

Return Service Requested

SPOKANE VALLEY  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH  
115 NORTH RAYMOND RD  
SPOKANE VALLEY, WA  
99206

**Sunday 9am**  
**Traditional Service**  
**Sunday School & Nursery**

**Pastor**  
Rev. Alissa Amestoy  
**Director of Music**  
Betsy Pletscher  
**Director of Hospitality**  
Margie Manfred  
**Technical Ministry**  
**Co-Coordinator**  
Lexi Shay & Logan Tiedt  
**Coordinator of**  
**Ministries with**  
**Young People**  
Jackie Florian  
**Nursery Caregiver**  
Chris Nilles  
**Church Secretary**  
Mackenzie Draper  
**Lay Leader**  
Zack Reiber



Check out  
our website!



Scan our new QR  
code for easy  
online giving!

Church Office: 509-924-7262  
Office Hours:  
Mon-Thurs 8 am - 11:30 am  
Friday 8 am - 2 pm

Church website: [www.spokanevalleychurch.org](http://www.spokanevalleychurch.org)  
Church email: [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

july 2025

### The Heart of Christianity Summer Worship Series

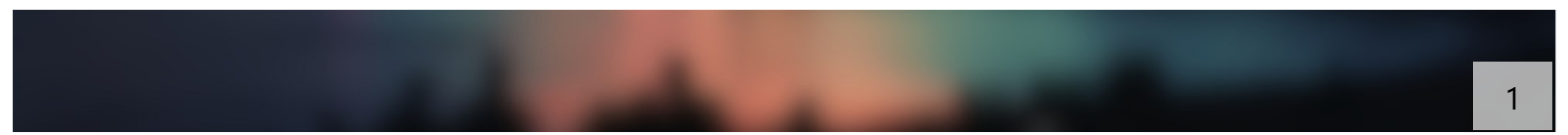
At the beginning of the year, I proposed “The Heart of Spokane Valley” as an overall theme for us to explore as we seek to both deepen our connection to God within our church and our relationships with the community outside our church. Over the past six months during worship we’ve renewed our commitment to the “love others” part of our mission statement, been touched by the “Healing Heart of Jesus,” returned to God with “all our hearts” and, in the most recent Eastertide season, been empowered to share our faith with the goodpeople of Spokane Valley. So far the scope of our exploration has been local, personal, and centralized on our ministry as a United Methodist Church. This summer, however, I’m going to invite us to take a sky high view of the landscape of the Christian religion in North



America as a whole – a landscape which, over the past 100 years or so, has experienced and is continuing to experience A LOT of change and conflict.

To guide us in this 5000 foot view, I’m enlisting Marcus Borg, an American New Testament scholar and theologian who was among the most widely known and influential voices in progressive, mainline Christianity before his passing in 2015. Raised Lutheran, Borg majored in political science and philosophy at Concordia College then went on to begin studies in theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York eventually receiving both a Master and PhD in Theology from Oxford. He taught at a number of colleges and universities; most notably for us in the PNW, he was a faculty member of the Religion and Culture Studies Department at Oregon State University from 1979 until his retirement in 2007. A frequently requested public speaker and keynoter, Borg was often featured in programs on PBS, NPR and National Geographic teaching and even debating Christian theology with other scholars. He wrote many books during his career – a few of my favorites include: *“Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously but Not Literally”* and *“The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions”* in which he and his good friend and fellow theologian N.T. Wright discussed their theological differences in chapters comprised of their letters back and forth to one another. For the purposes of our summer


(Cont. on pg. 2)





worship series, we’ll be learning from Borg’s book “*The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering the Life of Faith*” published in 2003. Though a few decades have passed since its writing, I find that the questions that Borg seeks to answer and the changing paradigms he identifies are still very much at play in our present circumstances and pertinent to our “The Heart of Spokane Valley” year-long exploration. The two main questions he seeks to answer are these:

- What is the heart of Christianity particularly in this time of change and conflict?
- What does it mean to be Christian today? (i.e. What is central to an authentic Christianity and Christian life today?)



