

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-Coordinators**  
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

august 2025

### Pacific Northwest Annual Conference 2025 Report by Margie Manfred & Pastor Alissa

June 26-28 we had the opportunity to represent our church at the 152<sup>nd</sup> session of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference which was held in a hybrid format at Bothell United Methodist Church on the west side. Zack Reiber, our lay leader, would normally be our lay delegate but his work and seminary schedule didn't allow for it this year. With us hosting Annual Conference next year, and Margie never having attended, we thought it would be a good idea for her to do some "reconnaissance" before being on the hosting team!

The conference began with opening worship to center us on the conference theme, "Blessed and Broken", based on the story of Jesus feeding the 5000 in Luke 9 and preached on by Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth. Special music was provided by the B.U.G.S. Ukulele Band from Blaine Memorial UMC and a pop-up choir comprised of conference members sang "All Who Hunger Gather Gladly". Conference Communicator, Patrick Scriven offered this reflection on the Bishop's message: *"At the core of the sermon was a call to hold together two tensions in ministry: 'sustaining while disrupting.'*

*Sustaining involves the faithful work of the church - building community, connecting passions, sharing the good news - while disrupting means daring to move forward without all the answers, trusting God more than our plans." Both of us found the message very powerful,*



humorous, and engaging. Once our Chapel AC is back up and running, we hope to offer an afternoon viewing of the Bishop's sermon with popcorn and candy! We also really enjoyed singing the song "For Everyone Born" which Layla McClarty led us in singing during communion (Cont. on pg. 2)



on July 6. We loved the song so much as did Betsy Pletscher, Director of Music, that we decided to invest in the third UM hymnal “Worship and Song”. Be ready to sing some new songs this summer!

After lunch, we went our separate ways with Margie attending the Laity Session and Pastor Alissa heading to the Clergy Session. During the Laity Session, attendees spent time getting to know one another answering silly questions like “If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would you choose?” Margie would eat pasta (even if it isn’t something she should be eating for the rest of her life!) They also received a presentation that helped them better understand the different forms of legislation that would come before the conference on Day 2. Several workshop options were offered with Margie attending one on marketing. She took away several good ideas for enhancing our website, our outside reader board sign, and our facility.

The second day of the conference featured morning plenary where we tackled the ratification votes on four constitutional amendments from General Conference 2024. The results will be reported once all annual conferences and central conferences have had an opportunity to vote. Later in the afternoon, we celebrated the retirement of nine retiring clergy members representing over 200 years of ministry. Rev. Megan Madsen from Covenant UMC preached a powerful sermon on the Luke 9 passage and emphasized how the disciples wanted to send the people away but the Jesus insisted they do the work to which he had called them and feed them with what they had to work with...which turned out to be more than they realized! The music for that service was provided by a young adult praise band from First UMC of Canada and they brought the Spirit!

Another plenary session followed with conference members voting to approve new legislation calling for creating a LGBTQIA+ Ministries Team, more flexibility for collaboration across the GNW Area in disabilities ministries, encouraging fossil fuel divestment, and affirming the creation care-related decisions of the 2020/24 General Conference. We also approved a request from the Conference Disabilities Committee to require *annual* Accessibility Audits at Charge Conferences rather than once every four years. Members also affirmed the new Shared Services administrative and financial support for PNW and OR-ID. Many, many reports from the various mission and ministry areas were offered as well as update videos about what is happening across the conference. We went LATE into the evening on Friday dealing with two financially related petitions, one aimed at requiring more budget transparency, and the other seeking to direct the Conference Trustees to offer first right of refusal for closed church properties to United Methodist churches. After lengthy debate and numerous amendments, we FINALLY passed them both shortly before 11 p.m.! Margie got to head to bed while Pastor Alissa had to stay to run the rehearsal for the Service of Ordination and Commissioning which would happen in the morning - she finally got to bed at 1:30am!

