

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

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
Noreen Duffy: Church Secretary
Ed Poblete: Custodian
Alyssa Arnold: Children's Ministry
Kyra Straub: Youth Ministry
Jessica Lunceford: Nursery
Kelsey Martin: Nursery
Betsy Pletscher: Piano & Organist
Tracey Partridge: Contemporary
Worship & Choir Director
Margie Manfred: Hospitality Director
Nate Dunigan: Technical Ministry

Volunteer Staff Position:

Shirley Porter: Lay Leader

Church Office: (509) 924-7262
Office Hours

Monday-Friday
9:00am to 3:00pm
Closed Noon to 1:00pm

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



Return Service Requested

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US Postage
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Spokane, WA



CONNECTIONS

May 2020

Thank you to our amazing tech team, musicians, singers, and Pastor Mike for making our Sunday morning online worship possible. We appreciate all you do!



FROM OUR BISHOP, ELAINE STANOVSKY

Dear United Methodist Clergy and Laity of the Greater Northwest Area, "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1:78-79

EXTENSION OF WORSHIP SUSPENSION AND BUILDING CLOSURES

As bishop of the Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, I am extending the suspension of in-person worship in United Methodist Churches and other ministries and the closure of church facilities to all but essential services throughout the Alaska, Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest Conferences through May 30, 2020, despite the loosening of restrictions in some or all of the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. This date may be reconsidered as circumstances change. How did I come to this decision, and what does it mean? (see inside)

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.*

FROM OUR BISHOP, ELAINE STANOVSKY, April 24, 2020 (continued)

MARCH 24: Suspension of In-Person Worship and Closure of Buildings. On March 24 I directed that in-person worship and other gatherings be postponed in United Methodist Churches and other ministries through April 30, 2020. At the same time, I directed that all Church facilities were to be closed except for essential services. These actions were taken to protect the health of vulnerable people, to slow the spread of the disease, and to prevent health care systems from becoming overwhelmed by a sudden surge of cases needing hospital beds and equipment.

You helped keep people HEALTHY! You did it! You made adjustments and found ways to be church without gathering for in-person worship. Your actions, and the general population's compliance with the orders of the governors appear to have slowed the spread, flattened the curve of the crisis, and averted a crisis in our health care systems. I thank God for the incredible ways you have contributed to these outcomes. At the same time, we grieve over people who have contracted COVID-19, some of whom have been hospitalized and even died. And we continue to hold in our hearts and prayers all who are at risk for this disease because they render essential services, or have compromising health conditions, or who, because of systemic inequities in our society live with little or no social safety net.

EASTER: You celebrated Resurrection in the Shadow of Death. Alleluia! You found ways to overcome all kinds of obstacles to celebrating Easter. Your clergy and lay leaders have demonstrated an adventuresome spirit, as you learned how to care for one another, conduct worship and support vulnerable people in your neighborhoods, while maintaining physical distancing and suspending all gatherings. Christ the Lord was Risen again this Easter, with shouts of Alleluia!, prayers for strength and healing, and acts of generosity. Well done, good and faithful servants.

MAY 1 We are now approaching the end of the directives I gave on March 24 and many of you are eager to know whether the restrictions will be lifted or extended. I am closely monitoring the guidance and criteria for loosening restrictions in each of our four Greater Northwest states, as well as the daily reports of new cases, deaths and health system capacity. As you know, the disease has unfolded at different rates across the area. And the cultural and political climates across our region are varied, leading to different assessments of the risks involved. I find myself leading in the midst of continued uncertainty and significant controversy about the best course of action. Three value-based priorities inform my leadership as your bishop.

Do No Harm: Protect the public health

Do Good: Share the financial burden with persons most vulnerable to economic impacts

Stay in Love with God: Promote the life-giving ministries of the Church

DO NO HARM. Protect Public Health

Following the leadership of four very different governors, our four states are all weathering the pandemic better than expected. All four governors have laid out the criteria that must be met before incremental, phased loosening of restrictions within their states begins. I am pre-disposed to trust the governors of each state to listen to their health care advisors, know their regions and give prudent guidance. At present none of these four governors has reported that the criteria within their state have been met. As Christians and citizens committed to protecting public health, we are responsible both to abide by the guidance of government and health officials, and to assess whether the Church holds itself to a higher standard of caution than the states direct.

Second, if a state meets its own criteria, and loosens restrictions, I will continue to ask whether it is prudent for the Churches to do likewise. Without adequate testing and case tracking, church gatherings may allow the virus to spread unchecked and expose people who are at most risk for severe illness, due to age, access to health care or compromising health conditions.



Prayer is a priority at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church. It supports the needs of the Church, individuals, community and our world. For all of your prayer requests contact Margie Collin at (509) 922-8371 or email: prayer_svumc@yahoo.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Do you know that the estimate of giving card you may have signed is an estimate of giving, not a pledge? Circumstances change, so if you need to revise your estimate, contact Susan Ingalls so the church budget can be revised as or if needed.