**The HEART  
of Christianity**

Rediscovering a Life of Faith

**MARCUS J. BORG**  
*Author of Convictions*

Through his studies and teachings, Borg had identified that American Christianity has been in the midst of a significant paradigm shift for the past 100 years between the early vision of the church and the new emerging vision in our present reality. The earlier paradigm of the church, which has ruled for centuries, taught the Bible as the unique revelation of God (and, therefore, must be taken literally), that the Christian life should be centered on personal salvation, and that belief in God, Jesus, and the teachings of the Bible are the *only* way to heaven (in other words, Christianity is the only “true religion”). The emerging paradigm, on the other hand, which is a product of the past 100 years of Christianity encountering the modern and post-modern realms of science, history, religious pluralism, and cultural diversity, encourages interpreting scripture figuratively or symbolically, emphasizes community transformation and service to others as the locus of the Christian life, and respects other religions as viable pathways to a relationship with God in this life and in the life to come.

If you’ve been a United Methodist for the last 40-90 years, a denomination that has aspects of both paradigms present within our congregations, then this tension is familiar to you. For example, I would guess that most of us adhere to the Big Bang and evolutionary theories to explain how life came to be *and* also believe that the teachings about God as Creator of all as taught in Genesis 1 to be “true” if not scientifically factual. (Worship on July 20<sup>th</sup> will dive into this!) You also probably have no issues declaring Jesus as “the only way to the Father”...*and* also believing other faith traditions have wisdom and truth to offer about God. (Worship on September 14 will examine this!) What both examples emphasize is the reality that we, as modern-day North American United Methodist Christians, are caught in the midst of a time of competing beliefs which we have to navigate both personally and, more importantly, *communally* as more and

**Special Events:**

**7/4** Office closed

**7/7** 6:30 pm Sarah Circle FPR

**7/10** 11:00 am Rachel Circle FPR

**7/14** 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth  
6:30 pm Trustees

**7/15** 10:00 am Touched by Cancer  
2:30 pm Finance Meeting

**7/28** 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth

**Weekly Events:**

**Monday**  
3:30 pm Nancy Larson Small Group  
Rm 115

**Thursday**  
9:00 am Thursday Crew

**Saturday**  
10:00 am Choir Practice

**Sunday**  
9:00 am Traditional Service  
9:00 am Children’s Sunday  
School & Nursery

ANNIVERSARIES

**7/26 Bob & Marta Prow**

BIRTHDAYS

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>7/2 Laura Gottberg</b> | <b>7/18 Mary Barker</b>     |
| <b>Pat Palanuk</b>        | <b>7/26 Easton Anglin</b>   |
| <b>7/9 Jerry Bartak</b>   | <b>7/29 Brandon Meckel</b>  |
| <b>7/16 Asher Cheney</b>  | <b>7/30 Roberta Headley</b> |
| <b>Raeann Ducar</b>       |                             |



# JULY WORD SEARCH

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| U | I | M | S | P | Y | N | Q | W | B | E | A | C | H | D | A | Y |
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| D | E | R | G | D | B | D | Q | N | S | O | L | N | T | P | S | O |
| T | M | T | A | H | D | C | X | U | C | E | W | M | Z | E | U | M |
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Firefighter  
Pool Party  
Cherries  
Chess  
Ice Cream  
Hammock

Raspberry  
Independence Day  
Hot Dog  
Fireworks  
Picnic  
Moon

Stargazing  
Baseball  
Beach Day  
Apricot  
Sunscreen  
Popsicle

Roadtrip  
Read  
Snap Pea  
Water Park  
Sprinklers  
Sunburn

unchurched folks who are *not* formed by the earlier paradigm and very much informed by science and so forth join our church family.