The final day of conference started with the District Gatherings which only Margie could attend as Pastor Alissa was getting things ready for the ordination service. Margie enjoyed meeting everyone and hearing about what other churches are doing and how we all work together to support our shared ministry through our apportionments. At the ordination service we had the super cute blessing of a Children’s Choir singing “Five Loaves and Two Fish” and the Bishop commissioned two provisional elders, Leslie Kollreno and Job Pangilinan, one provisional deacon, Kelly Marciales, and ordained two elders, Carrie Bland and Meghan Lambert. Appointments and assignments to the conference’s five districts and extension ministries were also celebrated in the service including Pastor Alissa’s official appointment to serve at SVUMC for the 2025-2026 ministry year. At the very end, the two of us, along with DS Rev. Daniel Miranda and Inland District Lay Leader, John Townsend, had the opportunity to invite everyone to the 153<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference session which will be held at Spokane Valley UMC June 23-25, 2026! It was the first time laity had been involved in the official invitation announcing the location!

We are grateful for the opportunity to represent our congregation and very excited to be hosting next year! The Annual Conference Planning Team will be coming in September (exact dates TBD) to do their first site visit in preparation for next year. If you have any questions about our AC 2025 experience or about our role in hosting the 2026 session, please contact us. Thank you for receiving our report!

Special Events:

- 8/5 10:00 am SPR Meeting
- 8/11 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth  
6:30 pm Trustees
- 8/12 9:00 am Huddle
- 8/19 10:00 am Touched by Cancer  
2:30 pm Finance Meeting
- 8/25 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth
- 8/26 9:00 am Huddle

Weekly Events:

- 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

8/3	Bill & Marilyn Wixom	8/13	James & Georgette Rogers
8/9	Tim & Susan Henderson Vern & Ruth Johnson	8/15	Ed & Raeann Ducar

BIRTHDAYS

8/1	Marie Chapman	8/20	Toby Pfeifer
8/6	Howard Lloyd		Leanne Pope
8/8	Terry Blue Vern Johnson	8/21	Leanne Pope
8/13	Roy Hooten	8/25	CJ Amestoy
8/15	Norma Trefry	8/27	Ed Ducar Paul Norris
8/19	Jim Droppers Mary Alice Jones	8/28	Chrishone Wilson
		8/29	Bill Wixom
		8/30	Jeannie Salyers



# AUGUST WORD SEARCH

R	E	W	O	L	F	D	L	I	W	O	P	S	X	M	E	V
E	D	A	N	O	M	E	L	Y	R	H	A	D	O	I	F	H
T	R	C	E	T	W	P	E	S	O	M	E	U	V	W	T	O
S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	T	J	G	N	I	H	S	I	F
A	Q	P	M	Y	O	X	O	H	M	T	B	T	A	M	L	H
O	R	T	I	H	E	G	V	K	A	Y	A	K	B	Z	P	B
C	L	X	L	B	R	F	P	I	U	O	I	W	C	L	S	O
R	Q	O	E	O	J	X	N	O	L	E	M	R	E	T	A	W
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Q	O	M	I	Y	D	J	I	T	N	V	A	Z	M	C	O	T
R	A	S	K	P	E	S	U	O	H	T	H	G	I	L	H	B

