of Sacrifice* (Communion)

Luke 22:14-30 and songs: *Song of the Shadows & Given for You* - Pastor Alissa preaching

**March 10 – Lent 4:** *The Shadow of Loneliness*

Matthew 26:30-56 and song: *And It Was Night* - Pastor Alissa preaching

**March 17 – Lent 5:** *The Shadow of Suffering*

Matthew 27:1-2 & 11-31 and song: *In Pilate’s Court the Savior Stands* - Pastor Klara preaching

**March 24 – Palm/Passion Sunday:** *The Shadow of Death*

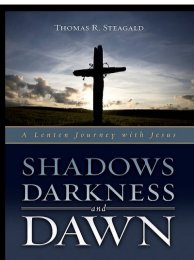
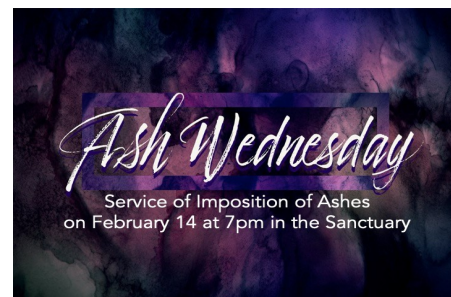
Matthew 27:32-50 and song: *Agnus Dei* - Service of Word and Song  
*Song of the Shadows* Cantata Worship at 4pm

**March 29 – Good Friday Service at 7pm:** *The Shadow of the Cross*

John 18:1-19:42 and song: *Even the Heavens are Weeping* with readings & reflections

**March 31 - Easter Sunday:** *The Dawning of Resurrection Life*

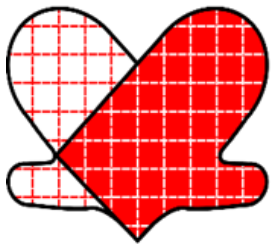
John 20:1-18 - Pastor Alissa preaching - Baptism of Cayde Gebhart



### **The Lenten Devotional Book,**

“*Shadows, Darkness and Dawn*” can be purchased for a donation of \$9.00 at the Connect Desk February 11th and 18th.





**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* ❤️

### **Washington Legislative Conference—January 27**

Thank you for all who helped set tables & rooms, prepared the lunch, baked cookies, greeted in the parking lot and hallways, served the lunch and helped with clean up.

It took all of us together to make this a successful event.

\$1,017.30 was raised towards our 2025 covenant relationship with Katherine Parker.

Thank you to all who donated to the Christmas Letter—\$1,645 was raised for local recovery efforts following the Gray and Oregon Road Fires.

### **At the Connect Desk in February**

#### **Naomi Paper Drive—February 4 and 11**

Still two Sundays left to bring paper towels and toilet paper to the Connect Desk.

This is always a successful event and so appreciated by the Naomi Community

#### **Cinnamon Roll Sale on Sunday, February 4 Benefiting Our Covenant Relationship with Katherine Parker**



#### **Spokane Valley Partners Food Drive—February 18, 25 & March 3, 10 “Hunger Is on the Rise— But Together We Can Help Families in Need”**

Granola Bars, Applesauce, Fruit Cups, Fruit snack, Fruit rollups, Ramen,

Cup of Noodles, Oatmeal, Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Pop top canned soup,

Pop top canned fruit, Pop top canned beans and chili,

Pop top Canned meat (spam, tuna, etc.)



#### **55 Plus Luncheon and Program**

**February 29, Thursday, at Noon in the Gym**

**Lunch: Vegetable Soup and Turkey & Cheese Sandwich**


**Program: C.J. Amestoy**

**“Who’s in your wallet? - Fighting Fraud with Financial Wellness”**



# 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.*



## **Spokane Valley United Women in Faith Dining In and Takeout Annual Easter Dinner March 23rd (Saturday) from 4:00-6:00 pm**

Dining in from 4:00—5:00 pm and Take out from 5:00—6:00 pm

Ham, Creamy Potato Casserole, Carrots, Cole Slaw and Roll  
Easter Cake for Dessert

Adults - \$15

Children (6 – 12 years) - \$7

Children 5 and under - Free

The March Newsletter will have full information  
on ordering either Dining In or Take Out Meals

## **Spokane Valley United Women in Faith Circle Meetings**

Together, we welcome new women into our sisterhood.

It's an exciting time to be part of United Women in Faith!

Driven by God's love and united in sisterhood,  
we are working to improve the lives of women, children and youth.

We show up. We take action. We get it done.

Come and join us. Check out one of our circles .

