

Return Service Requested



connections  
december 2024

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

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

**Pastor**  
Rev. Alissa Amestoy  
**Piano & Organist**  
Betsy Pletscher  
**Director of Music**  
Luke Henderson  
**Director of Hospitality**  
Margie Manfred  
**Technical Ministry**  
**Co-Coordinators**  
Lexi Shay & Logan Tiedt  
**Children's Ministries**  
Samantha Wallace  
**Nursery Care**  
Cassandra Strickland  
**Sunday School Teacher**  
Jackie Florian  
**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.*

**Advent Worship Series**

It seems like we just celebrated Advent...oh, wait...we did back in August using Marcia McFee's "The Inn: Housing the Holy" series! But now that December is here, the *real* Advent is upon us, so we're going to do it all over again with another series by Marcia called "Angels Among Us." When you arrive for worship on December 1, you will find that our Sanctuary has been transformed into a heavenly abode perfect for experiencing angel visitations! Throughout the season of Advent and into Christmas we'll be learning about the original angelic envoys in the Gospels and learning how we can be messengers of the Good News ourselves. Given our theme, I'm dedicating this newsletter article to exploring more about angels. Have you ever wondered what the Bible teaches about them? What they look like, where they came from, and what they do? Then keep reading!

Typically, when we think of angels, we visualize them as being dressed in white, with big feathery wings, and surrounded by ethereal light. Sometimes we add a little halo behind or above their head to make it clear they are "holy" and a harp or a scepter as symbols of their office. They are interchangeably male and female and all too often of a Caucasian variety even though the Biblical reference as to their skin tone says they were covered in bronze (see next page). Usually they look peaceful and wise, gentle and kind, but sometimes they are also depicted as strong, mighty, and even warrior-like. As is often the case, however, if we look to the Bible to see how angels are *actually* described in scripture, we find that our depictions are slightly off and perhaps more inspired by our own humanness rather than God's original creation!

One of the places we find the most detailed description of what angels look like is in Ezekiel 1:1-28. The prophet shares a vision of seeing four living creatures, which he calls cherubim emerging from a storm of fire and light coming from the north. The details are incredible - he reports that their appearance is human in form but with four faces, four wings, straight legs, feet like a calf, and sparkling bronze in color with human hands under their wings. Each of their four faces was different featuring a human, lion, ox, and eagle and they each had a wheel on the earth like a chariot. If you have the interest or time, I invite you to read the full description - it's fascinating and, be warned, just a little terrifying which is probably why they immediately say "do not be afraid" when they show up! If Ezekiel's vision is (Cont. on pg 2)



to be believed... you can see why we might have made some alterations to how angels look in our modern interpretation! One thing we did get right with the Biblical text is the angelic ability to fly. Though angels are recorded as having used a variety of modes of transportation from chariots, walking on foot, and sudden appearance (teleportation?), there are several places in which they are described as flying. In Daniel 9:21, Gabriel comes to him in "swift flight" and in Revelation 14:6, John of Patmos writes that he saw "another angel flying in midheaven." Most of



the time though, angels just show up right next to you (as was the case with Zechariah at the altar) or descending in a blaze of glory from the sky. I think it's safe to assume that however they show up, it's unexpected and a little unnerving!