Swim  
Marco Polo  
Watermelon  
Fishing  
Ice Tea  
Root Beer Float

Lighthouse  
Frozen Yogurt  
Smile  
S'mores  
Wildflower  
Mountains

Lemonade  
Kayak  
Roller Coaster  
Thrift Shop  
Fajita  
Bow Tie

Photography  
Honey  
Peach  
Banana Split  
River  
Sunshine

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

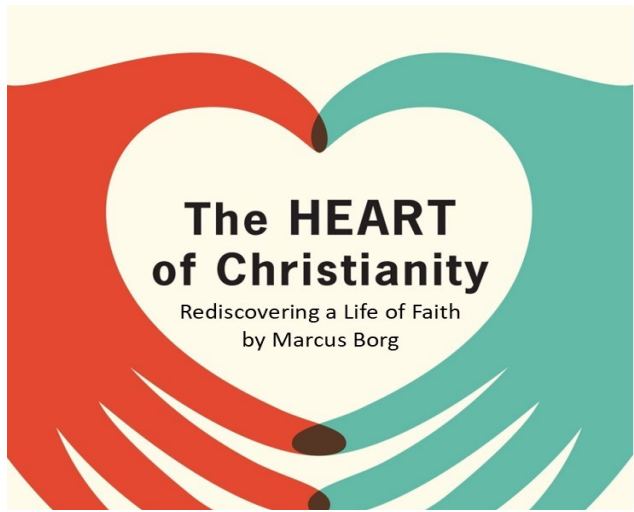
**August 3 – 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – “Jesus: The Heart of God”** (Ch. 5)  
Matthew 16:13-20– Pastor Alissa preaching & Communion

**August 10 – 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – “Born Again: A New Heart”** (Ch. 6)  
John 3:1-17– Pastor Alissa preaching

**August 17 – 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – “The Kingdom of God: The Heart of Justice** (Ch. 7)  
Luke 6:20-31 – Pastor Alissa preaching | Ministry that Matters Moment: Young Adult Shelter

**August 24 – 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – “Thin Places: Opening the Heart”** (Ch. 8)  
Ephesians 1:15-23– Pastor Alissa preaching

**August 31 – 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – “Sin & Salvation: Transforming the Heart”** (Ch. 9)  
Romans 7:15-25– Pastor Alissa preaching



**Summer  
Worship  
Series**  
(through Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>)

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ZACHARY BJURSTROM

Maybe you’ve noticed especially wonderful sounds coming from our piano this summer? One reason is we invested in a long-overdue restoration and re-regulation of the piano. But another unmistakable difference is our new accompanist, Zachary Bjurstrom. He is currently a student at EWU, majoring in Music Performance and Composition. I asked him to share some things about his musical journey; I hope you get to know him as I have! – Betsy Pletscher, Director of Music

*Zachary, how did you begin studying piano?*  
My Grandma taught me and my cousin starting when I was six. She carried on the tradition of my Great-Grandma Bessie, a musician her whole life. She played for Methodist churches for 87 years.  
*Tell us about your musical experiences in school.*  
I grew up in Millwood, in the West Valley District. When I was in middle school, I had a piano teacher who was also a student at the time. Once, when I was experimenting with bits of a Beethovel Bagatelle, she said, “Let’s try writing a piece.” This teacher really ignited a creative spark in me, and I’ve been composing ever since. I ended up doing Running Start at

EWU, which created opportunities I likely wouldn’t have had otherwise, like collaborative composition projects, performing on the radio, and a commission by the Spokane String Quartet.  
*What projects do you have coming up?*  
I will be writing a piece for orchestra this year, as well as a commissioned piece for the 100th anniversary of the city of Millwood that includes instrumental octet and possibly choir.  
*Who are your favorite composers?*  
Chopin, Liszt, some of their contemporaries.  
*What will you do after graduation?*  
I hope to keep writing and performing, and also teach.





# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.*

Choir "Takes a Breath Between Phrases..." As true musicians will, giving us an opportunity to listen! In other words, we are stepping back for a few weeks to catch our breath. Meanwhile, Hearts have spoken, and the remaining summer will be full with special solos and original pieces. Mozart is sometimes quoted to have told the orchestra during rehearsal, "the most important part of this music is the silence," and perhaps summer is a good time to contemplate sound and silence, elements of grace in the rhythms of natural events - ranging from planetary revolutions to butterfly wings. We can realize the manner in which one event ends in such a way as to prepare the next one, the way that each event, appearing to the same as others, is actually unique, and to take the time to honor the rhythms of our lives.  
- Betsy Pletscher, Director of Music

Let's Get Ready! Coffee Chat starts September 7<sup>th</sup>. **The freezer need filling so let's fill it up! Please bring your very favorite cookies.** Looking forward to seeing everyone at in the Fellowship Hall to kick Coffee Chat on again!