**Esther Circle** will meet February 13 at 12:30 pm to carpool to Christ Kitchen  
Contact Nancy Ashworth, 509-993-9074

**Rachel Circle** will meet February 8 in the Fireplace Room at 11:00 am  
Contact Susan Henderson, 509-924-5192

**Sarah Circle** will meet February 5 in the Fireplace Room at 6:30 pm  
Contact Robin Gregory, 509-443-5953

**Prayer Shawl Ministry** will meet February 12 and 26 in the Fireplace Room at 10:00 am  
Contact Jodi Mackin, 509-922-4074

# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Touched by Cancer**

Touched by Cancer is a new women's cancer support group. Our first meetings will be announced in future bulletins. Women who have or have had cancer, or who have helped someone with cancer, are invited. We want to physically, emotionally, and spiritually support each other, to share ideas, to listen and learn. If you have questions contact Susan Ingalls (509) 926-0684

## **Senior Lunch Bunch**

Sunday, February 11th, 12:00 p.m. at Black Angus, Spokane Valley Mall.  
Sign up Sunday, February 4th at the Connect Desk.



## **Flannel Shirt Day February 11th**

Check your closet and wear your best flannel for Sunday worship!

## **Multi-Generational Game SVUMC Day**

Sunday February 25th, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 a.m.

Lunch provided: Mac & cheese, hotdogs, veggies, fruit trays and cookies!



Play corn hole, Ping pong, giant Jenga, card games, and board games or bring your favorite game from home!

Sign up at the Connect Desk so we know how much food we will need.

Please email or call Sharon Maxey at (509) 953-1756 or csmay902yahoo.com with questions for this event.

About the hymn - **God Will Take Care of You** by Wes Holmquist

In my mind's eye, I can still see the young cowboy in JC Penneys in 1951, paying for a new pair of beautiful black and white cowboy boots with 20 silver dollars. Whenever we needed reasonable clothes my mother took her family of ten children to JC Penney's (probably not all at once though). We took silver dollars for granted back then, and also took for granted the JC Penney clothing store. But JC wasn't always a success. In the great depression of 1929, he nearly lost everything. His business deals went sour and Penney became overcome with anxiety and insomnia. He developed a painful case of shingles and was hospitalized. His mental state deteriorated until, as he later said, "I was broken nervously and physically, filled with despair, unable to see even a ray of hope. I had nothing to live for. I felt like I hadn't a friend left in the world, that even my family turned against me." But one morning he heard singing coming from the little hospital chapel. The words of the song said, "Be not dismayed whatever betide / God will take care of you." Entering the chapel, he listened to the song, to the scripture reading, and to the prayer. "Suddenly something happened. I can't explain it. I can only call it a miracle. I felt as if I had instantly been lifted out of the darkness of a dungeon into warm, brilliant sunlight." From that day forward, JC Penney was never plagued with worry, and he later recalled those moments in the chapel as, "the most dramatic and glorious twenty minutes of my life." He later became one of America's greatest merchants. True story from "Then Sings my Soul" by Robert J Morgan.

It is great to get through the first month of 2024 and be on our way to another year of faithful mission and ministry at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church. Thanks to all that returned pledge information as we prepare for the new year. Our giving estimate for the year will be very close to the same as what we received last year, which should keep us financially strong as we complete the work of the church and our congregation in the community this year.

We are ending 2023 in great shape. Revenue received for the year was \$355,698.00 and our Expenses ended the year at \$357,345.00. Thus, we will start 2024 with a General Fund balance of \$82,184.00.

Thank you all for your continued support through your generous gifts of time, talent, and financial resource, 2024 will be an exciting year as God's work continues through our congregations commitment to make a difference in our community. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

Feeling Blessed Always,  
Your Finance Team SVUMC



# Meet our new Teacher Miss Jackie



## Children's Ministry

We are excited to add Jackie to our team as the new Sunday School Teacher.

## Introduction

Hello, I am a senior at Eastern Washington University. I am majoring in Social Work with a minor in Psychology. I grew up in church but didn't choose to seek out my relationship with Jesus till the age of 20. The Holy Spirit has guided my life in a way that's been perfect. I am incredibly excited to teach Sunday School again and to be a part of this community. Thank you all for accepting me wholeheartedly and with warmth.

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

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

**Staff:**

Congregation: Ministers of the Church  
Alissa Amestoy: Reverend  
Klara Diesler: Pastoral Intern  
Betsy Pletscher: Piano & Organist  
Luke Henderson: Director of Music  
Margie Manfred: Hospitality Director  
Amanda Johnson: Church Secretary  
Nate Dunigan: Technical Ministry  
Samantha Wallace- Children's Ministries  
Jaqueline Florian: Sunday School Teacher  
Cassandra Strickland: Nursery Caregiver

**Volunteer Staff Position:**

Zack Reiber: Lay Leader

**Church Office:** (509) 924-7262

**Office Hours:**

Monday-Friday  
11:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

**Church Website:**

[www.spokanevalleychurch.org](http://www.spokanevalleychurch.org)

**Church E-mail:**

[secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org](mailto:secretary@spokanevalleychurch.org)

**Return Service Requested**



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**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.*

*Love is the Spirit at Spokane Valley UMC - we are a weapons-free and drug-free community. Thank you for abiding by this policy and helping to make our church a safe space for all.*