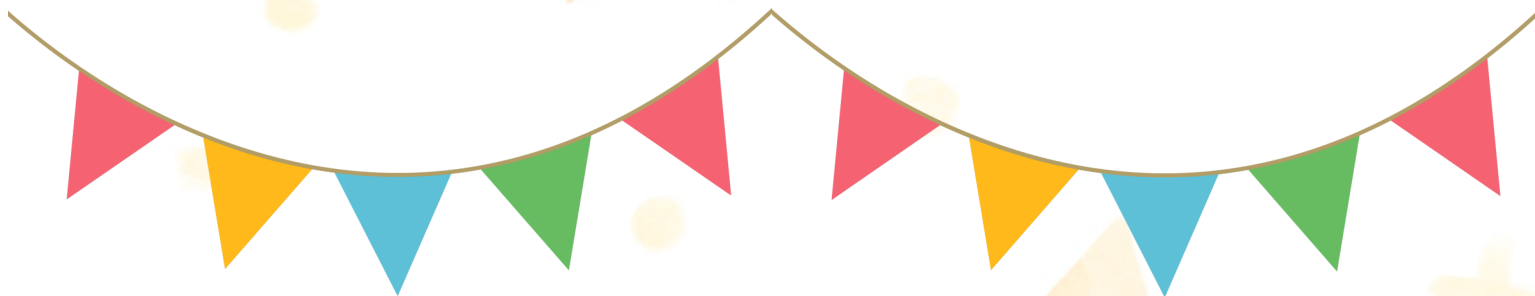
In Genesis 2:1, we learn that God created the heavens and the earth and "all their multitude" (i.e., the angels and archangels) and later on, Paul in his letter to the Colossians 1:16 remarks that it is through Christ that all things were created which surely includes the angels! The Bible tells us that they were created to serve God and are subservient to Christ (ex. 1 Peter 3:22) and are never themselves meant to be objects of worship. In fact, John of Patmos got rebuked by an angel when he fell to his knees in adoration of one: "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

Angels are mentioned over 270 times in the Bible but there's no knowing how many angels there are - the Bible

says the number is indescribable and lists them as "tens of thousands and thousands" (Psalm 68:17). Though other extra-Biblical sources indicate there are seven different types of angels, the Bible only includes five: archangels, cherubim, seraphim, "living creatures," and common angels. Archangels were "chief" angels and in charge of conveying really important divine messages. Though Michael is the only one officially identified as such (Jude 9) it's assumed that Gabriel was one as well due to his delivering some PRETTY important information regarding the birth of Jesus Christ! Along with Michael and Gabriel, the only other angel/Archangel to be named

# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 12/01 Gary Anderson        | 12/17 Ethel Richards |
| 12/05 Alan Lovchick        | 12/19 Madelyn Bafus  |
|                            | 12/26 Mary Picken    |
| 12/06 Anna Jenkins         | 12/27 Carol Hickman  |
|                            | 12/28 Margie Collin  |
|                            | Shirley Porter       |
| 12/09 Linda Hansen         | 12/29 Suzan Sloan    |
| 12/13 Sam Barrett          |                      |
| 12/15 Cassandra Strickland |                      |



# DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 12/02 Jim & Mary Picken
- 12/28 Wes & Ann Holmquist  
Jerry & Nancy Larson



# DECEMBER WORD SEARCH

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

- |             |          |           |           |
|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cheer       | Trees    | Christmas | Bethlehem |
| Holly       | Santa    | Caroling  | Jesus     |
| Snow        | Emmanuel | Yuletide  | Gift      |
| Decorations | Love     | Joy       | Mistletoe |
| Festive     | Family   | Merry     | Manger    |
| Season      | Lights   | Rest      | Peace     |

in the Bible is Lucifer and it's sort of a stretch to say he's *named*. In Isaiah 14:12, some Bibles translate "O Day Star" (NRSV) or "morning star," as "Lucifer" which is the ancient Greek way of saying "shining one." Like I said, it's a bit of a stretch.

Getting back to the types of angels, cherubim attended to God in heaven and guarded God's glory both on Earth and by his throne in heaven - they were most often experienced when God's glory is being revealed to humans as was the case for Ezekiel. Seraphim, who often get paired with cherubim, only show up once in the Bible - in Isaiah 6. He describes them as six-winged "fiery" angels who surround God as he sits upon his exalted throne and who worship God continually - they are literally so in love with God they are "on fire" with adoration (the Hebrew root word "saraph," means "to burn"). The seraphim seem to bear a resemblance to humans, as Isaiah describes them as having faces, feet, hands, and voices.