Interested in a weekly jump-start to your morning? Join Brian Hoyt and Amy Norton for an early morning Wednesday hike in some of Spokane County's wonderful hiking areas. We'll kick off with a local favorite: the Dishman Hills Conservation Area, at Philips Creek. The Philips Creek trails start with a gradual climb through the forest. Sections will be out in the open (sunny), and we'll finish downhill. It is likely to be hot, so cool clothing, water, and sturdy shoes are recommended. We'll plan on a relatively slow two hour round-trip hike with several stops on the way, so a basic level of fitness is also recommended. There is a port-a-potty and plenty of parking at the trailhead.

## What's Going on Upstairs? A Glimpse into the Hearts of Our Youth

By Jacqueline Florian, MSW | Coordinator of Ministries for Young People

Greetings, church family! I'm incredibly honored to share a glimpse of what's happening upstairs with our amazing young people. As the Sunday School teacher and youth leader, my goal is to create a space where curiosity is encouraged and hard questions are welcomed. I believe faith is something that must be wrestled with, questioned, and ultimately owned by each person. And I've found that as I walk alongside our children and youth, my own faith continues to be stretched and strengthened. We are blessed with an extraordinary group of young individuals who are seeking to understand who they are and who Jesus is to them.

This summer, we launched a new Confirmation Class for our middle and high school students. I'm honored to co-lead this journey with Jen Prince, and we are committed to making this a meaningful, faith-shaping experience. Our Confirmation Class is designed to be safe, welcoming, and engaging. A place where youth can explore what they believe, why it matters, and how to live it out. We're using the Sparkhouse curriculum, which is interactive, age-appropriate, and rooted in United Methodist theology and tradition. We divide our students into two groups—middle schoolers and high schoolers—to better meet them where they are in their development. Each week, we dive into thoughtful conversations about God, the Church, grace, discipleship, and identity. Our teaching philosophy is centered on grace, relationship, and discovery. We believe faith isn't something passed down; it's something discovered, questioned, and chosen.

Parents and church family: thank you for trusting us with your children's spiritual development. It is a joy and an honor to walk this road with them. As we continue in this Confirmation journey, I ask for your prayers—for wisdom, for openness, and for the Spirit to guide our conversations. I also invite you to consider coming alongside one of our youth—as a mentor, a prayer partner, or simply someone who shows up and supports their journey. These young people are hungry for connection, truth, and belonging, and I believe our entire church has a role to play in that.

Let's keep growing together.

In Christ,  
Jacqueline Florian



The United Women in Faith would like to thank all the women of the church who made June 29th's "UWF Sunday" a success. We couldn't have done it without you!

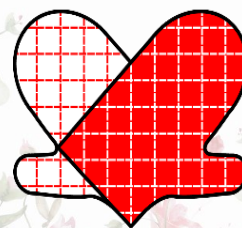
On **Monday, August 4th**, Sarah Circle will have our annual summer gathering at Ferraro's Restaurant at 6pm. All are welcome - bring a friend! Additionally, Sarah Circle will have a field trip to the Ridgeline Environmental Science Community Garden at the home of the head of Ridgeline's Science Department, Krista Larsen, on **Tuesday, August 19th at 6:30pm**. Krista is a wealth of information on climate science and even has her own research trip planned to Antarctica. We will meet at the front parking lot of the church at 6:10pm.  
- Robin Gregory

## SVUWF invites the women of the church to join one of three circle meetings in September!

Esther Circle - September 9 - 12:30pm Room 115  
Contact Sue McGovney at 509-924-1555

Rachel Circle - September 11 - 11am FPR  
Contact Susan Henderson at 509-951-8525

Sarah Circle - September 8 - 6:30pm FPR  
Contact Robin Gregory at 858-344-7462



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



This month, help us collect boxes of tissues and baby wipes for Broadway Elementary classrooms for the coming school year! Bring them to the Connect Desk  
August 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31!