The family of Doris Swehla extends their love and thanks to you all, her church family, for the decades of love and support that you shared with Mom. Her passing on April 3rd was sudden but not unexpected. Her faith carried her through the rough spots in this life, and lifted her to her heavenly home. At this time of 'shelter at home' and 'social distancing', we are not able to plan a service for her. Hennessey Valley Funeral Home has a tribute page set up for Doris, please feel free to visit there and share memories with her family and friends. We look forward to sharing her 'Celebration of Life' in the future, with you all. May the Lord bless and keep you and yours, in the palm of His hands. With hearts full of gratitude, Robin Cole, on behalf of the Swehla family.

Thank you so much for all your prayers and cards concerning my knee surgery. It was wonderful and they helped me so much. Hopefully I'll be seeing you soon! - Pat Porter

A Letter from Katherine Parker

Dear Spokane Valley United
Methodist Church,



I hope that you are safe, well and are adjusting to different ways of engaging as we all contribute to keeping our communities safe.

I came back to the USA in mid-March, intending to join the Board of Directors meeting at Global Ministries and return to Nepal a week later. But when I reached my transit point in Turkey I learned of the plan to close flights from Europe to the US, and by the time I reached the US, Nepal had started imposing travel restrictions that made it impossible for me to get back. Then Nepal finally went into lockdown. I'm stuck here in California for the duration, which has been a mixture of guilt of not being with my community at this time of need and gladness that I can be a comfort to my family.

The economic impact on Nepal has been devastating. The many day laborers are hardest hit right now. The government of Nepal is organizing for a very minimal food and cash distribution to the ultra-poor during lockdown and we are looking at ways to contribute to the relief efforts when the lockdown ends. The long-term effect will be even grimmer; almost 50% of Nepal's GDP comes from movement related work: sending out migrant workers and bringing in tourists.

We are planning now for how we can contribute to re-training and support returning migrants to build up the local economy. As part of the Health Team we are looking not just at supporting our two remote hospitals, but also at how to expand our mental health and reproductive health work. Our Education team is planning how to support schools in areas where much of the population doesn't even have phone access and where schools provide a critical meal for children.

The hospitals that the United Methodist Church helped UMN start in Nepal have done amazingly well at becoming financially self-supporting in recent decades. The commitment to provide free and reduced-cost care to the poor continues to be supported by your donations but is also under-girded by our ability to recruit and maintain high quality Nepali doctors, nurses and staff to our remote hospital locations (a difficult challenge). Funds for the salaries of our staff come primarily by providing quality routine and elective care for a fee.

But with the lockdown in Nepal, patients are not traveling in from the surrounding villages to access these services, and hospital income and cash flow are down. This means that our hospitals are facing a challenge to pay salaries at a time when we need to be prepared for the chance of a widespread outbreak in Nepal. We ask for pray that the early call for strict lockdown in Nepal will be effective and there won't be a country-wide outbreak.

Our critical appeal right now is for funds to help us keep our hospital staff employed. Tansen United Mission Hospital has its own UMCOR number, [Advance 13421a](#) where you can contribute towards this. We know that this is a global disaster that is having devastating effects here in the USA for health and life and economics, that many of you are facing personal hardship and job loss and that the need for compassion and response is worldwide. Your prayers for our world and for the people of Nepal are so appreciated as we face this struggle together.

Your Sister in Christ,
Katherine

"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

First, we need to evaluate whether the governors' own criteria have been met before loosening restrictions. As of this writing (4/27/2020) Alaska and Idaho have begun to loosen restrictions on gatherings of faith communities. Oregon and Washington have not taken similar actions at this time. Despite the affirmation by governors that testing and case tracking are necessary to protect public health, based upon their own published documents and reports, I cannot verify that each state has the capacity for testing and case tracking necessary to prevent spread of the disease.

Second, if a state meets its own criteria, and loosens restrictions, I will continue to ask whether it is prudent for the Churches to do likewise. Without adequate testing and case tracking, church gatherings may allow the virus to spread unchecked and expose people who are at most risk for severe illness, due to age, access to health care or compromising health conditions.

DO GOOD. Share the Burdens of Most Vulnerable Persons

During this season of closed buildings and postponed in-person worship, I hope that every congregation will re-engage its neighbors, by partnering with community organizations that are directly involved with people who are most vulnerable to the economic impacts of the pandemic. How this neighborhood engagement looks will be specific to your congregation, its context, and the partnerships you are able to form to serve people most at risk during this crisis. I heard the other day of a church in a small town that set up a "tab" with the local grocer so that people who needed food could "shop" for what they needed and charge it to a tab that the Church paid. In this win-win-win arrangement, people get food, the church serves people in need whom they may not even know, and the grocer's business is supported in the process. There is no recipe for this kind of innovative response. It's all based on local relationships that can become networks of care.

STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD. Promote the Life-Giving Ministries of the Church.