From Revelation 4:8 we learn about the "living creatures" form of angels: *"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'"* Similar to cherubim and seraphim, this special category of angels exalts God and worships him continually. Last, but not least, are the common angels who are so called because they don't really fit into any of the other categories and the Bible doesn't provide much detail on them. They are referred to more than they are documented such as when the writer of the letter to the Hebrews cautions: *"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it"* (13:2).

Whatever form angels came in, the Bible paints an overall picture of them being wise and intelligent with the ability to discern the difference between good and evil as well as being able to give insight and understanding to humans (when they listen!). Though they seem to possess some pretty incredible powers (flight, immortality, strength), the Biblical narrative makes it clear that they are not capable of God's omnipresence (ability to be everywhere all the time), omnipotence (possessing power over everything all the time), or omniscience (knows everything all the time). But the Bible also makes it clear that angels do *feel* things like love, joy, and a desire to serve God just like us and that they are invested in helping humans experience and participate in the holiness of God which is pretty awesome!

There's much, MUCH, more that can be shared about angels in the Bible, but I hope this has provided a little insight into what our scriptures say about these mysterious and fascinating beings. As we continue through our series "Angels Among Us," I hope we continue to garner some knowledge about these divine messengers and learn from them how to dedicate ourselves to glorifying God, sharing God's Good News, and fulfilling God's will...even if we don't get the benefit of wings, four faces, or eyes all over! May we look for signs of angels among us alerting us to God's work in our world and may we seek to be like them, praising God and telling the world all about the glory of God!

With Advent blessings -  
Pastor Alissa

**December Worship Preview**  
**Angels Among Us - Advent Series**



**Special Events:**

- 12/02** 10:00 am Marlene Group FPR  
 11:00 am Daughters of Dorcas  
 6:30 pm Sarah Circle
- 12/03** 10:00 am SPRC FPR
- 12/05** Grieving Through the Holidays  
 (time TBA)  
 12:00 pm 55+ Luncheon
- 12/07** UWF Annual Christmas Celebration
- 12/09** 10:00 am Marlene Group FPR  
 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth Room  
 6:30 pm Trustees Meeting
- 12/10** 9:00 am Hospitality Huddle  
 12:30 pm Esther Circle FPR
- 12/12** 11:00 am Rachel Circle  
 Grieving Through the Holidays  
 (time TBA)
- 12/14** 3:00 pm Bella Cristo hand bell  
 choir
- 12/16** 11:00 am Daughters of Dorcas
- 12/17** 10:00 am Touched by Cancer  
 6:00 pm Coordinating Council
- 12/19** Grieving Through the Holidays  
 (time TBA)
- 12/23** 10:00 am Marlene Group FPR  
 10:00 am Prayer Shawl Youth Room



**Weekly Events:**

- Monday**  
 9:30 am Shirley Small Group Rm 115  
 3:30 pm Nancy Larson Small Group  
 Rm 115
- Wednesday**  
 10:00 am Walkers
- Thursday**  
 9:00 am Thursday Crew  
 1:00 pm Lois Small Group FPR
- Saturday**  
 10:00 am Choir
- Sunday**  
 9:00 am Traditional Service  
 9:00 am Children's Sunday School and  
 Nursery  
 10:00 am Coffee Chat

**December 1: Ready for More Hope** – Advent 1  
 – Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 (Zechariah)  
 In the midst of great change, hope is always a welcome thing. Advent can remind us that God makes us ready for whatever unknown may come our way and calls us to be messengers of **#morehope** in an ever-changing world. Pastor Alissa preaching and celebration of The Great Thanksgiving.

**December 8: Nothing Is Impossible** – Advent 2  
 – Luke 1:26-45 (Mary)  
 Have you ever struggled with finding your purpose and being at peace with it? Or are you yearning for more peace in your life and relationships? **#morepeace** in the world happens when all of us feel **#morepeace** within ourselves and live out that message each day. Pastor Alissa preaching and Ministry That Matters Moment: *Basic Needs Program at SFCC* presented by Zack Reiber.