This dynamic is not unique to us - as Borg was guest lecturing and going on teaching tours in the early 2000's he began to realize that many people are seeking answers to these larger questions of faith and longing for a different way of being Christian that embraces the early vision/tradition *and* the new paradigm emerging. This became the inspiration for his book and in the preface, Borg names that he wrote it out of a passion for communicating a way of seeking God, our human relationship to God, and a path of transformation for whom the traditional way of belief and Biblical interpretation doesn't make sense in our modern context. It was also a result of his observation of the many conflicts existent in mainline denominations born out of these competing paradims around the ordination of women and LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion, as well as our reckoning with our awareness of how the Christian faith has contributed to systems of racism, sexism, nationalism, and other harmful ideologies presently doing harm in our current reality.

As we seek to be the "heart of Spokane Valley" and be a church where people seeking a new way to engage in the Christian walk (whether churched or unchurched) are welcome and encouraged in their journey, I believe engaging the questions Borg asks and intentionally wrestling with how these paradigm shifts and resulting denominational conflicts impact our mission and ministry is worth a summer of exploration. To accomplish this, starting July 6, each Sunday through the summer I will offer a sermon integrating scripture and a chapter of Borg's book. While it's not necessary, you're welcome to get a copy of *The Heart of Christianity* from your favorite bookseller and read along with me. Check out the July Worship Preview for more information. I look forward to you joining me on this mile-high vision summer journey as Marcus Borg and the scriptures of our faith help us understand what is happening in the North American church and how to live out the heart of our Christian faith in the new era right here in Spokane Valley!

Peace – Pastor Alissa

## July Worship Preview – The Heart of Christianity Summer Worship Series

**July 6 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – “A Time of Change”** (Ch. 1)

John 14:1-14 – Pastor Alissa preaching & Communion

**July 13 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – “Faith: The Way of the Heart”** (Ch. 2)

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 – Pastor Alissa preaching

**July 20 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – “The Bible: The Heart of Tradition”** (Ch. 3)

Selections from Genesis 1-2a – Pastor Alissa preaching

Ministry that Matters Moment: Mission Community Outreach Center Shoe Drive

**July 27 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – “God: The Heart of Reality”** (Ch. 4)

Isaiah 43:107 – Pastor Alissa preaching & New Members Liturgy

*If you are interested in joining the church on July 27, please contact Pastor Alissa:  
alissaamestoy@gmail.com or 509-879-2278*





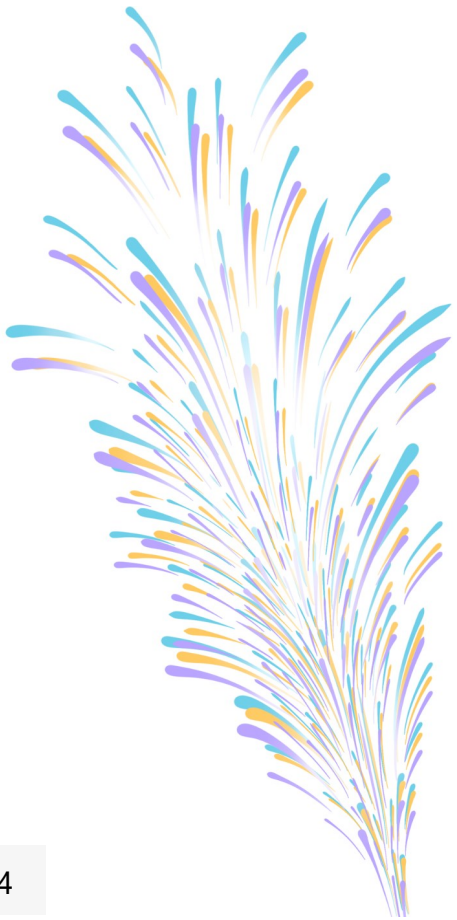
*"Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can."*  
John Wesley

Thank  
you

Note from the Kitchen Committee: The Kitchen Committee would like to thank all those who have donated to the kitchen fund. Especially to Marlene McCoy, Nancy Olds, Tracey Partridge, Barbara Soran, Nancy Croskrey, Ethel Richards, Madelyn Bafus and Roberta Headley for their donation for all brand new matching silverware.