While I know that the effectiveness of ministry and health of congregational life suffer when people are not able to gather for worship, this hardship does not justify taking the risk of spreading the disease through church gatherings, or exposing older and health-compromised people to infection and possible death by re-opening our church gatherings too soon. I trust and know that the leaders and people in each church are finding creative ways to continue to serve God's promise of abundant life for all people and the whole creation despite these extreme circumstances. When the time is right, we will gather again and re-build and renew our ministries.

MAY 31 – PENTECOST

As we enter another month of some level of physical separation, let's hope that we will be able to gather in our churches on Pentecost, May 31. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church, when people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem to hear Peter preach. The book of Acts describes how the people understood what he said, even though they spoke many different languages. I hope that we will be able to gather in worship that day – maybe sooner. Let's hold it as a date to hope for, to pray for, to work for. And if it can't be May 31 – if it comes sooner, or later – then, we'll adjust, just as we have been adjusting for these many weeks.

I don't need to remind you that God is with us and at work. I don't need to remind you that miracles happen every day, even in the midst of disease and death, as people of generous hearts pour their lives out in love and service where there is need. We are blessed to be a blessing. Thanks be to God, who opens the way of life before us.

May God bless you and keep you today and through the days ahead.

Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky

BIRTHDAYS

05/01 Marilyn Clements
Drew Satter
Mary Jane Waters
05/02 Sharon Maxey
05/04 Theresa Meckel
05/05 Pat Bishop
05/06 Wes Holmquist
05/07 Meredith Elsensohn
Glenda Lovchik
05/08 Casandra Partridge
05/09 Eric Moss
05/10 Chandra Reiber
Samantha Wallace
05/11 Brian Cheney
Tammy McKibben
05/12 Dorothy Carpinteyro
Tom Warga
05/15 Jim Crull
05/16 Aaron Schrock
Karen Droppers
05/18 Brian Bos
05/20 Brent Gregory
Cliff Maxey
05/21 Carl Jenkins
Claudia Michael
05/24 Sterling Hardy
05/27 Jason King
05/28 Trinity Hall
Alek Reiber
05/29 Kyndal Gebhart
Margaret Natividad
05/30 Beth Ross
05/31 Donald Bower



Anniversaries

05/01 David & Dommie Oswald
05/06 Will & Amber Schilling
05/08 Rob & Rachel Peck
05/12 Philip & Margaret Chesley
05/17 Howard & Elaine Lloyd
05/20 Norman & Chris Moss
05/30 John & Stephanie Mackin



YOUTH MINISTRY

MOTHER'S DAY is May, 10th. Now is the time to do something nice for your Mom. Prepare lunch, clean the kitchen (or your room), plant flowers, help with laundry – anything you do will be appreciated. Enjoy her and the rest of your family on this day.

DO YOU KNOW ANY GRADUATES??? Do you know anyone who has graduated from college, technical school or high school **since last June?** How about anyone who will be **GRADUATING this spring?** If you would like to have them recognized in our graduation section of the Communicator in June, please contact Kyra at kyrasyouth@gmail.com This information needs to be returned to Kyra no later than **Sunday, May 12th.**

Once we gather together again as a Youth group we will set schedules and be ready for upcoming activities!!!

The last time I saw the majority of you was at the Auction, March 7th. Craig and I sure have missed all of you. This quarantine has been hard on everyone. I can only pray that you will grow stronger and learn to be a force for good once our quarantine has been lifted. Hopefully you are keeping in contact by phone with some of your friends. They are great support (and the might need to hear from you) even though you cannot 'hangout together'. Let's ALL be strong and know that God is in Control! Always praying for you!

MAY Schedule:

05/01 MAY DAY – PICK YOUR NEIGHBORS (& MOM) SOME WILDFLOWERS & LEAVE THEM ON THEIR DOORSTEP
05/12 MOTHER'S DAY
05/24 MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND – BE SAFE
05/31 PENTECOST – wear something RED today!



May Update...

We are asking church families, youth, and children to **get involved on Sunday service by reading the scripture from home!** All you need is a camera or smartphone and someone willing to read a verse or two! If this is something your family would like to participate it, email or call Alyssa for easy instructions!

Earn Bible Bucks at Home!

We want to give all children an opportunity to continue to earn Bible Bucks for what they do at home with their family. Once together on a Sunday morning again, the child will have an opportunity to show their teacher what they have learned over this break to receive their Bible Bucks. At that time, have kids ready to recite verses, find a given verse in the Bible, or bring completed projects from home!

Here are some ways they can earn Bible Bucks:

- Memorize verses
- Find verses in the Bible
- Complete Bible crafts and projects
- Be a good helper to family members

This month's curriculum is a series that shows how we can be like Jesus by the ways we rely on God, know and follow His commands, show love and kindness, and serve others!

We hope you all still receiving weekly emails from Alyssa with updates and details on curriculum content that you and your kids can complete together while at home!

If you have not gotten any emails, contact Alyssa at adarnold95@outlook.com, or the church office, and we will get you set-up with these awesome lesson ideas!

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are grown they will not turn from it." -Proverbs 22:6