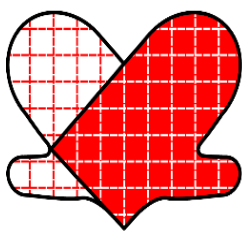
**December 15: Do Not Be Afraid** – Advent 3 – Matthew 1:18-25 (Joseph)  
 Keeping up with “appearances” can rob us of our **#morejoy**. Let us be messengers of encouragement and steadfast support, as Joseph was, for that which the Spirit is birthing in the world. Pastor Alissa preaching.

**December 22: This Will Be A Sign** – Advent 4 – Luke 2:1-10 (Shepherds)  
 Most of us look for great big obvious clues about God’s presence. But instead, the angel says that a baby...a newborn helpless baby in a feeding trough was it — the sign. In a flash, the message was that **#morelove** is found where you least expect it and perhaps is already there residing in the ordinariness of your life. Pastor Alissa preaching and Special Music from the *British Brass Band*.

**December 24 (Tuesday)** – *Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 8:00pm*  
 During Advent, we will have heard of the stories of angel appearances heralding incredible news of the birth of a savior. They didn’t appear to kings and rulers or courts or the privileged of society. They came to an old and barren couple, a young girl barely a woman, a simple and humble man betrothed to her, and finally, to lowly shepherds on a hillside. They came to people like you and me. God worked through ordinary people and did extraordinary things. And so it is that God works through us every time we offer messages of hope, peace, joy, and love to an anxious world. As we celebrate the birth of Christ with all our favorite carols and the Christmas story, we are called to fly in the face of fear — to be angels among us!

**December 29** – *First Sunday in Christmas*  
 Special Singing Sunday Service led by our Director of Music, Luke Henderson, and filled with scriptures and songs celebrating the birth of Christ!





# 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*



## 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 Budget for Year 2025

<b>Conference:</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Pledge to Mission.....	\$5,000
Special Mission Recognition.....	40
Gift to Mission.....	25
Gift in Memory.....	20
Mission Candle.....	5
<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$5,090</b>

<b>Local Church:</b>	
Kitchen Use.....	200
Copy Machine.....	50
Audit.....	80
<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$330</b>

<b>Christian Social Relations:</b>	
Tacoma Community House.....	200
Atlantic Street Center.....	200
Jamaa Letu Orphanage.....	500
Local: (Funds to match Circle tea money).....	500
<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>1,400</b>

<b>Cultivation of Spiritual Life:</b>	
Literature ( 3 program +3 prayer books +3 Mission U books).....	165
Response Magazine – 2 yrs..... 3X\$45.....	135
Program Speakers.....	300
2 UMW Meetings-(food).....	150
Scholarships (Mission U and other).....	200
Miscellaneous.....	40
Dorcus Circle supplies for quilting.....	40
Legacy Fund.....	150
<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$1,180</b>

**TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2025.....\$8,000**

**This budget will be voted on at the SVUMC United Women in Faith Annual Christmas Celebration. For questions, see Madelyn Bafus.**

Thank you 

Thank you to all those who brought jeans and shirts for Mission Community Outreach Center's "Christmas Joy" drive! And many thanks to all who provided cookies for Ornament Night at Broadway Elementary. We are so grateful to live and worship in such a generous community! This month, we're partnering with Family Promise to provide \$10 gas cards this season. You can bring them to the Connect Desk Sundays December 8, 15, and 22. We recommend Maverick gas station as the best place to purchase them.

It is with sadness and joy that I let you know that 55 Plus Luncheon and Program will hold their final luncheon on December 5th, 2024. 55 Plus began on October 20th, 1999. We who began this program were in our 50's and 60's. Today we are in our 70's and 80's. Before this program started, we spent a lot of time researching whether this would be something our community would appreciate.

At that time, I was on staff with the church. For those who remember Bonnie Randles, she was instrumental in birthing this program. Jim Droppers was key to its beginning as he secured funding and programs for our first years through The Good Samaritan Society Retirement Community. Ethel Richards joined the program at its beginning and has been a part of the team for these 25 years. Ethel's help is so valued by those who know and love her.