If you would like a mid-year giving statement, contact Desiree Forster or the church office for them. Thank you!



15th Annual

## SCHOOL SHOES FOR KIDS DRIVE

MCOC is collecting new athletic shoes and socks to be given out at our School Shoes for Kids Giveaway in August.

- New Athletic Shoes
- Sizes toddler 9-adult 12
- New Socks

Grab a Shoe Drive flyer at the Connect Desk. The flyers have a Big 5 coupon that can be used to purchase shoes. Share with your friends and family!

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If you would like to donate funds, volunteer or want more information please visit our website: [www.4mission.org](http://www.4mission.org)

Mission Community Outreach Center  
Reaching Out With Care

1906 E. Mission Avenue ~ 509-536-1084 ~ [mcoc.spokane@gmail.com](mailto:mcoc.spokane@gmail.com)

Now giving shoes to kids preschool to 12th grade

## LETTER FROM THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES SUPPORT TEAM

Hi to all from Jim Droppers, the Co-Chair of the Church's Financial Resources Support Team! We had our monthly meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup> to review our General Fund Budget through the month of May and to discuss some significant capital expenses that we currently face. As we worked through the meeting, it was noted by several team members how we feel our church is blessed as it was not difficult to find the means to pay for the obligations we discussed.

First, allow me to will share a brief update on the General Fund Budget. Through the end of May we are right on target with the budget that was approved last December. One target we review is percent of revenue and expense. To stay within the budget the church needs to bring in 8.3% of the annual budget and spend no more than 8.3% of the annual budget each month. Therefore, through May we should have revenue and expenses at 41.7% of budget. Currently, they are both right at 42%, with a \$250.00 difference between gifts given and expenses paid. We are blessed!

The second topic for the meeting was to review proposals for the repair and/or replacement of the six HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems that were damaged outside the Church last month when someone stripped all the copper tubing from them resulting in approximately \$81,000.00 in damages. The Trustees received several quotes and, through their hard work, have acquired a bid to replace all six systems for \$73,000.00. It is estimated that based on the age of the old systems, after the deductible, insurance will pay for around \$23,000.00 of cost the replace the equipment. Therefore, the Church will have to cover \$50,000.00 to complete the repair/replacement. Thankfully we have the funds! When Pastor Alissa came to our congregation in July of 2022, we were able to sell the parsonage due to her already having housing arrangements. We invested the funds from the sale and the gains made on those investments over the past three years will cover the remaining cost to replace the six HVAC systems and provide us with brand new heating and cooling systems. We are blessed!

In addition to the repair/replacement HVAC project, the Trustees obtained bids to put a double six foot ornamental wrought iron fence around the exterior HVAC units to help prevent future vandalism. The cost for this work will be \$7300.00 and we will be able to pay for this additional work through the gains on the parsonage investments. We are blessed!

After returning home from the meeting my mind kept wandering back to how many times someone on the team had said "We are blessed." So, of course, in the modern world, I had to Google search "blessed church" in Scripture. What I found is that in Scripture, a "blessed church" is characterized by spiritual growth, faithful service, and focus on God's Word; it's a community where believers are unified, love one another, and actively participate in God's work. Key elements include obedience to Christ's teachings, a focus on holiness, and a commitment to making disciples. I think that describes our Church pretty well! Thank you to all for being a part of this great work through gifts of time, talent and the funds needed to keep up God's plan for us all. Please join me in thanking the Trustees and my team members on the Financial Resources Support Team for their holy work of caring for our Church facility and its resources. We are blessed!

Peace-  
Jim Droppers