The program started in room 115 and in a few years moved to the gym. We have had so many wonderful programs that informed, educated and entertained us through the years. The goal of 55 Plus was to provide a lunch at the end of the month when money was tighter for seniors. The cost has always been by donations. At the beginning, the suggested donation was \$1. It was also the goal to have programs of interest to seniors. I truly feel that with God's direction we fulfilled our goals.

God has always been with us as we prepared, served, visited and cleaned up the lunch. There has never been a budget – what comes in is always what is needed to pay expenses (food and stamps). People smile and greet each other warmly. This has been a joyful time.

I wish to thank the 55 Plus Team for their dedication to this program: Ethel Richards, Shirley Porter, Mary Jane Waters, Sue McGovney, Mary Peterson, Gerry Bafus, Dave Nobel, and so many more who have helped. I also wish to thank those who have supported this program by attending through the years. Finally, I thank the church for providing the space for us to use: the gym and that wonderful kitchen that continues to bless others.

Join us on December 5th for our Hot Turkey Sandwich lunch, Christmas music, and time to celebrate these 25 years.

In sadness and JOY,

*Madelyn Bafus*



The staff at Broadway Elementary thank you for the delicious luncheon on November 21. They have been talking about this lunch for a long time! They look forward to the luncheon served during conference week. Thank you to all the cooks who brought food - you are so appreciated!!

# SPOKANE VALLEY

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 14  
3:00 PM Bella Christa Hand Bell Choir

DECEMBER 24  
8:00 PM Christmas Eve Candle Light Service

DECEMBER 29  
9:00 AM Singing Celebration Sunday

9:00 AM Traditional Service  
Sunday School  
Nursery  
10:15 AM Coffee Chat

*Angels Among Us*  
with Rev. Alissa Amestoy

115 N. RAYMOND RD. SPOKANE VALLEY  
WWW.SPOKANEVALLEYCHURCH.ORG  
509-924-7262



## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



### SUNDAY SCHOOL & NURSERY

With the holiday season already here Sunday School and Nursery are really excited about decorating for Christmas.

With the growth of the program over the past few months we are going to begin doing volunteer sign-ups in the new year for Sunday School.

### YOUTH GROUP

Youth group is in full swing. They are meeting bi-weekly from 10:30-12pm  
If you are interested in volunteering, there will be more information on that in the new year.

*Merry Christmas*

Samantha Anglin  
Samantha.marie00@outlook.com



### Celebration of Lights

Join Santa and his elves for some festive holiday fun!

**Friday, Dec. 6**  
from 6-7 p.m.

**New location!**  
Balfour Park, 105 N. Balfour Road  
Parking available at Balfour Park and Spokane Valley City Hall

- Tree lighting
- Visit from Santa
- Music by Northwest Festive Brass & Opportunity Elementary School Choir
- Hot cocoa and cookies
- Wear your light-up festive wear and follow Santa through Balfour Park in the new walking light parade!

Sponsored by

Join us January 5th at 45 Degrees Brewhouse from 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm for our third annual Holy Pub Event! We'll celebrate a Twelfth Night experience with a Christmas singalong and lots of good food. Bring a friend and have a blast! For those 21 and over only.  
45 Degree Brewhouse  
10421 E. Sprague Ave.  
Spokane Valley, WA 99206



**FRIENDLY REMINDER**  
The office will be closed Dec. 25 - Jan. 1. Pastor Alissa will be on vacation during that time.  
Happy Holidays!

**SING ON! SEASON**  
2024 - 2025

Works by:  
G.F. Handel  
J.S. Bach  
G. Holst  
Saint-Saëns  
John Rutter  
Elaina Hagenberg  
Ola Gjeilo  
And more....

*Sugar & Spice*

DR. JOSHUA CHISM, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
DAVID BREWSTER, COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

**DEC 9 MONDAY** | **DEC 10 TUESDAY**  
7PM | 7PM



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BUY TICKETS AT CHORALECDA.COM  
ADULT \$30 | SENIOR \$25 | STUDENT \$15

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